

Lesson 9

Look to Jesus

Bible Lesson: Hebrews 12:1-3

Summary: God delivers us from sin by working repentance in our heart. Only the repentant will look to Jesus for deliverance from evil.

Memory Verse: Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. *Hebrews 12:1-2a*

Enrichment Memory Verse: Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 3:13b-14*

Catechism Student Memory Work: *What does this mean?* We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our heavenly Father would deliver us from all manner of evil, whether it affect body or soul, property or reputation, ...

Catechism TM Reference: #322, & 213

From what evil do we pray God to deliver us in this petition?

We pray God to deliver us from all sin that still clings to us, and from all the destructive effects of sin upon soul and body, property and honor.

#213 Can only a repentant sinner have this faith in Christ?

Yes; the faith which lays hold of Christ and His righteousness, can be wrought in that heart only which bitterly feels the pain and misery of living in sin. Matt. 9:12. They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach

Help students understand that:

- ◆ God would help us to keep our eyes on Jesus.
- ◆ We should pray that God would deliver us from the sin which so easily entangles us.

Prepare Materials

- ◆ Bible, pencils, crayons or colored pencils.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Introduction

Even though it was many years ago now, I can still picture in my mind my then 16-month-old son's first experience with a North Dakota winter. This was a busybody of a toddler. From the time he began to crawl was in constant motion. That was until the day he got all bundled up with snowsuit, cap, mittens, and boots. Out in the snow he stood motionless. Not because he was scared of the snow. He was motionless because he was so bundled up that he couldn't possibly move without falling down. Once I took him back inside and helped him take his snowsuit off, he was back to being a bundle of toddler energy once more.

Just as my son's ability to move because he was "encumbered" with a snowsuit, the writer of the book of Hebrews reminds us that there are things that we can be encumbered with that makes our spiritual life very difficult. And just as my toddler needed my help to become "unencumbered" so that he could move freely again, so too, we need the Lord to deliver us from the sin that encumbers us. In this study of Hebrews 12:1 and 2 we will be looking at laying aside things that hinder our Christian walk of faith, and what it is that we need to focus on as Christians.

B. Prayer Preparation

1. Ask the Lord to remove from you the things that can "encumber" you and hinder your walk of faith.
2. Ask the Lord to deliver you from the sin which so easily entangles you.
3. Ask the Lord to help you show your students that their deliverance from sin comes from the Lord.

C. Bible Study

Often when we hear the words of Hebrews 12:1 and 2, "Therefore since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us," we are often encouraged to picture in our mind the men and women of faith chronicled in Hebrews 11 as a stadium filled with fans cheering us on to spiritual victory. However, when we consider the "cloud of witnesses" – the Old Testament men and women of faith, I would like you to consider them in the context of a group of successful men and women of faith who have left an example for us to follow after. Much like a young athlete looks at the pictures and trophies in a school trophy case, sees the record of past accomplishments, and then says, "I want to strive for the same kind of success that those who have been here before me experienced."

Just as there are certain "keys" to athletic success, there are "keys" to keep in mind if we desire to be "successful" in living the Christian life. The writer of Hebrews begins with the exhortation in Hebrews 12:1 to "Lay aside" two things: 1) every encumbrance, and 2) sin.

Since the writer of Hebrews makes a distinction between encumbrances and sin we will look at what is different about the two terms. An "encumbrance" is anything that hinders a person's progress. There may be things that might not in and of themselves be "sinful," but none-the-less hinder our walk of faith. Athletics, leisure activities, and work are all examples of things that are not "sinful," and yet may very well hinder our faith life if they take priority for our time and keep us from growing in our relationship with Jesus. There are other "things" that come into our lives that we know are sinful – wrong in the sight of God. There are activities that we get caught up in that cause us to "fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)."

Satan loves nothing more than to get Christians sidetracked, whether it be through the use of encumbrances or sin. We need to ask the Lord to help us recognize the encumbrances and sins. We need to ask Him to help us lay aside the encumbrances, and we need to ask Him to forgive us for getting entangled in sin, and to cleanse us from the unrighteousness of our sins. We also need to ask

the Lord to guard our hearts and minds so that we can recognize the encumbrances and sins before we get caught up in them. He also need to ask the Lord for the strength to “run with endurance” the “race” that He has set before us.

In verse 2 we are given a vital “key” to help us run with endurance the race that God has called us to run. We read, “Fixing our eyes on Jesus.” The phrase, fixing our eyes, means to give our full attention to Jesus. To “fix our eyes on Jesus” requires more than just a “casual” approach to God and His word. It requires that we “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). We need to focus every aspect of our lives on Jesus, then we will not be so easily encumbered, or entangled in sin.

As verse 2 continues, we are given the reason for fixing our eyes on Jesus. He is “The author and perfecter of faith.” If we want to know all about living a life of faith, we need to go to the author of faith. That is Jesus. He is the author. He is the perfecter. Jesus demonstrated that He is the author and perfecter of faith when He went to the Cross of Calvary, endured its shame, and rose victorious over sin, death, and the devil. As a testimony to His victory He now sits at the right hand of the throne of God ready to give victory over sin, death, and the devil to those who come to Him by faith.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome with Love

Displaying books or magazines with professional athletes would be ideal for today as we focus on running the race. Many church libraries will house biographies both in video or audio tapes as well as printed of Christian athletes. Perhaps you have some in your church congregation that would come in to share with your students. You could provide time for your students to cut out pictures of

great athletes and glue them to a picture with the memory verse printed on it. Or provide some sound effects - the roar of the crowd, national anthem, etc., that you would typically hear at a game. Maybe you could even wear a workout type outfit for class today. Carry a clipboard and wear a whistle or referee colors of black and white. Do some warm ups to welcome your class today - simple stretches and calisthenics could be done even in a small space.

