

Gleanings of Grace

Hebrews 12

Lesson 19

The authorship of Hebrews is not known to us. This letter begins, not with an introduction, but with a proclamation. It begins with the word *God*. It proclaims that although, *God in time past spoke by the prophets, He in these last days has spoken to us by His Son*. The Jewish believers who received this letter were getting weary and wanted to give up; but the writer encouraged them to keep moving forward by reminding them of the superiority of Jesus in all things. Jesus is better. Simple statement. Simple truth. May all you do be surrounded by it.

OBSERVATION: Read Hebrews 12

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?

2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns or titles that refer to *Jesus* and *God*, the Father.

Key Words: *Jesus*, *God*, *chasten/s/ed/ing*, and *shook/shake/en*

3. The contrasting words *but*, *yet* and *nevertheless* are used ten times in Hebrews 12 (not including yet in verse 4). Mark the words. Choose one instance of its use and record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion *therefore* is used three times in Hebrews 12. Mark the word. Choose one instance of its use and record what it is based upon.

Background:

1. Throughout Hebrews, the author, in an effort to counter those who would return to the old covenant of the law, offers examples of the many ways that Jesus is *better* or offers *more* than anyone or anything else. Using the verses below, record what is revealed about Jesus or what He has done.

Hebrews 1:4

Hebrews 3:3

Hebrews 7:19

Hebrews 7:22

Hebrews 8:6

Hebrews 9:11

Hebrews 9:14

- a. In what ways have you discovered Jesus, and His sacrifice on the cross for your sins, to be *better* than being required to follow the law as a way to connect with God?
- b. Besides heaven, what do we have available to us, as Christians, that those under the law of Moses did not have?

Read Hebrews 12:1-4 - Looking Unto Jesus

1. Hebrews 12 begins with the word *therefore* and refers to the *great cloud of witnesses* mentioned in Hebrews 11:17-39. List some of those men and women of faith who are among the *witnesses*.
 - a. What are we told about them according to verses 33-39?
 - b. If these *witnesses* could speak to us now, what do you think they would say to us?

2. What instructions are we given in Hebrews 12:1?
 - a. What are some *weights* that can hinder our running?
 - 1.) Notice the phrase, *the race that is set before us*. What *race* do you think God has *set before* you?
3. The author exhorts us to *look unto Jesus*. What did he write about Jesus in verse 2?
 - a. Consider Jude 1:24. Why do you think this will bring Jesus *joy*?
 - b. Meditate on the phrase *despising the shame*. What are your thoughts when you consider that Jesus *despised* what was happening to Him, yet did it for the *joy that was set before Him*?
4. *Consider* the strong words of Hebrews 12:4. Jesus didn't quit. How do these words convict you when you find yourself thinking about walking away from the *race that is set before you*?

Read Hebrews 12:5-11 – Partakers of His Holiness

1. This section of Hebrews teaches us the proper perspective that a child of God should have regarding God's *chastening*. Define the word *chastening*.
 - a. List some antonyms for the word *chastening*.
 - b. In defining the word *chastening* and looking at words that are opposite, we might conclude that we would much rather experience the opposite of *chastening*. And thankfully, we who belong to Jesus do experience those things. Scan Hebrews 12:5-11 and answer the following questions:

What is to be our response to being *chastened*?

Who does God *chasten*?

Why does God *chasten*?

2. What do the following verses add to your understanding about God's *chastening*?

Job 5:17,18

Psalms 119:75

Proverbs 3:11,12

3. What would you be like if God had not *chastened* you?

Read Hebrews 12:12-17 - Looking Carefully

1. Often the result of chastening is *hands that hang down and feeble knees*. How would you describe your physical reaction to *chastening*?

a. Instead, what are we called to do? verses 12,13

1.) Using your own words, describe what we are being called to do?

2. Rather than allow *chastening* to dishearten us, Hebrews 12:14 encourages us to get moving; to *pursue*. What two things are we to *pursue*.

a. This addressed both our relationship with others and with the Lord. Discouragement can cause us to be self-focused. In what way have you personally discovered this to be true?

b. What are the consequences of not *pursuing holiness*?

1.) How does *pursuing holiness* help you to *see God*?

3. Hebrews 12:15,16 contain a warning, to *look carefully lest*:

a. Explain how *bitterness* towards others or God *troubles* us.

- b. What is it like to *fall short of* or miss out on *the grace of God*?
4. What are we told about Esau in Hebrews 12:16,17?
- a. Genesis 25:27-34 tells the story of Esau *selling his birthright* to his brother, Jacob. What happened?
 - b. Esau regretted his decision and was not beyond forgiveness. But because of his choice, he could never get back his *birthright*; he could not go back and redo what had been done. His choice also resulted in a *bitterness* towards his brother. What can we learn from this story?

Read Hebrews 12:18-24 – Registered in Heaven

1. This section of Hebrews 12 invites us to be bold in our relationship with the LORD. It recounts a time in Israel's history when they were afraid of God's presence. Read Exodus 19:12-13 and 20:18-21. Summarize their fear of the LORD's presence.
2. Hebrews 12:18-21 describes that event in contrast to the relationship we now have with the Lord. Using verses 22,24, list what we have now.
 - a. Hebrews 12:24 reminds us of *Abel*, the son of Adam and Eve, who made the first animal sacrifice. Read Hebrews 9:14,15 and express your thanksgiving for what Jesus, through His sacrifice, means to you.

Read Hebrews 12:25-29 – Do Not Refuse Him Who Speaks

1. Hebrews 12:25 begins with the words, *See that you do not refuse Him who speaks*. In what ways can we *refuse* the words of the Lord?

2. The last words of this chapter are intended to provoke the believer to walk in the ways God has ordained for us, reminding us that there are consequences to our choices. God *shakes the earth*. Yet verse 28 reassures us that *the kingdom of God cannot be shaken*. What are some things that we can know will never be changed?
 - a. How does this security help you to *have grace* (verse 28) or enjoy *grace*?
 - b. Some would claim that *grace* is an excuse to disobey. What does Hebrews 12:28 tell us is the intended result of *grace*?
 - 1.) How have you personally experienced this effect of *grace*?
3. The chapter closes with the words, *our God is a consuming fire*. That fact once provoked fear in God's people. We are still to respectfully fear the LORD. Consider the words of Hebrews 10:31. When you choose His ways, what have you discovered about *falling into His hands*?

REVIEW: Read Hebrews 12

1. Hebrews 12:1 calls us to consider the message of those who have gone before us. Summarize what you have gleaned from your study of Hebrews 12 as you consider what their message would have been to you personally.

*Therefore I will look to the LORD;
I will wait for the God of my salvation;
- Micah 7:7*

Observation Worksheet

Hebrews 12

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. ¹² Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. ¹⁴ Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶ lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears. ¹⁸ For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. ²⁰ (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." ²¹ And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.") ²² But you

have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.²⁵ See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,²⁶ whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."²⁷ Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.