

Devotional Questions – Hebrews 12:1-11, Study Leader’s Questions

1. *Who are [is] the ‘great cloud of witnesses’ (Hebrews 12:1)?*
2. *How are we to run the race of faith (Hebrews 12:1-3)?*
3. *What do you think are the ‘weights’ and ‘sin’ that concern the author (Hebrews 12:1)?*
4. *What aspects of Jesus does the author highlight to his readers (Hebrews 12:2-3)? Why?*
5. *What is the comparison between our sufferings for Christ and Christ’s sufferings for us (Hebrews 12:4)?*
6. *What response does the author want from his readers as they think about Christ (Hebrews 12:7, 9)?*
7. *If we experience hostility striving against sin, how should we view it (Hebrews 12:4-9)?*
8. *What comparisons does the author draw between parental discipline* of children and the trials of life (Hebrews 12:5-10)? *The correct term is “**chastening**” Hebrews 12:5.*
9. *What purpose does the discipline* from God accomplish (Hebrews 12:10-11)? How does such discipline* work to accomplish its purpose? *The correct term is “**chastening**” Hebrews 12:11.*

Devotional Questions – Hebrews 12:1-11, Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Book of Hebrews* pp 288-306 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 1614-1615 for detailed comments.

1. Who are [is] the 'great cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1)?

The saints of Hebrews 11, who bore witness to Hebrews 11:6, binding on a saved person today. **"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."** Note that **"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"** Hebrews 12:1. "Beset" is defined as "compassed about" and "so great a cloud" is therefore limitless, depicting "the heavenly Jerusalem" Hebrews 12:22.

2. How are we to run the race of faith (Hebrews 12:1-3)?

- **Unencumbered.** "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" Hebrews 12:1 as in Ephesians 4:22 **"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts"** i.e. ruthlessly like Sinbad put off the old man of the sea and smashed in his head with a rock **"all to brake his skull"** Judges 9:53 and for the Christian **"that Rock was Christ"** 1 Corinthians 10:4. This in practice is putting aside anything that is **"me first"** Luke 9:59, 61, even though it be close family ties i.e. **"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple"** Luke 14:26. Anything time-wasting should also be cancelled out, Ephesians 5:16 **"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."**

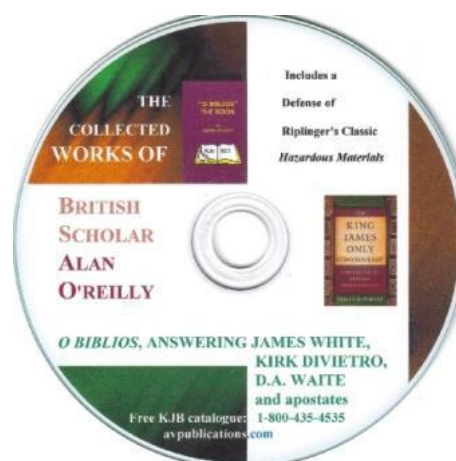
- **"With patience"** Hebrews 12:1. **"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise"** Hebrews 10:36 e.g. it is now possible for this writer to give tracts and other Bible-based literature to individuals at the gym through long acquaintance in accordance, as this writer trusts, with Ephesians 6:6 **"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."**

- **"Looking unto Jesus"** Hebrews 12:2. That was Paul's testimony. **"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"** Philippians 3:14. This writer has had no higher calling than to have assisted Sister Dr Gail Riplinger against those saved fundamentalists in the US and elsewhere who have attacked her and her work, because they hate both her and it.

See www.timefortruth.co.uk/why-av-only/james-white-dr-divietro-and-dawaite.php *KJO Review Full Text, James White's 7 Errors, D. A. Waite Response, Reply to DiVietro's Attack on Gail Riplinger – Flotsam Flush.* See also shop.avpublications.com/ *Shopping, What's New?, The Collected Works of Dr Alan O'Reilly.*



Sinbad rocks the old man of the sea to sleep – permanently www.arabiannightsbooks.com/illustrator.do?illustratorId=4
N.B. The actual image is not visible on the original site



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3. What do you think are the ‘weights’ and ‘sin’ that concern the author (Hebrews 12:1)?

See Question 2. Close family ties, for example, as Luke 9:59, 61 describe, are a weight rather than a besetting sin but if they hinder obedience to the Lord’s command to follow Him, then they become a besetting sin and render the individual not fit to be one of **“the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart”** Ephesians 6:6, as the Lord Himself warned in Luke 9:62.

