

Addiction Must Fall

E.T.S.

This passage edifies the believer to victoriously run his or her race through the encouragement that we receive from other people of faith, but especially the Author and Finisher of our faith.

E.S.S.

Hebrews 12:1-2 provides help for the believer who may be trapped in an addictive practice.

OBJ.

For the Christ Seeker: Convince the unbeliever that Jesus ultimately answers the questions about sin, life, and eternity. Invite him or her to accept Jesus as his or her Savior.

For the Christ Follower: Show that this passage provides encouragement that is past, present, and future in nature.

Introduction

Please join me today in Hebrews 12.

For several weeks, we have considered giants that must fall. We saw that all giants have similar characteristics: 1) they are well-armed and armored, 2) persist, 3) draw your attention, 4) use

discouragement to stop you, and 5) are already defeated.

Though defeated, they find space to operate and wreak havoc in our lives, ultimately leaving us immobilized and unable to progress in our walks.

Some face the giant, Fear. Some, the giant, Despair. Some face Anger. Others, the twins, Guilt and Shame.

Today, let's talk about the giant, Addiction.

Already, some may feel this is unnecessary. Unfortunately, we view addictions only in terms of the "major" addictions. If we are not addicted in one of these "major" ways, we deny any issue with addiction.

First, even in a crowd as we have in this service, there likely are several who struggle with a "major" addiction.

Second, addiction is much wider than we recognize or would like to admit.

Perhaps it would help to define addiction.

An official definition is "a compulsive, chronic, physiological or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behavior, or activity having harmful physical, psychological, or social effects and typically causing well-defined symptoms"

(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/addiction>). A secondary, less-official definition is "a strong inclination to do, use, or indulge in something repeatedly"

(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/addiction>).

In laymen's terms, addiction has been defined simply as "something that you cannot live without" (Giglio).

Here's how I will define addiction: Addiction is what you turn to instead of God when you should turn to God. And there are many forms of addiction.

Pastor Louie Giglio addresses this in his book, *Goliath Must Fall...*

Addictions typically spring from some other experience or circumstance of life; they rarely come from a vacuum. Often, they spring from an attempt to deal with some pain...

So, what help does God's Word have for addiction?

Bible

(1) Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2 - KJV

Introduction

The penman of Hebrews wrote this epistle to a group of believers in Jesus who were on the

verge of turning away from Jesus. Not because of false doctrine like the Galatian believers, but because of difficulty. They were being persecuted. They had unsaved loved ones who were turning away from them. They were having their property and possession seized. They were being put in prison and threatened with death. They were struggling. They were questioning. They were doubting.

To these, the penman gives encouragement and exhortation – really beginning back in Hebrews 10:19 – to stay the course. Four realizations spring from these two verses that summarize the encouragement and exhortation.

1...The Spectators who look on (v. 1a)

Explanation

It is a blessing to be encouraged, but it hurts to experience rejection.

There is a *great cloud of witnesses* that surround us. These include the heroes of faith written about in the previous chapter. These are portrayed as watching on – to cheer us on. They encourage us to continue...to live by faith as they did. Their lives demonstrate the practice, the power, and the prize of faith.

- Faith enabled Abel to please God.
- ... Enoch to be translated to heaven without dying.
- ... Noah to build an ark and escape God's wrath.
- ... Abraham and Sarah to leave their country, to look for a city built by God, conceive a

child in old age, and offer Isaac in obedience to God.

- ... Isaac to bless his sons according to God's plan.
- ... Jacob to worship God in the hour of his death.
- ... Joseph to speak of Israel's deliverance from bondage.
- ... Moses's parents to risk their lives to save his.
- ... Moses to leave Pharaoh's palace, forsake Egypt, endure, and lead Israel.
- ... Joshua and Israel to defeat Jericho.
- ... Rahab to be saved when Jericho fell.

Pick up now in Hebrews 11:32.

Bible

(32) And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: (33) Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, (34) Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. (35) Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: (36) And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: (37) They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (38) (Of whom the world was not

worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (39) And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: (40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Hebrews 11:32-40 - KJV

Application

While we call Hebrews 11 the Hall of Faith, these are not recorded for us to look up to as some lofty place we cannot reach, but as examples we can learn from and be encouraged by. Their lives still speaks to us today. They're shouting, "You've got this. You can do this. No, don't look to yourself. Trust God. He's still the King. He's still good. He's still working...Believe Him!"

