

19 – A REALISTIC APPROACH (HEBREWS 12:1-11)

I. The Admonition (Hebrews 12:1-2)

A. The Cloud of Witnesses (12:1a)

- The writer tells his readers that they are surrounded by this cloud of witnesses.
- The cloud of witnesses refers to the testimonies of faith in chapter 11.

B. The Race (Hebrews 12:1b-2)

1. Lay Aside Sin (Hebrews 12:1b)

- The writer urges his readers to lay aside any weight or sin that hinders our lives.

2. Run the Race (Hebrews 12:1c)

- The reader is called to run with perseverance the race that is before us.

3. Our Focus (Hebrews 12:2)

a. Look to Jesus (Hebrews 12:2a)

- As we run, we are to look at Jesus.

b. His Nature and Actions (Hebrews 12:2b)

- Jesus is the one who pioneered our faith and perfected the way of faith.
- He endured the shame of the cross as he kept his eye on the throne he would be given.

II. A Plea for Realism (Hebrews 12:3-11)

A. Consider Jesus (Hebrews 12:3)

- The reader is called to think about the suffering Jesus endured.
- This will help the reader to endure in the midst of his suffering.

B. Their Struggle (Hebrews 12:4)

- The struggle here does not necessarily refer to a personal struggle with sin.
- "Striving against sin" appears to refer to sinful people as in verse 3.
- The writer states that his readers have not endured suffering to the point of death.

Understanding Our Faith: The Letter to the Hebrews

C. The Chastening of God's People (Hebrews 12:5-11)

1. They Forgot (Hebrews 12:5a)

- The writer points out that they have forgotten the Biblical exhortation concerning suffering.

2. The Exhortation (Hebrews 12:5b-6)

- The writer quotes Proverbs 3:11-12, where the reader is called to not react to chastening.
- The passage tells the reader that if they are children of God, they will be chastened.

3. What Chastening Reveals (Hebrews 12:7-8)

- Through suffering, God deals with his children.
- All of God's people suffer; therefore, no suffering reveals that you are not a child of God.

4. The Response to Chastening (Hebrews 12:9)

- Chastening by our parents resulted in respect for our parents.
- The writer asks if our chastening should not result in submission to God.

5. The Purpose of Chastening (Hebrews 12:10)

- Our parents disciplined us for a brief period as they knew best.
- God disciplines us for our benefit so that we may be holy.

6. The Nature of Chastening (Hebrews 12:11)

- All chastening is painful for the moment.
- However, it produces the fruit of righteousness in those who are instructed by it.

Scripture James 1:2-4 (ESV)

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.