

INCENTIVES FOR PERSEVERANCE

(Part Six)

TEXT: Hebrews 12:3-11

INTRODUCTION: God, as a wise Father, uses both positive and negative reinforcement with His children. As we noted in a previous message, He promises eternal rewards for obedience and perseverance in faith (10:34-37). He both rewards and chastens. He praises and He punishes. Unlike even the best of human fathers, however, God never forgets to follow through on His promises, and He is infinitely able to do so.

The Greek word translated “chasten” in our KJV involves far more than negative punishment. It encompasses all aspects of child training and discipline. God has many “tools” in His “tool-chest” to accomplish our sanctification. He will “turn up the heat” in our lives to separate the dross from the gold. It’s painful while it lasts, but it sure produces the choice fruit of “righteousness” (v. 11). If we understand our Father’s gracious purposes for disciplining us, we will not “lose heart” (v. 3), but will persevere in holiness.

OUTLINE: What six truths from the epistle to the Hebrews do we need to consider if we would persevere and “finish strong”?

- I. **The Sinless Life of Christ**
(2:17,18; 4:14-16)
 - A. His **Incarnation**
 - B. His **Impeccability** (John 14:30)
 - C. His **Identification** with us (Acts 9:4)
- II. **The Present Mediation of Christ**
(7:24,25)
 - A. Praying that we will be **kept** (Jn. 17:11)
 - B. Praying that our **faith** will not **fail** (Lk. 22:32)
- III. **The Sufficient Atonement of Christ**
(10:12-23)
 - A. Produces **assurance** (v. 22)
 - B. Produces **steadfastness** (v. 23)
- IV. **A View of Heavenly Rewards**
(10:34-37)
 - A. Minimizes temporal **loss** (v. 34)

- B. Produces **patience** (v. 36)
- C. Focuses on the **Second Coming** of Christ (v. 37).

V. **The Successful Race of Other Christians**
(12:1)

- A. Because their **agony** was not in vain (Gk. for “race”)
- B. Because their **circumstances** were not different from ours (chap. 11)
- C. Because their **perfection** is tied to ours (11:40)

VI. **A View of God’s Purpose in Chastening**
(12:3-11)

- A. Cause for **consolation** (v. 6)
- B. Reassured by His **restraint** (v. 11, 1 Cor. 10:13)
- C. Results in **meekness** (Job 34:31)
 - 1. Not **flippancy** (“*despise not*”)
 - 2. Not **despondency** (“*nor faint*”)

CONCLUSION: God has given us some powerful incentives to **persevere** in our work and warfare for Christ. He doesn’t want us to be in the dark forever about the things He allows in our lives. Let that word “afterwards” in verse eleven be a great source of comfort and encouragement. We can and ought to be able to say with Job, “*when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold*” (Job 23:10). God’s grace is sufficient. His love never fails. He has already given us “*all things that pertain unto life and godliness.*” Let us not doubt His heart but ever keep our eyes on Jesus Who persevered over far greater obstacles and hostilities than we will ever face (v. 3)!