

Jesus, the supreme example  
Hebrews 12:1-3

Introduction

1. This section begins in Hebrews 10:19 and goes through 12:29,
  - a. This complete section is titled “A Call to Follow Jesus Faithfully and with Perseverance”
  - b. We are called to follow Christ faithfully and with perseverance
  - c. If we want the crown, then we must run the race which involves faith and perseverance
2. The writer leading up to Hebrews 12 gives us the following facts about our life in Christ
  - a. In 10:19-23, we are told about the believers full rights in Christ.
    - i. In v19, we find that we can with “...confidence (boldness)...enter the Most Holy Place by (because of) the blood of Jesus,
    - ii. In v20, we are told that the way for us into the most holy place is “...a new and living way” and it is “... opened for us through the curtain, that is, his (Jesus’) body,”

**Note:** Jesus’ sacrifice opened the curtain for us to enter the most holy place which is one of our rights, so we do not have to stand on the outside looking in for we can enter through Jesus.

  - iii. Verse 21 tells us that “...we have a great priest over the house of God,”
  - iv. Therefore, in v22 we are told to “...draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”
  - v. Then in v23 we are challenged to “...to hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”

**Note:** Jesus is the one who promised, and He is faithful.

- b. Then in verses 24-25, the writer tells us of our duty to each other.
  - i. In v24, we are to
    - 1) “...consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”
    - 2) And then in v25, we are to
      - a) “...not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but”

- b) "...encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
- c. In verses 26-31, he warns them of eternal punishment if they wilfully sin.
- i. v26--If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth,
    - 1) v26...There is "...no sacrifice for sins is left,"
    - 2) v27...There is "...only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."
  - ii. In v28 we are reminded of the consequence of rejecting the law of Moses, for they died without mercy on the on the testimony of two or three witnesses
  - iii. Then in v29, we are warned of the severity of the punishment if we reject Jesus.
    - 1) "How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?"
    - 2) For added emphasis, he quotes Deuteronomy 32:35-36 in Hebrews 10:30

**Note** Hebrews 10:30

i. KJV...

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

ii. AmpC...

For we know Him Who said, Vengeance is Mine [retribution and the meting out of full justice rest with Me]; I will repay [I will exact the compensation], says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge and determine and solve and settle the cause and the cases of His people.

3) Then the writer says in v31...

It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God

- d. In verses 32-37, the saints are encouraged to have patience, continued faith, and endurance.
- i. They are told to remember
    - 1) v32--their "...earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering."
    - 2) v33--How they had at times been "...publicly exposed to insult and persecution;"

- 3) v33--How they had "...at...times...stood side by side with those who were..." publicly exposed to insult and persecution.
- 4) v34--How they had "...sympathized with those in prison"
- 5) v34--And how they had "...joyfully accepted the confiscation of...(their) property, because...(they) knew that...(they) had better and lasting possessions."
- ii. v35--Therefore they should not "...throw away your confidence; (for) it will be richly rewarded."
- iii. v36--They are "...to persevere so that when...(they) have done the will of God,...(they) will receive what he has promised."
- iv. v37--Because "...in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay."
- e. Then in verses 38-39, he warns them again about backsliding and perdition.
  - i. God says in v38 that His "...righteous one will live by faith."
  - ii. v38--But, if a man "...shrinks back, (God) I will not be pleased with him."
  - iii. v39--The writer declares that "...we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but (we are)"...of those who believe and are saved."
- f. In chapter 10, the writer tells us of our rights and responsibilities in Christ as well as warning us to not turn away from God, which he follows with chapter 11 where he records those who were victorious, who were received by God, and then with increased force he moves in to Chapter 12 verse 1 with the theme, "They made it, and You can make it too."

**Note:** The knowledge of the Great Cloud of Witnesses that surround us should motivate us to serve God, to full commit our lives to Him while laying aside every weight and every besetting sin, and with renewed energy apply ourselves to Continue Running Our Race.

3. Now, we are going to look at Jesus as our Supreme Example of faith walk in 12:1-3

4. Note the Scripture

a. KJV...

1) Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3) For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against

himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

b. Nlt...

1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2) We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. 3) Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

c. AmpC...

