

HEBREWS 12:1–13

FIRST DAY: Introduction

The life of faith is not a short race, a sprint, or a mad dash. No! Rather, it is a lifelong marathon rife with obstacles, perplexities, hardships, and trials. Therefore, the marathon of faith requires endurance, sacrifice, sustained motivation, divine strength, and discipline. These requirements are met and developed as we:

- Remember the testimonies of those who have successfully finished the marathon of faith
- Lay aside every sin and weight that impedes our progress
- Look to and consider the example and accomplishments of Jesus
- Embrace, appreciate, and cooperate with God's discipline in our life

These are the requirements to which the author of Hebrews draws our attention in Hebrews 12. Without these divine aids, we will become sluggish, weary, discouraged, and prone to drop out of the great marathon of faith. However, if we will take hold of these principles and factor them into our lives, we are sure to finish the course and receive the reward of faith.

*Ask God to help you run the marathon of faith
with endurance and joy!*

SECOND DAY: Read Hebrews 12:1–2

1. In Hebrews 11, the author exhorted the Hebrew believers by recalling testimonies of Old Testament saints. In Hebrews 12:1a (NLT), he described these saints as *a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith*. From your study last week, share something that stood out to you from this *crowd of witnesses*.
 - a. Use Romans 15:4 to note an additional purpose for these testimonies.

2. In light of the fact that we are *surrounded* by these *witnesses*, comment on what we are exhorted to do. Hebrews 12:1b
 - a. A *weight* can be defined as anything that hinders our progress in the life of faith. List a few things that might become a *weight* in the life of a believer.
 - (1) How would you practically suggest someone deal with these weights?

 - b. Use Hebrews 12:1b to describe the harm sin causes. See also Genesis 4:7 and James 1:14–15.

3. Having dealt with these obstacles, what are we instructed to do?
Hebrews 12:1c
- a. According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, the word used for *endurance* describes a person who is *unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings*. How does this underscore the importance of removing *every weight* and *sin* from our lives?
- b. Use the following Scriptures to enhance your understanding of the importance of *endurance*:
- (1) Acts 20:24
- (2) Philippians 3:12–14
- (3) Hebrews 10:36
- c. From Hebrews 12:1d and 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, describe the Christian life.

4. In order to endure, we are to look to Jesus as our example. The Greek word for *look* means *to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something else*. What does this convey to you about the way we are to look at:

a. Who He is—Hebrews 12:2a

(1) Link this with Philippians 1:6 and share your thoughts.

b. What He has done—Hebrews 12:2b

(1) What does it mean to you that Jesus did this:

(a) *For the joy that was set before Him* (See also John 15:10–13)

(b) *Despising [disregarding] the shame* (See also 2 Corinthians 5:21)

c. Where He is seated—Hebrews 12:2c (See also 1 Peter 3:22)

5. As you personally look to Jesus, how are you enabled to endure the marathon of faith?

THIRD DAY: Read Hebrews 12:3–6

1. The Hebrew believers were exhorted not only to look to Jesus (Hebrews 12:2), but to *consider* Jesus as well (Hebrews 12:3a). How would you define the word *consider*?
 - a. What did the author desire his audience to *consider* about Him? Hebrews 12:3a
 - b. What would this prevent from settling into their souls? Hebrews 12:3b
 - (1) Link this with the following Scriptures and remark on why Jesus' example is so encouraging:
 - (a) Romans 8:17
 - (b) Philippians 2:5–11
 - (c) 1 Peter 4:13
 - (2) How does this help you with weariness and discouragement? See also Matthew 11:28–30.

2. What did the author point out about the believers' struggle?
Hebrews 12:4
 - a. Consider Jesus' example in Luke 22:41–44 and share how His struggle exceeded anything we experience.

3. To further encourage these believers, the author cited Proverbs 3:11–12 to help them understand that God was speaking to them as *sons*. Use Hebrews 12:5–6 to note and comment on:
 - a. The importance of not forgetting the *exhortation* (verse 5a)

 - b. The way to respond to chastening (verse 5b)

 - c. God's heart in chastening (verse 6)
 - (1) Accordingly, why do you think God's chastening is a good thing?

 - (2) *Exhortation* means *communication emphatically urging someone to do something*. How does this exhortation speak to you expressly as a child of God?

4. Share a way your lesson has exhorted you.

FOURTH DAY: Read Hebrews 12:7–10

1. In Hebrews 12:7–10, the author continued to elaborate on the blessings and benefits of God’s chastening. What does verse 7a reveal about the believer who endures *chastening*?
 - a. Link this with Hebrews 12:6 and 1 John 3:1a. How does this minister to you concerning the Lord’s chastening in your life?

2. In Hebrews 12:7b, the author asked rhetorically, *What son is there whom a father does not chasten?* Therefore, what is the sobering indication *if you are without chastening?* Hebrews 12:8
 - a. How does this underscore the essentiality of God’s *chastening*?

3. Continuing with the father-son analogy, the author noted in Hebrews 12:9–10 (NLT), *Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in His holiness.* Use this passage to compare and contrast:
 - a. The discipline of *our earthly fathers*

 - b. The discipline of our heavenly *Father*

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4. Use Psalm 119:67, 71 to express why the Lord's discipline is for *our profit*. Hebrews 12:10b
 - a. In what way have you misjudged God's chastening? See Psalm 119:68.

5. From your lesson today, share a reason why God's chastening should be appreciated and embraced.

FIFTH DAY: Read Hebrews 12:11–13

1. The author next pointed out the good purpose of the Lord's *chastening*. Use Hebrews 12:11 to note and comment on:
 - a. What chastening *seems* like in the *present* (verse 11a)
 - (1) Share a way you can relate to this experience.

 - b. What chastening, *nevertheless, yields* (verse 11b)
 - (1) Link this with James 3:17–18. What do you see?

- (2) What does the word *trained* suggest to you about chastening?
- (3) Share a way you have seen the *fruit* of this training in your life.
2. The author cited Isaiah 35:3 as the response believers are to have to chastening. Link this Scripture with Hebrews 12:12–13a and describe the reasonable response to God’s chastening.
- a. Use Isaiah 35:5–6 and Hebrews 12:13b to cite the benefits of responding this way to chastening.
- (1) Suggest a practical way you can respond to God’s chastening.
3. How would you describe the:
- a. Wrong response to God’s chastening
- b. Wrong attitude toward God’s chastening
4. From your lesson today, share a reason you desire to cooperate with God’s chastening.

