

# Lesson 11

## The Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

Hebrews 12:1-29

In Hebrews 12, we come to a very instructive passage. It is as though the author is finished discussing the principles of faith and is now focusing on how the audience should respond in light of those truths. As you read through Hebrews 12, ask the Lord to reveal His truth and show you how He would have you personally apply the exhortations.

### Fix Our Eyes on Jesus

Read Hebrews 12:1-3.

1. In Hebrews 11, the author recounted many faithful witnesses who've gone before us. Even though we have many whose examples are encouraging, on whom should we "fix our eyes" (Hebrews 12:2)?
2. In Hebrews 12:1, what does the author encourage us to do?
  - ❖ An *encumbrance* is anything that is burdensome, useless or superfluous. It may not be something bad in itself, but it is something in our life that weighs us down. It may be too much of something, something that tends to distract or discourage you, or it may be something like a family responsibility you are trying to carry in your own strength. Take some time to ask the Lord if anything is encumbering you. Then ask Him what He would have you do with it (Matthew 11:28-30).
  - ❖ How does the Lord guide us to "lay aside" our sin?
    - ❖ 1 John 1:8-9
    - ❖ James 5:16

*"Therefore since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

*Hebrews 12:1-2*

- ❖ 1 Corinthians 10:13
  - ❖ Where do we develop endurance/perseverance according to Romans 5:3-5?
3. How is Jesus described in Hebrews 12:2?
  4. How does Jesus describe His feelings before going to the cross in Matthew 26:38? How does that compare to Hebrews 12:2?
  5. In John 17:1-5, what did Jesus look forward to after the cross?
  6. What brings joy in heaven according to Luke 15:3-10? What relationship do you see between that and the joy set before Jesus on the cross (Hebrews 12:2)?
  7. Where is Jesus now sitting according to Hebrews 12:1-2?
  8. How does considering Jesus encourage you not to “grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:3)?

### **The Discipline of the Father**

In Hebrews 12:4-17, the author discusses the Lord’s discipline. In the first eight verses, he discusses the role that God’s discipline plays in the lives of believers. God’s discipline is not punishment. His punishment is reserved for the unrighteous who do not receive the gift of salvation (2 Peter 2:9). The discipline the author is talking about is the Lord’s working within the circumstances of our lives to bring us to maturity and to teach us His ways.

Read Hebrews 12:4-17.

9. What was the circumstance of the Hebrew believers according to Hebrews 10:32-33?

10. In Hebrews 11:35b-38, what did we learn about the lives of people of faith?
  
11. Read Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28. What circumstances does God use for good in our lives?
  
12. From Hebrews 12:4-8, what does the Lord do for all of His children?
  
13. How does discipline feel in the moment? (See Hebrews 12:11 if you don't know from experience!)
  
14. Fill in the three results of God's discipline described in Hebrews 12:9-11? The first one is done for you.
  - ❖ Hebrews 12:9 – **Life**
    - ❖ What do you learn about eternal life in John 17:3?
  
  - ❖ Hebrews 12:10 – \_\_\_\_\_
    - ❖ Who makes us holy (*sanctified* in some translations) according to Hebrews 13:12?
  
  - ❖ Hebrews 12:11 – \_\_\_\_\_
    - ❖ What is counted as righteousness according to Romans 4:3-5?
  
15. Looking back on your life, when has God used your circumstances to discipline you and mature you in your life with Him? How are you different because of it?

16. What action does the author encourage in Hebrews 12:12?

- ❖ Read Isaiah 40:28-31 and Habakkuk 3:19. How are we strengthened?
- ❖ In what area of your life do you need God's strength?

17. What does the author encourage those being disciplined to do in Hebrews 12:13?

- ❖ According to Proverbs 3:5-8, how do we make our paths straight?
- ❖ In what area of your life do you need to straighten your path by trusting God rather than relying on yourself?

18. In Hebrews 12:14, the author encourages us to "pursue peace with all men." What do you think that means?

- ❖ Ask the Lord if there is anything you need to do to live at peace with all men. Specifically, is there anyone you need to forgive or anyone whose forgiveness you need to seek?