1) Therefore then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who have borne testimony to the Truth], let us strip off *and* throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to *and* entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance *and* steady *and* active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us, 2) Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader *and* the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising *and* ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3) Just think of Him Who endured from sinners such grievous opposition *and* bitter hostility against Himself [reckon up and consider it all in comparison with your trials], so that you may not grow weary *or* exhausted, losing heart *and* relaxing *and* fainting in your minds.

I. Consider the witnesses

A. All those mentioned in chapter 11

1. All of them are considered people of faith
2. Some gained all and others lost all, but the ultimate gain was God's favor

B. How about witness in our history who were faithful through all difficulties

II. Lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us

A. Every weight

1. All inordinate affection and concern for the body, the present life, and world.

**Note:** Inordinate is something that is excessive, undue, unwarranted, extravagant, or unreasonable.

2. Inordinate care for the present life, or fondness for it, is a dead weight
3. Inordinate care pulls our soul down when we should be moving upward
4. Inordinate care pulls us back when we should be pressing forward
5. Inordinate care makes our Christians responsibilities more difficult, harder, and heavier than they should be.

B. The sin that doth so easily beset us

1. This refers to the sin that has the greatest advantage against us
2. The sin that has the greatest advantage could be because of our circumstances, our desires, and/or the company which we keep.
3. The besetting sin
  - a. Could be unbelief
  - b. Could be loving our old life
  - c. Could be habits
  - d. Could be external and internal hindrances.

**Note:** We are to lay aside every weight, hindrance and the sin that dogs our path which we call mistakes.

III. Run with patience the race that is set before us.

**Note:** The writer is referring to the Olympics where the course is laid out before the runners, so they run the race laid out before them, so you and I have to run our race with patience that which God has laid out for us.

A. Christians have a race to run

1. Our race is a race of service
2. Our race can involve difficulties, suffering, trials, and temptations
3. Our race does involve active and passive (submissive) obedience.

B. This race was set before them, and is set before us

1. Our race is marked out by the word of God

2. Our race is also marked by examples of faithful servants of God, which are the cloud of witnesses that compassed around us
3. Our race is set by proper limits and directions
  - a. We have a finish line to which we run
  - b. We have a prize for which we run
  - c. Our race is plainly marked, so we can run with confidence
  - d. There are rules involved in this race that everyone has to obey, including the one that opposes us
    - i. These rules are given to us in the Word of God
    - ii. Our enemy satan has to abide by these rules, but when we break the rule, we give satan an advantage into our lives
    - iii. When we abide by the rules, we have a right to call on the One that watches the race, Who intercedes for us, and Who by His Spirit guides and directs us in the race for His intervention when the enemy violates the rules set forth for the race.

C. This race must be run with patience and perseverance.

1. There will be need of patience as we encounter the difficulties and obstacles that lie in our way as we run our race
2. We must learn to persevere and resist all temptations that try to turn us aside
3. Faith and patience are the conquering graces which be cultivated and constantly exercised.

**Note** the following Scriptures on patience

i. James 1:2-8

2) My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3) Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4) But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. 5) If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6) But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7) For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8) A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

ii. Luke 21:19...

1) KJV...In your patience possess ye your souls.

2) NLT... By standing firm, you will win your souls.

3) AmpC...

By your steadfastness *and* patient endurance you shall win the true life of your souls.

iii. James 5:7

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

iv. James 5:10...

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

v. James 5:11

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

**Note:** Patience and faith carries us through the test, trial, affliction, persecution, temptation to the reward on the other side, if we remain steadfast, firm, in perseverance.

D. Look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith (v2)

**Note:** The greatest example that we as Christians have in serving the Lord, is our Lord, Jesus, Himself, so we look to Jesus Who is the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