2...The Stresses and Sins to lay down (v. 1b)

Explanation

There are two hindrances that we are called to lay aside that will hinder us from effectively and victoriously living the Christian life. We'll see in a moment that it is illustrated by a race – not a sprint, but a marathon. We're called to *lay aside* these things. *Lay aside* is the same word used in Romans 13:12 where we are commanded to "cast off the works of darkness." It is also the word used in Ephesians 4:22 where we are commanded to "put off the old man."

What we are to *lay aside* includes *every weight*. The Greek word translated *encumbrance* is *ogkos*, which means *protuberance*. A protuberance is a tumor or swelling, an excess growth.

Application

For many of us there are likely some weights that we are carrying and those weights are hindering us from running effectively and victoriously.

Explanation

Another hindrance is *the sin which doth so easily beset us*. This literally describes sin as having the advantage because it is prevailing.

Application

Have you ever been asked, what is your besetting sin? I will tell you what your besetting sin is. Your besetting sin is whatever sin has the advantage in your life. Your besetting sin is whatever sin is prevailing over you. Your besetting sin is whatever sin has you in its grips, and you need to lay it aside.

For the Hebrews, that besetting sin was unbelief. Maybe that is what you struggle with. You struggle with believing God to fulfill His word, keep His promises, act for your good and His glory.

It may be something else that has the advantage in your life.

- Is it fear?

- ... unrighteous or unresolved anger?
- ... addiction?
- ... anxiety and worry?
- ... lustful thought life?
- ... unfaithfulness in relationship, ministry, finances?

For God's sake and for the sake of effective and victorious running and living, lay it aside.

Confess it, let God clean you, and cut it off / out of your life once and for all.

3...The Spur to go on (v. 1c)

Explanation

This journey is a race – not a short sprint, but a long marathon. Even when all the weights and sins are laid aside, things can still happen that might hinder you. Opposition and unplanned, uncaused difficulties come our way. When they do, we need endurance.

That is the meaning of *patience* in this text. It is not simply waiting; it is the steady continuation of running in spite of opposition and unplanned, uncaused difficulties.

Here's the encouragement...You are not alone in the race. The penman does not say, "You run your race". He says, "Let's run our race". Just as there are spectators looking on who have run their race and are now encouragements to us to run ours, there are others running their race beside us – not as competitors, but as companions.

Bible

(8) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

1 Peter 5:8-9 - KJV

Application

Hey, let's encourage and edify each other.

Sometimes, I need someone to come along side me to tell me to keep going and keep running. I even need someone to come along side me and tell me when I am carrying extra weight or engaged in activities or attitudes the Bible clearly says are wrong.

4...The Savior to look to (v. 2)

Explanation

An even greater encouragement and exhortation exists for us. We have a Savior to look to.

Looking identifies a definite looking away from one thing to another.

Application

There are many distractions. Like Peter as recorded in Matthew 14, there are many waves that we could look at instead of looking at the Savior. Waves of fear, doubt, turmoil, scandal,

injustice, oppression, upheaval, ruin, and others crash on the sea.

We are called to look away from these and look to the Savior.

"Let us look to JESUS crucified, risen, and glorified.

Let us look to JESUS and not to ourselves, not to the world, not to our denomination, not to our position in the church, not to our prayers, not to our Bible reading, not to our strengths or weaknesses, not to our troubles, not to our successes or failures, not to our faith or repentance, but to JESUS CHRIST Himself" (Monod, www.aboverubies.org)!

"Are you tempted?

Look unto Jesus.

Are you afflicted?

Look unto Jesus?

Do all speak evil of you?

Look unto Jesus.

Do you feel cold, dull, and backsliding?

Look unto Jesus"

(Ryle, www.likesuccess.com).

Application

Look to Jesus and see Who He is – the Savior Who saves His people from their sin.

Look to Jesus and see what He has done – He taught us how to endure suffering and shame in light of the victory that comes when the race is over.

Look to Jesus and see where He is – He is at the Father's right hand. He is eternally enthroned and exalted in His place of power and authority.

Bible

(20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, (21) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: (22) And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Ephesians 1:20-22 - KJV

Application

We need to take in, reflect on, and apply the encouragement and exhortation of Hebrews 10:35-36 in light of this encouragement and exhortation. We read...

Bible

(35) Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of

reward. (36) For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Hebrews 10:35-36 - KJV

Conclusion

Look to Jesus!

I know that there are many things that would take you away from looking to Jesus. There are many things that would cause you to lose heart, pick up weights, and be hindered by besetting sin(s). Don't throw away your confidence! Endure! You can do it! You can keep going! You have a mighty Savior! Look to Him!

The message has been directed to believers, but if you have never trusted Jesus as your Savior, come to Him today!