

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NLT)

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- What's the longest race/physical activity you have done? Or what in your life has required the most endurance?
- O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

Hebrews 12:1-3

Introduction: v.1 starts by pointing back to all the examples of faith from Hebrews 11; which examples of faith from Hebrews 11 speaks the most to you over the course of this series?

*Why do you think we are to look back at the examples of faith (v.1) before we strive to live the full and enduring journey of faith ourselves?

- O: What is the difference between "every weight that slows us down" and "the sin that so easily trips us up?" (v.2)?
Why is it important to throw off both?
- O: Who is the ultimate example of faith and endurance (Heb 12:2)? Why?
What did He have to endure (v.2-3)?
How was He able to endure it (v.2)?
- O: Observe the verbs in v.1-2; what do they reveal about our journey of faith?
- I: What was so shameful about the cross (v.2)? see Deut 21:23, Matt 27:35-44, Mark 15:22-32, Gal 3:13
- I: What was "the joy awaiting" Jesus, what does this mean? See Isa. 53:11, Phil 2:9-11, Heb 2:9-10, Heb. 12:2
- I: What does it mean to "think on" or "consider Jesus in v. 3"?
What is it about Jesus we should consider, and how can thinking upon that spur us on to endurance?
- A: V.2 states that Jesus not only initiates our faith but also perfects our faith. How have you seen Jesus perfecting your faith recently and where in your life would you like to see Him working more in?
What "weight" or "sin" is keeping you from this full life of faith?
- A: How can making God's will and focusing on Jesus help us run our own race of faith? How can you make "thinking" or focusing on Jesus (v.3) more of a priority in your life?
- A: How has/can this series through Hebrews 11 impact your 2011?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Pray about all the different areas in this passage (preparing for, participating in, and persevering through, the race/life of faith.) Use the scripture (Heb. 12:1-3) as a means of praying through different topics (faith examples, stripping off weight and sin, active participation in the race, etc.)
- **Respond:** Re-Read Heb 11 & 12:1-3 this week. Meditate on what you have learned and how you can incorporate that into 2011.
- **Read:** In January we return to the second half of the Gospel of Mark, starting of (1/2/2010) by focusing on Mark 10:1-12. Take time prior to two Sunday's from now to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. These guides rely heavily on a few study guides; including "Run the Race" by Marilyn Burson (ISBN 1593870639), "When Faith is all you Have" by Ruth Reken (ISBN 0877880271), "Treasures of Faith" (ISBN 0875520960), and the Serendipity NT for Groups by the Young Life ministry (ISBN is N/A).