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Note that the word **“beset”** occurs only 6 times in scripture, with no derivatives; Judges 19:22, 20:5, Psalm 22:12, 139:5, Hosea 7:2, Hebrews 12:1. It has the sense of besieging, surrounding or encompassing the individual, giving him apparently no way out as the definition **“round about”** indicates and as even legitimate daily responsibilities e.g. work/study, family, finances or unavoidable limitations e.g. ill health can impose such that they become like the unbelieving ten spies in that **“they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them”** Numbers 32:9. Note that discouragement easily bred disobedience and therefore sin. The same can happen to the Christian as the Lord warns in the familiar parable of the sower. **“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful”** Mark 4:19.

Note that the 1984, 2011 NIVs’ **“entangles”** and the NKJV’s **“ensnares”** do not convey the correct sense of the term **“beset.”** Sometimes the leads for this writer’s laptop can entangle or ensnare the feet but they don’t **“beset”** them. The definition of the term **“beset”** is as follows.

“Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Be-lial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him” Judges 19:22.

“And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead” Judges 20:5.

“Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round” Psalm 22:12.

One verse gives **“beset”** in a good sense*, showing that for any besetting evil, **“The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD”** Proverbs 21:31. *See also Question 1.

“Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me” Psalm 139:5 with the accompanying parallel:

“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” Psalm 34:7, good for any saved young man or woman to ward off lustful predators.

“Beset...behind and before” by **“The angel of the LORD,”** the obedient saint is then safeguarded by God’s all-encompassing ‘flying wedge’ so that he can break through the besieging, besetting forces of weights and sin in order to **“accomplish that which I please”** Isaiah 55:11 via obedience to **“my word...that goeth forth out of my mouth”** Isaiah 55:11.



“Thou hast beset me behind and before” Psalm 139:5

God’s ‘flying wedge’ for His servant
www.cigarlabelart.com/auct%209/inner_23.htm i.e. label only ☺

4. What aspects of Jesus does the author highlight to his readers (Hebrews 12:2-3)? Why?

Paul highlights the Lord Jesus Christ as:

- **“the author and finisher of our faith”** Hebrews 12:2. The Lord Jesus Christ had to *authorize* **“our faith”** in Him such **“that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit”** 1 Peter 3:18 as He said to the disciples:

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” John 14:6.

That is why the Lord gave His followers *an Authorized Bible*. The Gospel can be presented effectively by various methods; messages, tracts, pictorial illustrations and even modern versions. However, the effectiveness of such methods is predicated upon the over-arching authority of **“the scripture of truth”** Daniel 10:21 i.e. **“thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name”** Psalm 138:2, provided that authority is acceded to, for **“God is not mocked”** Galatians 6:7.

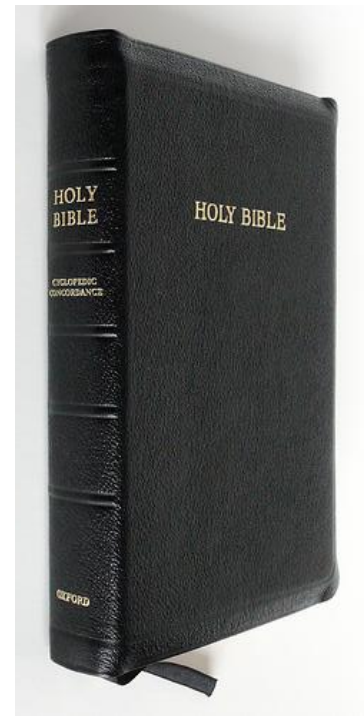
Note that the word *“pioneer”* 2011 NIV is wrong in that it does not convey any sense of authority but rather scouting unknown territory, which does *not* describe the Lord’s earthly ministry as Peter confirms. **“Lord, thou knowest all things”** John 21:17. The 1984 NIV had the correct term *“author.”*

The Lord then had to *finish* **“our faith”** as He did on the cross when he said **“it is finished”** John 19:30. Note that the Lord did not say *“it is perfected,”* which is implied by the incorrect reading *“perfecter”* in the 1984, 2011 NIVs. The reading *“perfecter”* not only breaks the cross reference to John 19:30 but also to Luke 9:31 with respect to **“his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”** The Lord’s decease accomplished **“a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh”** Hebrews 10:20 entered into via **“our faith”** as Paul exhorts **“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith”** Hebrews 10:22. Observe that the full rending of the veil of the temple, signifying **“a new and living way...through the veil”** only occurred *after* the Lord declared **“it is finished.”** The rent had started in Luke 23:45 when **“the veil of the temple was rent in the midst”** before **“Jesus...gave up the ghost”** Luke 23:46.

“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” Matthew 27:50-51.

“And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” Mark 15:37-38.

As indicated, the word *“perfecter”* is wrong in that it does not have the same sense as the word **“finisher”** in the context and breaks or obscures all the important cross references that impinge on the Lord’s declaration **“it is finished”** John 19:30.



