

Read: Hebrews 12:1-13

It's Worth It!

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Notice that Hebrews chapter 12 began with the word, “therefore.” It’s reminding us to look back at what was said in chapter 11. If you have a few extra moments right now, go back and check out Hebrews 11. This chapter is sometimes referred to as the “Heroes of Faith” chapter—kind of like the Hall of Fame of the Bible. The “great cloud of witnesses” at the beginning of today’s reading are these famous followers of Jesus who lived before us. God wants us to look to them and their lives as examples for us.

For example, what did Noah have to endure? Ridicule for building a huge ark when there was no apparent reason to do so. What hardship did Abraham have? He traveled to a location that only God knew and waited many years for a child. Moses risked his life as he approached Pharaoh to let God’s people go. He had to listen to the many complaints of the Israelites as they traveled through the desert. Noah, Abraham, and Moses are heroes of faith who carried crosses, faced temptations, endured hardships, and committed sins. Yet God helped them to keep their eyes on him as they carried out God’s plans for them.

What is your hardship? What temptations do you face? Sometimes you might question why God allows trouble in your life, but God is all-knowing. You can trust what God is doing, even in troubles. Often he uses hard times to call sinners back to himself. Maybe you haven’t yet learned a lesson that he wants you to know. God wants you to follow him, getting rid of anything that would prevent you from staying on the right path. He loves you and disciplines you, just as a parent would discipline you if you were doing something wrong. Proper discipline is done out of love to lead you in the right direction.

God used these Bible heroes to carry out his plan, and he uses you too! Is your suffering worth it? Yes! It directs you to your Savior and makes you eager for the joys of heaven. When you’re having a tough time, remember that Jesus suffered too. He looked past the suffering with joy because he knew it was all for you. YOU are worth that much to him!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name two heroes in the Bible and why they are your favorites.
- Who is a hero of faith in your life today?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- *True or false:* Troubles in life are a direct result of bad decisions we make.
- Describe a recent hardship in your life. How did God use it for your good?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Compare yourself to Noah, Abraham, Joseph, or Moses. How are you the same as them? How are you different?
- How will you use these examples to help you persevere when hardship enters your life?

Closing Prayer:

O Lord, give us patience to endure hardship. Help us stand up under it and continually fix our eyes on you until we reach our heavenly goal. Amen.