



# UPSTATE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

**WEEK 13- 12:1-11- NOVEMBER 4-10**

## LEADER NOTES

Leaders, this study focuses on living the Christian life like running a marathon. The athletic terms used in the passage indicate the necessity for endurance and the help to finish. Therefore, the meat of the discussion centers around three actions that help believers run the race. Those actions are: lay aside every weight (vs. 1), look to Jesus (vs. 2), and receive God's discipline (vs. 3-11).

Leaders, please continue to be diligent in taking group attendance and completing the Gospel Connection's and Conversations form. You can find the form [HERE](#).

You can find other sermons from our Teaching Pastor's [HERE](#).

# COMMUNITY

*OPEN THE GROUP BY CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER AND ALLOWING A MOMENT FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE A PLACE TO BELONG.*

**START THE GROUP BY TAKING PRAYER REQUESTS, FINDING OUT ABOUT PEOPLE'S WEEK, AND PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.**

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

*HAVE YOU EVER RUN IN A RACE? HOW DID YOU DO? WHAT WERE THE KEYS TO FINISHING WELL IN YOUR RACE? IF YOU COULD CHOOSE, WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER, AND WHY: LIGHTNING-BOLT SPRINTER'S SPEED OR A MARATHON CHAMPION'S ENDURANCE?*

# SCRIPTURE

**TAKE THIS TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER. REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT JUST TO CONVEY INFORMATION, BUT TO HELP PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP LEARN TO READ THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES.**

## THE POINT

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE REQUIRES THAT WE KEEP RUNNING TO THE END.**

### Hebrews 12:1-11

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
nor be weary when reproved by him.

6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,  
and chastises every son whom he receives.”

7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Heb 12:1-11.

# STUDY NOTES

## WEEK 13 NOTES : Hebrews 12:1-11

Up to this point, the writer of Hebrews has argued Jesus is better and a life of faith in Jesus is better. But in chapter 12, the writer turns the conversation from a theological argument to practical application. This is the point where he gets personal and turns the focus from examples of faith to the reader's life. He says, since we have all these examples of living by faith (ch. 11), we should take those examples and do the same. He is convinced the reader can also live the same victorious life. When we look at the hall of faith and how God worked in the lives of those mentioned, we can be encouraged to see the possibilities of God working in our lives for His glory.

In verse 1, the writer compares living the Christian life to running a race. The reality, though, is this race isn't a short sprint, rather it's a marathon full of distractions, celebrations, struggles, and victories. Therefore, there are three practical actions we must consider in order to run this race.

### **Lay aside every weight and sin. (vs. 1)**

Obviously, the first question is, where do we start? Where do we begin to live the Christian life? The starting point is to lay aside every weight and sin that holds us back. In other words, we cannot run until we get rid of the weight. Another term the Bible uses is repentance. We must daily allow the Spirit to convict us of anything that hinders our walk. We must also repent of that sin and find forgiveness in Christ. To clarify, we don't get rid of sin through our own power. There is another action that must take place in conjunction with repentance.

### **Look to Jesus (vs. 2)**

According to the Bible, we lay aside the weight and run the race while looking to Jesus (vs. 2). Jesus endured suffering and is alive victorious in order that we might look to Him for forgiveness, salvation, and sanctification. Jesus is the founder and perfecter of our faith. The King James Version says, "the author and finisher of our faith." This means Jesus is Lord of our faith at the starting line, in the race, and at the finish line. Therefore, if we keep our eyes on Jesus, the distractions of the world are less likely to entice us. If we keep our eyes on Jesus, we can daily run the race in holiness and grace, making progress along the way.

### **Receive God's Discipline (vs. 3-11)**

Another action associated with laying aside every weight and running the race is being disciplined by God. Few people, if any, are excited about God's discipline. It hurts. His judgment and discipline breaks us, but in our brokenness we can gain a sober look at our sin. We need that

brokenness to surrender to God, so He can continue to work in us. That is why discipline is a form of grace. God is helping us when we cannot help ourselves by taking away our gods and replacing them with Himself. "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (vs. 11)

For more resources, click [HERE](#).

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Why is the Christian life a marathon and not a sprint?*
- *How have you been encouraged by the examples of faith set by Christians in years past?*
- *Is there anything in your life that might not necessarily be sin but is still slowing you down? What is it?*
- *What comes to your mind when you hear the word discipline? Do you see discipline as positive or negative? Why?*
- *Read Proverbs 3:11-12. Why is discipline an example of God's love?*
- *Who in your life is an example of faith and how does their faith encourage you in your walk with Christ?*
- *How can our group pray for you as you run the race?*

# COMMISSION

**AS YOU WRAP UP YOUR GROUP, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WE GO INTO THE WORLD ON MISSION FOR JESUS. USE THIS TIME TO FOCUS EVERYONE TO LIVE ON MISSION AS YOU LEAVE.**

***AS YOU WRAP UP YOUR GROUP, SHARE AND DISCUSS ANY GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS THAT YOU HAVE HAD IN THE LAST WEEK.***

Please continue to complete the Gospel Connection's and Conversations form. You can find the form [HERE](#).