



Preface

In the previous weeks...

- Week 1-8 (a): Jesus Christ is God's ultimate revelation to the world, the promised Son of God and great High Priest, who is superior over all things. He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice once and for all to purify us, reconcile us with God, secure our salvation, and establish the new covenant. We can come to God directly through Jesus Christ.
- Week 1-8 (b): We are warned to pay attention to God's revelation, firmly place our hope in Jesus, obey His Word, and grow in spiritual maturity. We are also warned to persevere and guard against losing faith, especially amid persecution.
- Week 9: Faith is active in obedience. We are to fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith; and have our minds set on the eternal to persevere in faith.

This week...

- Enduring hardships is one way that God disciplines us to make us holy and understand His holiness. The right understanding of God's holiness will lead us to come to Him in worship with reverent fear and joy. All the while holding on to God's promises that have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Observation

1. What should be the attitude (Heb. 12:1) and inspiration (Heb. 12:2-3) for running the race with perseverance?
2. What are the purposes and outcomes of God's discipline? (Heb. 12:10-11)
3. Based on Heb. 12:12-17, what are the instructions for believers to live out?

*Leaders' note: v.13 is a reference to Proverbs 4:26 "Give careful thought to the **paths for your feet** and be steadfast in all your ways."*

4. Compare and contrast the two mountains in Heb. 12:18-21 and Heb. 12:22-24.
5. What warning does the author give in Heb. 12:25 and what posture is the author inviting his audience into (Heb. 12:28), in light of the new covenant?

Interpretation

1. How did Jesus' perfect endurance (Heb. 12:1-3) encourage the audience to persevere in faith and endure hardships?

2. What were the commonalities of all instructions in this passage?

Leaders' note: This is an open-ended question. The general idea is that all instructions require discipline, effort, intentionality, and trained yielding within a community.

3. How was the original audience similar to the example of Esau? (Heb. 12:16-17)

4. Compare and contrast the two perceptions of God based on the two "mounts" in Heb. 12:18-21 and Heb. 12:22-24.

5. How would Heb. 12:18-28 and the closing statement of "God is a consuming fire" instruct the audience on the proper manner of worship?

Application

1. How has God's discipline produced righteousness in your life?

2. How have you been making every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy?

3. How has being in a community helped you to pursue holiness?

4. Examining your attitude towards worship, do you come with an attitude of reverence? Why or why not?

Optional Prayer Exercise: Praying with Physical Postures

The meaning of worship is to honor and show reverence for God. Sometimes we forget that we can worship through physical postures. In scripture, there are many examples of prayers accompanied by different physical postures. Abraham fell upon his face before God, Moses prayed with outstretched arms, and Jesus prayed while looking up to Heaven. This week, try praying with various postures and displaying the worth of Christ with our bodies.

Several posture examples and the meaning:

1. Lying prostrate before God to acknowledge our total unworthiness, recognize our need for God's mercy, show a proper response to a serious crisis, and express worship and reverence.
2. Kneeling before God to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, demonstrate an earnest appeal and humility.
3. Sitting before God to remind us that all believers are seated with Christ in Heaven, display a hearing heart and a teachable spirit, and symbolize intimate fellowship.
4. Standing before God to reaffirm one's commitment to God and His ways, and show a readiness to serve.
5. Bowing the head to show reverence and humility, looking up to declare that our help comes from God.
6. Lifting up the arms or hands as a symbol of seeking God's mercy and blessing, and to reflect attitudes of worship and appeal for God's sovereign power.