King James Bible
Oxford Brevier Edition
jmarkbertrand.typepad.com/bible-design/2008/01/r-l-allans-oxfo.html

“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it”
Psalm 68:11

- *The Despiser of the shame of the cross “for the joy that was set before him” Hebrews 12:2. Given that “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” Luke 15:10, the Lord’s joy is that “in bringing many sons unto glory” Hebrews 2:10 such that He will be able to say with joy “Behold I and the children which God hath given me” Hebrews 2:13. The Christian should aspire to the same joy.*

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” 3 John 4.

- *The Endurer of “such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” Hebrews 12:3. Observe the contradictions that the Lord endured during His earthly ministry.*

“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” John 1:10. *That is a contradiction.*

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not” John 1:11. *That is a contradiction.*

“And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus” Luke 6:10-11. *That is a contradiction.*

“Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death” John 12:9-10. *That is a contradiction, John 12:11 notwithstanding i.e. “Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.”* The Jewish leaders, any of whom no doubt could have become like Nicodemus *“a master of Israel”* John 3:10, didn’t have the spiritual discernment of a lowly Samaritan fallen woman *and that too is a contradiction.*

“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” John 4:29.

The rightful subjects of *“the King of the Jews”* Matthew 27:11, 37, Mark 15:2, 9, 12, 26, Luke 23:3, 38, John 18:33, 39, 19:19, 21, 12 direct references in all, for Israel, 13 with Luke 23:37, for rebellion*, declare unequivocally that **“We have no king but Caesar”** John 19:15. *That is a contradiction.* *See *Bible Numerics* by Dr Peter S. Ruckman pp 35-37.

The words *“opposition”* 1984, 2011 NIVs, *“hostility”* NKJV don’t convey the correct sense of the term **“contradiction”** that the above scriptures show.

Insofar as **“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps”** 1 Peter 2:21, be prepared for **“contradiction”**. From a faithful witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, May 27th 2013:

*“Been down Redcar today with **** preaching the good news. The sun was out but we got a cold reception...”*

That is a contradiction.

However, it forewarns of the End Times about which the Lord warned **“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold”** Matthew 24:12, evidenced in the witness’s report **“because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved”** 2 Thessalonians 2:10.

Peter’s exhortation is therefore important:

“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” 1 Peter 4:13.

5. *What is the comparison between our sufferings for Christ and Christ's sufferings for us (Hebrews 12:4)?*

His were terminal ***"For the life of the flesh is in the blood"*** Leviticus 17:11. See *Question 4* and bullet point ***"the author and finisher of our faith"*** Hebrews 12:2. The individual Christian's may not be, for now and they may even be beneficial:

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" Hebrews 12:11.

Keep in mind, however, cases such as those of the Lord's faithful servant Lillian Ladele, with respect to this note from The Christian Institute April 24th 2013. See:

www.christian.org.uk/news/christian-registrar-appeals-european-ruling/?e260413

Christian registrar appeals European ruling

Lillian Ladele, a Christian registrar who was pushed out of her job because of her conscientious beliefs about civil partnerships, is taking her case to the next level of the European Court of Human Rights...

Paul sets out the fellow Christians' responsibility of supportive prayer in such a case *in New Testament law*:

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" Galatians 6:2.

6. *What response does the author want from his readers as they think about Christ (Hebrews 12:7, 9)?*

"...be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live" Hebrews 12:9.

The essence is to live *right* as Peter exhorts ***"according to the will of God."***

"Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" 1 Peter 4:19.

strader.cehd.tamu.edu/BobJonesQuotes.php *"Do right though the stars fall"* – Dr Bob Jones Snr.

7. *If we experience hostility striving against sin, how should we view it (Hebrews 12:4-9)?*

It should be viewed as evidence of God's Fatherly love.

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" Hebrews 12:6 i.e. no exceptions to ***"chastisement, whereof all are partakers"*** Hebrews 12:8.

A young person very close to this writer was, it appears, recently distressed by the ending of a relationship, which the other party in the relationship ended. It is to be hoped that this young person will see that outcome as evidence of God's beneficial chastening and understand that ***"The LORD is able to give thee much more than this"*** 2 Chronicles 25:9.



Lillian Ladele

The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund is financially backing Miss Ladele's legal appeal.