TEACHING TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

Sing the Message

Use the theme hymn here: “*Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us*,” *Ambassador Hymnal*, #450. “*Runner*” by Twila Paris or “*Destined to Win*” by Farrel and Farrel. “*Find Us Faithful*” by Steve Green.

Pray the Message

Take time for all students who wish to pray out loud to do so and then you close. Or say, Dear Heavenly Father, Forgive us our sins today. Cleanse us from all unfaithfulness. Keep us from sin. Keep us from entangling our hearts. Help us to see the sins that have become so common to us that we do not even know they are there. Help us keep our eyes on Jesus and on the finish line of heaven. Bless our class time today as we look into your Word. Guide our thoughts and words today. We pray in Jesus Name. Amen

Learn the New Words

witnesses

encumbrance

entangles

author

perfecter

manner
reputation

common

distracted

racecourse

Introduce the Message

The Bible tells us that Christians are like runners. Our earthly life is the racecourse, and the finish line is heaven. We are to keep our eyes on the finish line. We are to keep looking towards Jesus and to heaven. But sometimes we may get distracted from the race. We may take our eyes off Jesus and allow sin to slow us down in the race. We may become so entangled in that sin that we stumble and fall. You could take time for a relay race today. Each team has to put on flippers, a heavy coat/wetsuit or snowsuit etc. Ask how did that feel - to run with all that cumbersome stuff on? Our lesson today talks about our sin being an entanglement for us in our race.

Read/Tell the Message

Now read the lesson from your student books. Teacher read to them or they read a paragraph or let them break into pairs to read together.

Reinforce the Message

ASK:

- ◆ What kinds of sin are hard for you to stay away from? (personal response)
- ◆ What does Hebrews 12:1-3 give us a picture of? (a race)
- ◆ To what is the Christian compared? (a runner)
- ◆ To what is the racecourse compared? (our earthly life)
- ◆ To what is the finish line compared? (heaven)
- ◆ Rather than being entangled and slowed in our race what is God's desire for us? (to run - to be free from sin - delivered)
- ◆ What is our best tool for this? (prayer)

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Memorize the Bible Verse

Give your students a blank piece of paper and have them illustrate a race - track, spectators etc. On the bottom have them print the memory verse. Hebrews 12:1-2a
In an Olympic year you may find photos readily available. A runner on your clipart

could be provided for your students if they are uncomfortable drawing their own. Or use the memory verse activity in your material.

Do the Activities Together

CLOSING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Pray Together

Close with praying the memory verse today. "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes in Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith." Or pray in a popcorn type prayer. This

is a time where you give your students time to pop in with short phrases or sentences. "Thank you for my family" "Thank you for caring for me" "Heal my friend Eric who is sick with the flu" etc. Then you close after you have given several students time to pray. Don't be afraid of silence - this is OK. It gives your class time to contemplate. You close or close with the Lord's Prayer together.

Prepare for Next Week

Gather and Prepare Materials

- ◆ Bibles, pencils, colored pencils,

Prepare Lesson 10

Begin your study and preparation with prayer.

Pray for each student daily by name.

Read the Bible text Daniel 3:8-30,
I Peter 1:3-9

Memorize the Bible verse:

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” *John 14:3*

Enrichment Memory Verse:

“‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not

for calamity to give you a future and a hope.’”
Jeremiah 29:11

Memorize the Catechism:

What does this mean? ...and at last, when the hour of death shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

Read the Teacher Manual.

Highlight, underline, and write in your own notes to help you teach Lesson 10.

Memory Verse

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. *Hebrews 12:1-2a*

Enrichment Memory Verse: *Philippians 3:13b-14*

What phrase best describes these KEY WORDS from Hebrews 12:1-2? Write the letter in the blank.

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|---|--|
| <u>e</u> 1. lay aside every encumbrance | a. even when we are tired, keep on running |
| <u>d</u> 2. sin which entangles us | b. Jesus |
| <u>a</u> 3. run with endurance | c. life on this earth |
| <u>c</u> 4. the race set before us | d. saying and doing bad things |
| <u>b</u> 5. author and perfecter of faith | e. things that slow us down |

Think about the lesson we read, and fill in the correct answers.

- Life can be compared to running a race.
- When we are running, we need to keep our eyes focused on Jesus.
- At the end of the race, the finish line or prize is heaven.

To avoid sin, what does the Bible say we should do about evil?

- Psalm 34:14 Turn from evil, and do good.
- Psalm 97:10 hate evil, you who love the Lord.
- Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.
- Proverbs 14:16 A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil.
- II Timothy 2:22 Flee from youthful lusts.



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Explain how you can run the Christian race with endurance.

LEARN GOD'S WORD _____

REPENT _____

PRAY _____

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our heavenly Father would deliver us from all manner of evil, whether it affect body or soul, property or reputation, . . .

DOWN	ACROSS
entangles	Jesus
faith	encumbrance
author	witnesses
sin	race
run	endurance
eyes	
perfecter	

Fill in the missing letters of the word puzzle. Then use the words to complete the memory verse below.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.

Hebrews 12:1-2a