

Sept 30, 2016



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

Lesson Leaders:

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Class Leaders:

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Our strongest allegiance is to Christ, who gives us unity with each other

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:
When we too fix our eyes on Jesus, the God who became Man, we can find increasing unity with our fellow believers through the bond of the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God
(Heb 12:2 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Oct 9, 2016)

Series: The Sovereignty of God
UNIT: Jesus: Alpha & Omega

NEXT WEEK

Making All Things New
(Rev 21:1-8)

The Author and Finisher of Our Faith Heb 12:1-13

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson describes how Jesus is **The Author and Finisher of Our Faith**. The **study's aim** is to recognize the role of discipline or chastening in our spiritual development. The **study's application** is to focus on the Lord to avoid the need for chastening but to benefit and accept the discipline the Lord gives us as part of our sanctification.
(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

Every believer has a battle against sin. But rarely do we as American Christians have to give our lives to maintain our faith in Christ. Western Christianity, in fact, has generally had it easy for a long time. The first-century Christians who first read this letter, however, were experiencing some serious suffering. They had been insulted, persecuted, and thrown in jail and had their property confiscated (10:32-34). Yet the writer of Hebrews encouraged them to think of all this simply as discipline from God, their Father. In reality, the persecution they were going through was reason to rejoice. Such fatherly "discipline" showed that they had been accepted as true children of God. The apostles also rejoiced that they had been counted worthy to suffer for Christ (Acts 5:41). Paul felt a mystical bond with Christ as he suffered; he viewed it as carrying on the suffering that Christ had begun (Col. 1:24). Not all those who seem to be God's children truly are His children, and enduring hardship/discipline is one decisive factor in revealing the reality of one's faith. Jesus' parable about the four soils (Matt. 13) and others remind us that not all who have a belief in Christ persevere in it. The reality thus becomes clear: those who quit are lost. Those who persevere, however, prove their faith, and the Father's discipline provides the opportunity. Remaining loyal despite hardship and discipline produces a fruitful crop of righteousness and peace. The outcome makes all the toil worthwhile. Since all this is true, it makes sense to cheer up no matter how painful the affliction. The reality is that the trouble believers experience lasts only a little while, but the marvelous joy and glory that will result from enduring it is eternal (2 Cor. 4:17). What more reason do we need to strengthen ourselves in the Lord and revitalize our efforts to carry out the will of God? God wants us to finish our race well; therefore, He chastens us. This chastening is a blend of discipline and nurture. When we experience it, we should not despise it or ignore it. Rather, we should embrace it because it is a sign that God loves us. He is treating us as His children. Only the most callous, dysfunctional father would ignore teaching and correcting his child. Earthly fathers have just a few years to teach and discipline their children before they reach maturity. They do the best they can with what they know. God, on the other hand, has perfect wisdom and knows what is best for us. God's discipline is always for our benefit, to make us holy. Discipline is like pruning. When a plant is pruned, it produces more fruit. The pruning of discipline in our lives will reap a harvest of peace and righteousness. As we run our race, we need to be strong in our faith so that we can help weak ones—who are following behind us—avoid stumbling.

(Adapted from "From Good to Great: A Better Priest and a Better Covenant" by Bob Deffinbaugh)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

The Author's Example (Heb 12:1-4)

Example that teaches laying aside the weight of sin (1)

Weight of riches (Luke 18:22-27)

Weight of anxieties of life (Luke 21:34)

Weight of wicked deeds (Rom 13:12)

Weight of contamination of the body and spirit (2 Cor 7:1)

Weight of evil desires (Eph 4:22-24)

Weight of the sinful nature (Col 3:5-6)

Weight of loving the world (1 John 2:15-17)

Example that leads to faith in Jesus (2-3)

Faith in Jesus' intercession (Rom 8:31-35)

Faith in Jesus' inward renewing (2 Cor 4:16-18)

Faith in Jesus' faithfulness (Phil 1:6)

Faith in being hidden in Jesus (Col 3:1-4)

Faith in Jesus' abilities (2 Tim 1:12)

Faith in Jesus' priestly powers (Heb 4:14)

Faith in Jesus and not ourselves (2 Cor 1:9)

Faith in Jesus' indwelling (1 John 4:14-16)

Example through bloodshed (4)

Willing to shed blood because of keeping the faith (2 Tim 4:6-7)

Willing to shed blood because of the name of Jesus (Acts 21:13)

Willing to shed blood because to die is gain in Jesus (Phil 1:21)

Willing to shed blood because of the honor of finishing the task Jesus has assigned (Acts 20:24)

The Author's Discipline (Heb 12:5-11)

Discipline that shows God's love (5-6)

Shows God's love because He only disciplines those He loves (Prov 3:12)

Shows God's love because God doesn't spare the rod of discipline (Prov 13:24)

Shows God's love through His compassion and mercy (James 5:11)

Shows God's love because all things work for the good (Rom 8:28)

Discipline that proves adoption into God's family (7-8)

Proves adoption because of being redeemed (Rom 8:22-23)

Proves adoption because Jesus presents His children as blameless and pure (Phil 2:14-15)

Proves adoption because God brings His children to glory (Heb 2:10)

Proves adoption because only God's children can share in the sufferings of Jesus (1 Peter 4:12-14)

Discipline because God knows what's best for us (9-10)

God knows what's best because He never withholds good things from those who endure (Ps 84:11)

God knows what's best because only God can meet all needs (Phil 4:19)

God knows what's best because God's grace is all sufficient (2 Cor 12:9)

God knows what's best because He knows how to give good gifts (Luke 11:11-13)

God knows what's best because His gifts are eternal (John 4:10)

God knows what's best because every good and perfect gift is from God (James 1:17)

Because discipline trains in righteousness (vs 11)

Trains in righteousness because that's what the kingdom of God is all about (Rom 14:17)

Trains in righteousness because God's discipline opens the gates to righteousness (Ps 118:18-19)

Trains in righteousness because it exercises godliness (1 Tim 4:8)

Trains in righteousness because righteousness leads to holiness (Rom 6:19)

The Author's Expectations (Heb 12:12-13)

Expectation of endurance (12)

Enduring by standing firm (Matt 24:13)

Enduring by persistence in doing good (Rom 2:7)

Enduring in doing the will of God (Heb 10:36)

Enduring by persevering in the testing of our faith (James 1:2-4)

Enduring by patiently waiting on God (James 5:8)

Enduring by overcoming the world (Rev 3:10-13)

Expectation of godly change (13)

Expectation of godliness because of the new self is created to be like God (Eph 4:21-24)

Expectation of godliness because Jesus reconciled us (Col 1:21-22)

Expectation of godliness because God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Expectation of godliness because it achieves eternal glory (2 Cor 4:17)