8. What comparisons does the author draw between parental discipline* of children and the trials of life (Hebrews 12:5-10)? *The correct term is **“chastening”** Hebrews 12:5.
- They are to be accepted. **“My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him”** Hebrews 12:5.
 - They are to be expected. **“...for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”** Hebrews 12:7.
 - They are to be withstood and outlasted. **“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure”** Hebrews 12:10. Be encouraged by Peter’s exhortation:
“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” 1 Peter 5:10.
9. What purpose does the discipline* from God accomplish (Hebrews 12:10-11)? How does such discipline* work to accomplish its purpose? *The correct term is **“chastening”** Hebrews 12:11.
- **“Chastening”** from God is intended to bring forth a holy life **“that we might be partakers of his holiness”** Hebrews 12:10 **“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”** 1 Peter 1:16.
 - **“Chastening”** from God is intended to bring forth a righteous life in that **“chastening...yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”** Hebrews 12:11.
 - **“Chastening”** from God is intended to bring forth a fruitful life via **“the peaceable fruit of righteousness”** **“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God”** Colossians 1:10.
 - **“Chastening”** from God is intended to bring forth a peaceable life via **“the peaceable fruit of righteousness”** with attendant qualities of prayerfulness, quietness, due deference, godliness and honesty. **“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”** 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

Observe that **“chastening,”** which is equivalent to *scourging* Hebrews 12:6 i.e. it can be *severe*, **“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him”** John 19:1, and the associated words **“chasteneth”** Hebrews 12:6, **“chastisement”** Hebrews 12:8, **“chastened”** Hebrews 12:10, occur seven times in Hebrews 12:5-11, *emphasising that the chastisement is God’s*. See *Bible Numerics* by Dr Peter S. Ruckman pp 23-27. By inspection, the NIVs obscure that revelation.

“Chastening” from God typically works by affliction *and, in contrast to the usage of the word by the NIVs, discipline is, scripturally speaking, the outcome of “chastening,” not its infliction*. Not surprisingly, the relevant passages are in Job.

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole” Job 5:17-18.

“And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; Then...He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge” Job 36:8, 10-12, Job 36:10 being the one and only reference to the word **“discipline”** in the scripture.

“Discipline” follows from **“affliction”** in that God gives the afflicted individual an open ear to be disciplined i.e. *disciplined* as in **“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples”** Isaiah 8:16 to follow God’s commands, beginning with separation from sin. As Job 36:11-12 show, the outcome depends on the individual’s response to God.

Manasseh is a good example. *Note that chastening followed a rejection of the Lord’s words.*

“And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people; but they would not hearken. Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God” 2 Chronicles 33:10-13.

Manasseh’s affliction brought him to receive God’s discipline with good *fruitful* outcomes.

“And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel” 2 Chronicles 33:15-16.

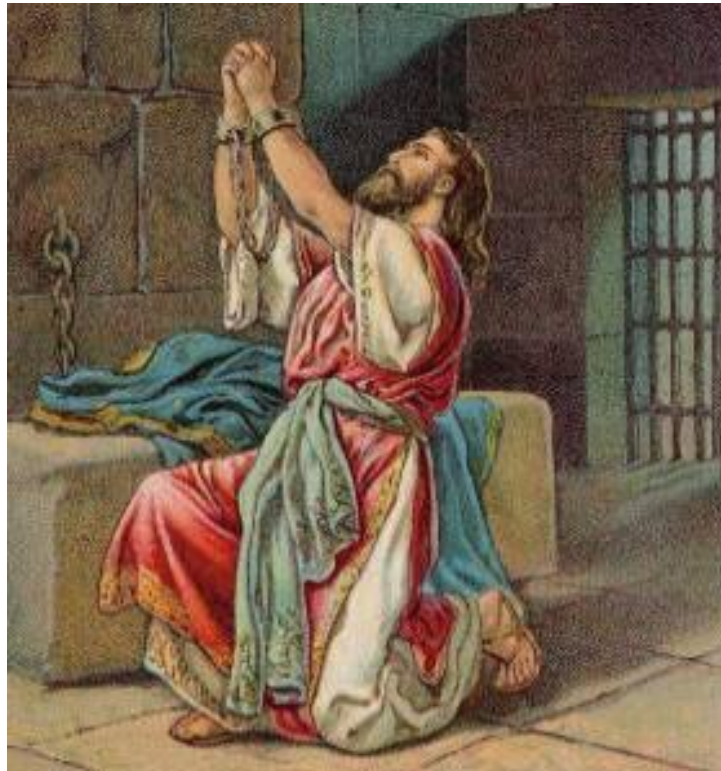
Paul’s readers appear to have been at the chastening stage through rejection of what God said, like Manasseh and Israel of that time.

“...seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” Hebrews 5:11-12.

Paul admonition to the Hebrews of his time therefore applies as much now as it did then.

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip” Hebrews 2:1. N.B. apostates don’t merely “*drift away*” 1984, 2011 NIVs, NKJV, they “*fall away*” Luke 8:13, Hebrews 6:6.

In sum, the Christian’s affliction bringing him to receive God’s discipline should have a good outcome and it eventually will, as Paul exhorts. It is to be hoped that Paul’s exhortation may encourage Lillian Ladele as well. See *Question 5*. **“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”** 2 Corinthians 4:17.



“Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God” 2 Chronicles 33:13

biblewalk.wordpress.com/author/biblewalk/page/29/