



Life Group Notes: 'Grace For Your Race' Tuesday 3rd July 2018

READ HEBREWS 12:1-3

1 Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. (ESV)

INTRODUCTION:

The great 'faith' chapter in Hebrews 11 lists many men and women who loved and trusted God, despite challenging circumstances and sometimes impossible situations. They chose to have faith and obey God's instructions to them, no matter what the cost. A few of those named are Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah. These are just a handful of witnesses that testified to the truth of God's absolute faithfulness in their own situations.

The witnesses who have gone before our time here on earth all have their own stories and testimonies. They all ran their own race with willingness and persistence to please God and for his glory.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

- 1) Hebrews 12:1 says to *'lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us'*. Weights can hold us back and can slow down a person when they are trying to run a race and affect their long-term endurance. Discuss what you would consider some 'weights' are in our lives as Christians and how can we lay aside these things.
- 2) Verse 2 *'Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith'* helps us stay focused and is a vital key in our faith race. Perspective and vision, or what we focus on, is very important.
 - a) Jesus *'who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross'*. How can we use his example and eternal perspective to continually spur us on?
 - b) What joys do you think Jesus wants us to focus on during our race, especially when we're finding things tough?

(Also read Philippians 4:14)

- 3) God calls each one of us personally and gives us grace for our race. Sometimes we can compare ourselves to others around us and put pressure on ourselves to do what they are doing when actually we need to listen to and obey what God is asking us to do personally.

Read Hebrews 4:16 & 2 Corinthians 12:9

Discuss why grace is also an important factor in our race and why this helps fuel our long-term endurance. How can you allow God's grace to help you in your everyday life in practical ways?

- 4) Verse 3 urges us to '*Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*'

Verse 3 indicates that there will be times during our race that weariness and discouragement try to knock us out of the race. Everyone gets tired at times and weariness can creep in gradually or suddenly.

Galatians 6:9 says '*Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*'

Also read Isaiah 40:29-31 and discuss how these verses can encourage and strengthen us during our race and what we should do to maintain momentum to keep going.

CLOSING REFLECTION & PRAYER

Take time to pray for each other that you will receive God's grace for your race, for wisdom and strength and that your focus will continually be on Jesus.

Finally - continually cheer each other on by encouraging one another daily!
'But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today",' Hebrews 3:13.