

HE IS BETTER.

A Series in the Book of Hebrews



Hebrews

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

The book of Hebrews is often summed up in one simple phrase: Jesus is better. Yet the book of Hebrews is itself is far from a simple book. The audience of this letter appears to be primarily Jewish Christians who grew up in Judaism but have believed in Jesus. Yet, they seem to be facing persecution for believing that Jesus was/is the Messiah that Israel had been waiting for. The author responds to these believers turning from faith in Jesus by showing that Jesus is superior to every possible thing that you could put in his place.

Call to Worship

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they were created and have their being.” - Revelation 4:8,11

Starter

Evidence of Grace

Ask kids to share ways they’ve seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion Question(s):

- What is a funny, sad, exciting, or happy memory or story you have about your dad?
- What does a coach do?

Text

Hebrews 12:1-17

Big Idea: Jesus is the better DISCIPLINE

Summary

As we continue in Hebrews chapter 12, the author just got done encouraging the Hebrew people to continue run with endurance the race that is set before them. The race of life that is hard, is a struggle, is exhausting for so many different reasons will take strength and discipline. But the author encourages them that they are not alone in that race. There have been many people that have gone before them that they can look to, and there will be people after them that will look to them and their example of faith.

After talking about people of faith and encouraging them to continue on in their race or life of faith, the author goes right into talking about discipline. Discipline is usually never fun. Nobody likes discipline but whether it is punishment or practice, it is for our good.

Discipline as Punishment.

Sometimes when we do or say something that is not good, or harmful, or hurtful to ourselves or someone else, it comes with consequences and we are punished by our parents. Maybe we get in a fight with our sibling, or say something hurtful or harmful at school to a classmate or teacher, or maybe when our parents ask us to do something we don't do it or just ignore them. All of those things, and probably many more, are instances in which discipline is a punishment. This type of discipline is still meant to correct, train, and be for our good, but it still is a punishment for something that was done or said that was harmful or hurtful. Discipline as punishment is not enjoyable for us. It is a consequence for something we did or said and consequences are usually not enjoyable and fun. In a way, they allow us to experience the hurt that we may have caused others.

When it come to God and discipline as punishment it is always for our good and His glory. Discipline from God is always meant to reveal idols or sin, with the hopes of repentance, and returning to live in relationship with God. Like a good father disciplines his kids because he loves them so much that he wants them to learn what is good and not good for them. Because he loves his kids, a dad or mom, will discipline their kids so that they learn that running into the street is not good, that fighting, calling someone else mean names, or bullying someone else is not good. Parents want their kids to grow in and grow up to be adults who love Jesus and love others well. In order for you to be adults who do that, parents have to discipline and correct when you are kids.

Discipline as Practice.

Another part of discipline is for preparation. If you want to be an adult one day who loves Jesus and loves others then you have to start practicing now when you are young. When we are trying to master something, or get better at something, or grow in something, we have to practice. The best athletes, the best musicians, the best teachers, the best video game players, the best dancers, the best pilots, all of these people have put in hours and hours and hours of practice. Nobody has ever been the best at their craft, sport, or talent without practicing. Malcom Gladwell, an author, estimated that it took an average of 10,000 hours of practice in order to master or become an expert in something. Now this is an average and it

won't take everyone exactly 10,000 hours to master something, but the point here is to say that it takes discipline to stick with practicing something over and over and over again in order to truly master something.

Discipline in our walk with Jesus takes practice. We need to practice praying. We need to practice reading God's Word. We need to practice loving our neighbors in ways that point to a good Father we have in God. Some rhythms of life that we use to help us practice living in God's kingdom now while on earth are called the BLESS rhythms. We practice BLESSING others with our time, talents, and treasures. We practice LISTENING to God and to one another. We practice EATING together as a way to point toward being present with God and others. We practice SPEAKING the good news of God's kingdom to our family, friends, and neighbors. And we practice SABBATHING as a way to be present with God and one another.

Jesus

Jesus was never punished by God for sinning or worshipping other gods. But Jesus took the punishment of death in order to once and for all pay the penalty of sin that was due for all of humanity. The punishment or discipline for sin is and was death. From the garden and until Jesus comes back to fully restore creation, the discipline for sin is death. But instead of having to sacrifice animals, Jesus took the punishment for sin and died on a cross so that humans no longer were at the mercy of the power of sin. Because Jesus took that punishment or discipline, humans can now live in the freedom of God's kingdom now on earth as a way to point a good Father we have in God.

Jesus also practiced discipline. Jesus blessed others. Jesus listened to the stories and words of those that were hurting and needed someone to talk to. He also spent time listening to His Father. He would get away from the crowds and even his disciples and spend time just being with, talking to, and hearing from God. Jesus ate meals with so many people and would always use meal times to tell stories and teach. Jesus spoke the truth of God's kingdom to all who would listen. He spoke to huge crowds and to individuals. He spoke to those who loved him and to those who hated him. His words pointed to God, His kingdom, and how people could live in that kingdom. And Jesus sabbathed.

Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all.

- What is a discipline (practice) that you would like ask God to help you grow in?
- What is a discipline (practice) that your family already does that you might be able to invite friends into?
- Can you think of a time that you experienced discipline (punishment) that at the time you hated, but can now look back on and say that you learned from it and grew because of it?
- If you have trusted Jesus with your heart, life, and loyalties, how should you live in relationship to God, to others, and to God's created world?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshipping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshipping other things

than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others in a way that points them to Jesus and your Kingdom. May our hearts be filled with love for you and for others in response to what you have done in and through your Son Jesus and the story you have invited us to now participate in. Help me to think of my community this week and how I can love them well so that they might know you more.

Craft

The kids can color the following picture or do the word search.



Run the Race

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1b (NIV)

Based on Hebrews 12:1-2



G Y B R H X E A E N G E T Z Q
 B H W T N U E L J W E Q H U S
 S F I P A T E G H F V V A E B
 D A I P Z H O T S I A I S X H
 F M U X H R A S D L N S H C L
 D K I C K O D T I D E D S O K
 C R U N F W M I U N M E E S F
 M T H R O N E O T P Y O F R V
 U A A Y M I L I F E E S G K S
 F A R A E C W X B U L J R N X
 R F J K J C V H Q G U E E I T
 A K B Q E U S E H C I S A U F
 C J O C O D U F U D M U T E A
 E F F N V M H S I N K S R M Z
 R G W R I P K J O Y T L K U N

GREAT	RACE	JESUS	JOY	FAITH
WITNESSES	THROW	THRONE	EYES	RUN
MARKED	FIX	HINDERS	CLOUD	SIN

