

LESSON 12

THE SURPASSING POWER OF FAITH

Having considered great servants of God in Old Testament times (ch. 11), the writer next turned to the present course that the Hebrews were following. They could take courage from those who had walked by faith through victory, fire, and sufferings. The Christian life is a walk of faith, too, but it is pictured here as a race to be run. Faithful endurance was the principal characteristic in those heroes and heroines of the faith in the past, and the same quality is displayed by the faithful in the Christian Age. Our focus is on Christ and what He endured.

CHRIST, THE PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH (12:1–3)

The race of faith is much more than emotionalism or thinking that we are saved because of some “experience.” It is a life of work, depicted here as arduous running. While the Christian race is wonderful, it is sometimes difficult and requires perseverance.

1. How is the journey of faith like a race?
2. What might be some encumbrances in our spiritual race?
3. According to verse 3, how do we “learn how to remain steadfast in the face of mockery and shame”?

DISCIPLINE AS CHILDREN OF GOD (12:4–11)

The writer gave proofs to show the Hebrews that chastening indicated God’s love for them. First, he declared that the Scriptures testify to this truth. Next, he determined that the principle is learned from personal experience, for we see it in the actions of a loving father toward his child. Last, he described the blessed results of discipline.

4. What are the three reasons the author of Hebrews gave us for desiring discipline (vv. 7, 8)?
5. What is the ultimate purpose of discipline?

**ENCOURAGEMENT TO SEEK GOD'S GRACE
AND LIVE A LIFE OF FAITH (12:12-17)**

The writer gave his believing readers various exhortations calling for perseverance. To ensure growth and continuance in the faith, and to prevent anyone from falling away, certain attitudes and traits of living must be developed.

6. What is the value of living at "peace with all men" (v. 14)?
7. In what ways did Esau become "godless" (v. 16)?
8. How might Esau's decisions be paralleled by a faltering believer in Christ?

**CONTRAST OF THE GLORY OF SINAI
AND THE GREATER GLORY OF ZION/
"HEAVENLY JERUSALEM" (12:18-24)**

This section is part of another warning in 12:18-29. The first warning was against neglect (2:1-4), the second against unbelief (3:7-4:13), the third against falling away (5:11-6:20), and the fourth against willful sin (10:26-31). The fifth warning, in 12:18-29, may be summarized, "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking" (12:25). Refusing to obey God brings eternal damnation. These admonitions were designed to secure loyalty to Christ and prevent the readers from turning from Him.

9. How is our covenant with God better, even though in the old covenant signs of God's presence were clearly visible?
10. How do verses 18 through 24 depict heaven?

**FINAL WARNING: THE DANGER
OF REFUSING GOD (12:25-29)**

The heart of the fifth and final warning in Hebrews is in 12:25-29. It may be the same as that in 3:7-11 (which is quoted from Ps. 95:7-11 in the Septuagint). Another "light and heavy" argument occurs in these verses, as was first

used at 2:1–4. Each saint must listen carefully to the Lord—even more than Israel did to God the Father at Sinai.

11. How is the metaphor of the earthquake used in verses 26 and 27?

12. What can we learn about the kingdom from verse 28?