19. What else are we to pursue according to Hebrews 12:14?

- ❖ Look back to question 14. How are we sanctified?

20. According to Hebrews 12:15, what might happen if we don't understand or respond rightly to God's discipline?

In Hebrews 12:15-17, the author gives a stern warning regarding Esau, who sold his *birthright* or *inheritance rights* – his rights and benefits as firstborn son. As children of God, one of our "rights" is the discipline of the Lord. The author is warning us not to despise this right or trade it in for the things of this world.

21. What did Esau find no place for according to Hebrews 12:17?

22. Compare the two types of sorrow in 2 Corinthians 7:9-10.
23. When God convicts us, it is as a Father who disciplines us in order to lead us back to Him (Hebrews 12:7-8). Is there anything God is convicting you of concerning sin? Take some time now to confess any sins that He brings to mind, agreeing with Him that they are wrong, and accepting the complete forgiveness available to you through the blood of Christ.

### **Mount Zion, the City of the Living God**

In Hebrews 12:18-24, the author compares Mount Sinai to Mount Zion in order to compare the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. The Law was given on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1-13). During the time that God's glory covered the mountain and God gave Moses the Law, no one was allowed to go up or even touch the mountain under penalty of death. Mount Zion is a mountain in Jerusalem where David placed the ark before the building of the Temple on nearby Mount Moriah. In time, Mount Zion came to refer to Jerusalem in general. It was here that Jesus was crucified and the New Covenant was established.

Read Hebrews 12:18-24.

24. From Hebrews 12:18-21 and Exodus 20:18-19, what was the people's reaction to God's glory as it was displayed on Mount Sinai during the giving of the Law?
25. In Hebrews 12:22, the author tells us that we have "come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels." The throne room of heaven is described in Revelation 4-5. What is happening in Revelation 4:9-11 and 5:11-14?
- ❖ From Hebrews 4:14-16, what can we approach with boldness?
  - ❖ From Revelation 4:10 and 5:13-14, what is our reaction to the glory of God on Mount Zion (ultimately in heaven and also in the glimpses we receive here)?
26. What are some of the other benefits of the New Covenant (Mount Zion) listed in Hebrews 12:22-24?

27. What does Hebrews 12:24 tell us about the blood of Christ?

- ❖ Genesis 4:9-12 tells us that the blood of Abel cried out to God from the ground after his brother Cain killed him. As a result, God punished Cain for his sin. In contrast to punishment, what does the blood of Christ do for us (Hebrews 9:13-14)?

28. How does the author of Hebrews restate all of his warnings in Hebrews 12:25? What is his main point in all of his warnings?

The author quotes the prophet Haggai 2:6 in Hebrews 12:26. It is reminiscent of his comments in Hebrews 1:10-12, where he quoted from Psalm 110.

Read Hebrews 12:26-29

29. In Hebrews 12:26, who will shake heaven and earth?

30. According to Hebrews 12:27, what is the purpose of the shaking?

- ❖ From our study of Hebrews, what do you think are some of the things that cannot be shaken?

31. What kind of kingdom do we receive in Hebrews 12:28? How should we respond to the Lord?

32. What is God called in Hebrews 12:29?

Under the New Covenant, we come boldly to the throne of grace. The Consuming Fire that descended on Mount Sinai, is still seated on His throne, but because we have received the salvation of Christ and have entered into the new and everlasting covenant of grace, we approach Him not with fear and terror but with reverence and awe. “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16), and as children, we come bringing our burdens to a willing Father, accepting the discipline of a loving Father and trusting our Father even when everything that *can* be is shaken in our midst.

**Prepare for Life Question:**

The author of Hebrews recognized that we face weariness and exhaustion as we live through the trials of this life (Hebrews 12:12). We all endure trials. Sometimes those trials shake the earth, and sometimes they just shake our tiny part of it, but we all need God's strength to endure faithfully.

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Even youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.” Isaiah 40:28-31

33. Spend some time this week reading and praying through Isaiah 40:28-31. Ask the Lord what specific promises He has for you in these verses. Ask Him how He would have you respond to Him.

**Lecture Notes:**  
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