



Looking Forward to the Future

Series: *Faith* Hebrews 12:1-3

May 6, 2018

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1. Faith is not just **theoretical**
2. Faith is more than just a **feeling**

Three directives...

1. Let us throw off everything that **hinders** and the sin that so easily entangles
Hebrews 12:1; 1 John 2:16
2. Let us run with **perseverance** this race marked out for us
Hebrews 12:1-2
3. Let us **fix** our eyes on Jesus
Hebrews 12:2; 2 Corinthians 8:9

Growth Group Questions

All references from New International Version (NIV)

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Have you ever taken the 'trust fall'? If so, what is the point of it? Should we try it tonight?
2. Brian listed a bunch of 'stories of faith'. Do you have a story of your faith? If so, would you share it with your group?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. There are many Christians today who can tell you what faith is. They would probably use Hebrews 11:1 as their definition, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance of what we do not see." But just because you can quote that definition, does that mean you have faith? Read these verses...

Galatians 5:6

⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

James 2:17-20

¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. ²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?

James 2:26

²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Brian said, "Faith is more than just a feeling." Do you agree? If so, why?

Can you think of a time in your life where you were asked to do something for the Lord, but you didn't really 'feel' like it? How did you feel afterward?

2. Brian mentioned two ways we can have a 'faith story'. One is when things happen to us and we have to persevere and not give up. The other is when we step-out in faith to do something uncomfortable or even a little dangerous. What do these verses say about perseverance?

Romans 5:3-4

³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Ephesians 6:18

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

James 1:12

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

¹³ And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.

Are you the type of person who likes to go through life 'flying by the seat of your pants', or do you like to have everything planned out?

In what specific ways could our growth group help each other persevere?

3. In Hebrews 12:1, the Greek word for 'race' is 'agon' from where we get our English word, 'agony'. So the writer of Hebrews is not just saying 'race', he's saying what kind of 'race' it is. It will be demanding. It will be hard-fought. What do these verses tell us about the challenging 'race of faith' we're running?

Galatians 2:2

² I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain.

Philippians 3:14

¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 9:24

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

2 Timothy 4:7

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Some preachers will say, “Hey, if you invite Jesus Christ into your heart and ask Him to forgive you for your sins, then your life will be easy.” Why is this dangerous teaching?

What makes the image of ‘running’ and ‘finishing a race’ a good way to picture what it means to follow Jesus Christ by faith?

4. Hebrews 12:1 says, “...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.” For those of us ‘running the race of faith’, we have to get sin out of our lives, or it holds us back. It weakens our faith. What do these verses say about that?

Matthew 13:22

²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Romans 13:14

¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Ephesians 2:3

³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

1 Peter 2:11

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

How do you know if you’re carrying any ‘extra weight’ when you’re trying to run this ‘race of faith’?

What is repentance?

TAKING IT HOME

Based on this week’s sermon and homework, what is the most important thing for you to remember and why?