1. Jesus is to us the Author and Finisher of our faith

**Note:** This means that Jesus is the Beginning, the Perfecter, and the Rewarder of our faith.

a. He is the Author of our faith

i. He is not just the Object of our faith, but the Author

ii. He is the great leader and example of our faith, for He trusted in God His Father

iii. He the Purchaser of the Spirit of faith

iv. He is the Publisher of the rule of faith

- v. He is the Competent, Capable, Professional cause of the grace of faith
- vi. Therefore, Jesus is called the Author of our faith
- b. He is the Finisher of our faith
  - i. He the Fulfiller and the Fulfilling of all scripture-promises and prophecies concerning our faith
  - ii. He is the Perfecter of the canon of scripture
  - iii. He is the Finisher of grace
  - iv. He is the Finisher of the work of faith with power in the souls of His people
  - v. He, Jesus is the Judge of our faith
  - vi. He, Jesus is the Rewarder of our faith
  - vii. He, Jesus the Determiner of who it is that has reached the mark or finish line
  - viii. From Jesus and in Jesus we have the prize that is ours for completing our race

**Note** Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- 2. Let us look at the trials that Jesus met while running His race and His course
  - a. He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself (v3)
    - i. He faithfully and patiently bore the opposition that they made against Him both in words and behavior
    - ii. The establishment constantly opposed Christ, seeking to destroy Him, but He patiently endured their evil intent, when He could have confounded and confused them, even using His power to oppose them, and by this set an example for us.
  - b. Jesus endured the cross
    - i. He took up His cross for us setting an example for us to be patient in all things
    - ii. He endured a painful and accursed death while being numbered with the transgressors so that He could see our sins nailed to His cross so we could be set free indeed.

- c. Jesus despised the same
  - a. He despised all the reproaches cast His way in life and death
  - b. Jesus knew His innocence and His excellence, so He despised the ignorance and malice of those who hated Him

**Note:** We should not have to prove ourselves to anyone, but just patiently endure and let God justify us in the eyes of others. God's approval will be seen by all, and bring to shame the accusers who accuse us.

- 3. Jesus was able to do what He did for the Joy that was set before Him
  - a. Jesus saw something that was beyond His sufferings which pleased Him
  - b. Jesus rejoiced in that through His sufferings, He satisfied the injured justice of God
  - c. Jesus rejoiced in that through His sufferings, He was able to give security to His honor and government for he defeated the government of satan by restoring the government of salvation to man with Jesus being the Head, King of this government
  - d. Jesus rejoiced in that through His sufferings He was able to make peace between God and man
  - e. Jesus rejoiced in that through His sufferings He sealed the covenant of grace becoming the Mediator of grace for you and I
  - f. Jesus rejoiced in that through His suffering He opened a way of salvation to the worse of sinners so that all could be saved
  - g. Jesus rejoiced in that He was the first-born among many brethren as all who believe on Him will have a new life with a new body when He returns for His own.

**Note:** This was the joy that was set before him.

- 4. Jesus' reward was that He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God
  - a. Christ, our Mediator, is exalted to a position of highest honor at the right hand of God
  - b. Christ our Savior is exalted to a position of the greatest power and influence at God's right hand
  - c. Nothing passes between heaven and earth but by Christ
    - i. Jesus does all that is done

ii. Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for His people

**Note** these Scriptures

i. Matthew 28:18

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

ii. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:27a...For he hath put all things under his feet.

iii. Ephesians 1:20-22

20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22) And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

iv. Philippians 2:9-11

9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

5. Let us observe our duty and responsibility to this Jesus.

a. We must look unto him

i. Set Christ continually before us as our example

ii. Look to Jesus as our great Encourager and Encouragement

iii. We look to Him for direction, assistance, and acceptance

iv. In all our sufferings, for we have not yet resisted unto death

b. We must

i. Consider our Lord

ii. Meditate much upon him

iii. Constantly compare our situation to His so that we will be encouraged through his faith and patience as He endured for you and I

iv. Remember that He suffered without cause for our cause, so we bear our cross in patience and commitment

v. Jesus is our example and pattern, so let us constantly look toward Him

6. Look to Jesus lest we be weary and faint in our minds

**Note:** Looking to Jesus gives us an advantage, for we are strengthened as we observe Him

a. We are all prone to become weary and faint as we face what life has to offer, especially when relief does not come as quick as we think it should

b. The best way to prevent weariness and faintness to destroy us is by looking to Jesus

i. Faith and meditating on Christ and His Word brings to you and I a fresh supply of strength, comfort, and courage

ii. Let us remember that the Word tells us that those who suffer with Him will also reign with Him, so let us hope in Christ, for His reward awaits us