

Intro

- ~ The bible uses metaphors of competition
- ~ Our Christian life is likened to a race (1 Cor 9:24-26), boxing (1 Cor 9:26), the athlete competes according to the rules (2 Tm 2:5), fighting the good fight of faith (1 Tim 6:12), and the writer of Hebrews refers to our Christian experience as a run in which we endure (Heb 12:1-23). In this race and competition to the end there are two things about it 1) maturity 2) it's our own competition
- ~ King Henry VI became the king of England when he was under a year of age. Alice Botiller was chosen to attend to the king and teach him manners needed and fit for a king and if necessary chastise him without fear of consequence. She needed freedom to train
- ~ So God uses discipline to train us and prepare us to be a people prepared for the Lord (Lk 1:17), holy and mature

Maturity in Hebrews

The terms used by the writer in Hebrews to describe this process of growth are:

1. Being sanctified (2:11)
2. Entering into rest (4:3-11)
3. Falling after Israel's example of unbelief (4:11)
4. Christ learning obedience by suffering (5:8)
5. The meat of God's word is for those who are of full age (mature) spiritually. They've surpassed milk level teaching (5:11-14)
6. Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ and going on to perfection (6:1)
7. Bearing fruit that accompanies salvation (6:9)
8. Not slothful but followers of those who have inherited the promises) (6:12)
9. We provoke one another to love and good works (10:24)
10. Exhorting one another to church attendance (10:25)
11. There's a warning not to draw back because God has no pleasure when we do (10:38)
12. Hebrews 11 is filled with example of people who didn't quit
13. Running, looking, considering and chastening (12:1-13)
14. God is shaking that which can be shaken so only faith remains (12:27)
15. Receive grace to serve God acceptably (11:28)
16. It is good that the heart be established with grace (13:9)
17. May God make us perfect in every good work to do his will (13:21)

Miscellaneous Comments

- ~ Now that we've been saved the Lord wants mature children
- ~ All of Paul's letters are intended to grow and mature the child of God. Often Paul's letters have an outline of doctrine and duty
- ~ The book of Hebrews is filled with examples of going on to maturity
- ~ The Lord doesn't want spoiled self-centered children.
- ~ The Lord uses trials to develop maturity in his children. While we may think the presence of trials indicates God doesn't love us, the presence of trials is proof God loves his children
- ~ Holman NT "We must reflect on the long-term benefits of our trials and recognize that discipline represents God's method of developing our maturity. We must respond to afflictions by searching out the faults or failures that hinder our spiritual growth." Holman New Testament Commentary
- ~ Training is part of life from childhood to adulthood. Our parents train us to be good respectable human beings that have character and can be trusted. There's training in our jobs in how to get our jobs done. The drill sergeant trained us in how to be ready for combat. At no time did he ask how I felt about it. He told me how to feel about it. So, in the Lord's kingdom the Lord trains us to be prepared, trustworthy for trials, and ready for anything
- ~ The word for chastening used here in Hebrews 12 means child training and correction
- ~ One of the questions we all ask is answered here in the passage. The Hebrew believers are probably asking, "now that they've committed themselves to Christ why are they experiencing hardship and suffering. The answer is God is training his children through suffering. The lesson is that suffering takes on are instructive, corrective and punitive
- ~ So the reminder is we're God's children and he loves us that's why he allows us to suffer

- ~ Don't think he doesn't love you because he does. The fact he allows us to suffer is proof he does love us
- ~ The Lord is bringing discipline to them as a means to admonish them not to retreat. The discipline is a reminder that they belong to a heavenly father who loves them. It's a reminder they're legitimate children of the father.
- ~ Lenski "Chastisement in its severest form is thus strong evidence of one's sonship."
- ~ Just as the athlete needs training for the physical to achieve their goal of winning the reward, so the believers need spiritual discipline and training to achieve their goal of holiness
- ~ Discipline isn't a vindictive punishment but a fatherly correction

Context of Hebrews and the need for maturity

The book of Hebrews is written to Jewish believers who were in danger of retreating spiritually and shrinking back to Judaism. So the author is urging them to go on to maturity and not go backwards

Context for Hebrews 12

The context for Hebrews chapter 12 starts back in Hebrews 10:32 where we see these Hebrew believers suffering for their profession of faith. Their suffering included a great fight of afflictions (Heb 10:32). In these afflictions they were publicly ridiculed, some beaten, some were thrown into jail and some had their property taken (Heb 10:33,34). They handled these things with joy but as trials remain in our lives we tend to lose our joy and trust in God. For this reason the writer tells them not to lose confidence in God (Heb 10:35), to maintain their patience while enduring trials (Heb 10:36) and to live by faith in Hebrews 10:38. These Hebrew Christians were in danger of drawing back but they are urged not to in Hebrews 11:39. Then the writer gives them the whole faith chapter (Heb 11) to admonish them in the faith. The word faith is used 24 times in Hebrews 11. These heroes of the faith serve as an examples for us in our pursuit of Christ (Heb 12:1). Faith is required as we run to Christ (Heb 12:1), look to Christ (Heb 12:2), consider Christ (Heb 12:3) and endure suffering as a child of God (Heb 12:5-13). God uses suffering to train his children and keep them engaged in the race. They were in danger of retreating back but the warning is that God will train his children, especially those who are going in the wrong direction.

1) Heb 10:32-39

- ~ They endured a great fight of afflictions (v32,33)
- ~ They needed to maintain their confidence (v35) and patience (v36)
- ~ They just live by faith (v38). A quote from Habakkuk 2:4
- ~ The writer says we are not like them who draw back to perdition (v39)

2) Heb 11

- ~ Faith is the key word in this chapter
- ~ The writer is teaching these Hebrew believers that faith is the key to running, fighting and competing in the Christian life
- ~ Faith becomes the key word in chapters 10-12
- ~ Faith is mentioned 3 times in chapter 10, 24 times in chapter 11 and 1 times in chapter 12 (v2). 32 times total

3) Heb 12

The Big Thought

- 1 We run and compete in a race (v1,2)
- 2 The end goal of running the race is holiness (v10)
- 3 Suffering is God's means to purify and mature his people (v5-13)

Conclusion

- ~ The end goal of running, looking, considering, disciplining and suffering is holiness (Heb 12:10)