

Finishing Well

KEY VERSES

Hebrews 12:1-4

KEY THEMES

Victory over sin

Eternal focus

TEACHING NOTES

 **Running the race (Hebrews 12:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 9:24-27)**

... lawfully

... with endurance

Baggage

INTRODUCTION

INNOCENCE

CONSCIENCE

HUMAN GOVT.

PROMISE

LAW

GRACE

Eternity

 **Keeping our eyes on Jesus (Philippians 1:21-24)**

Lesson Objective: *to understand that living out our Christian faith requires endurance and a focus on our eternity with Christ.*

PERSONAL STUDY**Study 1****Prepare your heart and mind**

Take a few moments to ask God to prepare your heart and mind to receive the truth that He has for you today.

We are in a battle**Read Ephesians 6:11-13**

In these verses we are reminded of the battle we are in. Explain who and what we are fighting against, and where the battle is happening.

**Read John 17:14-17**

Explain why we are targets of the enemy.

Through Christ's death, you were freed from the power and penalty of sin, but not from its presence. God's enemy hates the truth; therefore, as a believer, you are a natural target. The battle is real, whether you acknowledge it or not. But we are not without hope.

**Read Hebrews 12:1-4**

Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls! (Hebrews 12:1-4, The Message)

What advice do we get from verse 2?

The Apostle Paul also “never lost sight of where he was headed.” The evidence of this is found in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. Take time to read it now. Paul was one of the pioneers, a great example of faithful endurance. What do you think was the motivation behind his endurance?

What motivates you to endure the struggle against sin?

Oswald Chambers wrote, “*Gaining heaven, being delivered from sin, and being made useful to God are things that should never be a consideration in real surrender.*” Our motivation can only come from a response to God’s love or else it is self-seeking.

Our response of surrender

What does true surrender look like? We know in part if we have accepted the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. At one time we realized that we were not capable of being good enough. We accepted the death of our selves for new life with Christ. Our hearts swelled with love for our Savior. So now, why do we take the reins back as if we were in control? Or has our love died? Are we looking for our dead bodies to crawl back into? Use this space to ponder why you struggle with sin.



Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and Matthew 7:24

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5-6, NLT)

“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.” (Matthew 7:24, NLT)

Underline the action words in these verses that describe what our surrender should look like.

Surrendering is not passive, but active. We must seek the one we love. We must depend on Him. We must walk where He directs. Ultimately, we must surrender to fight the battle.

Key verse

Put to memory Hebrews 12:1b-2a. Place the provided card somewhere you’ll see it throughout the day so you can be frequently reminded of the truth of God’s Word.

... And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith...

Prayer time

Spend some time in prayer. Ask God to help you love Him with all your heart, mind, and strength. Ask Him to grow your trust and dependence on Him. Ask Him to help you run the race well.

Study 2**Prepare your heart and mind**

Take time to quiet your heart so you can focus on what God has for you during this time. Ask Him to help you see things more clearly in your life and to continue growing in your ability to consider things from God's point of view.

A time to reflect

One of the things that can hinder our growth is not taking time to reflect with God on His truths and what's going on in our souls. In this personal study we'd like to give you some journal-type prompts to help you reflect and put into practice the steps of **know**, **consider**, and **surrender**. Whenever we take time to allow the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and raise our awareness, we experience opportunities for growth if we will respond.

Know

To begin this process, we need to identify a truth from God's Word or something we are dealing with in our lives. We'll give you an example of each, and then at the end, you can fill in your own and continue through the steps of **consider** and **surrender** with what you chose to reflect on.

***Example 1:** If you chose a passage like Hebrews 12:1-2, you would read through this passage a couple of times and then write down what you think the author is saying and what God might want you to **know** from these verses.*

You might write down things like:

- Many people have walked in faith before me
- Life and its distractions can hinder me from living for God
- I will need God's help to have endurance
- My focus needs to stay on Jesus
- Jesus endured the cross to give me this new life

***Example 2:** Another way to use this reflection process is to write down a current issue you are facing in life. Maybe you are struggling in a relationship with a friend or family member. Write down what you think you **know** about this issue.*

You might write down things like:

- This person hurt my feelings
- When I think about them, I feel angry or frustrated
- I believe that they really do care about me
- I want to have our relationship mended and move forward

Consider

In this step, we want to ask the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts as we **consider** what we should do with what we wrote down under the **know** section.

Example 1: Read through the list of things you wrote down from Hebrews 12:1-2. Now **consider** what God may be showing you or teaching you in this passage.

Here are a couple of thoughts from the Hebrews passage we used above:

- What is currently distracting me from a closer walk with God?
- What takes much of my focus in daily life?
- How can I bring my focus back to God during my daily activities?

Example 2: Read through the list of things you wrote down about the issue or problem you are facing. Now **consider** how God would want you to respond. What does His Word say about how to respond to people or difficult times?

Here are a couple of thoughts from the example we used above:

- What may I have done to contribute to this issue?
- I know I am to forgive others' wrong against me (Colossians 3:13). How might I go about doing this?
- What inside me makes me not want to forgive them?

Surrender

In this final step, we get to practice what Jesus did over and over when He lived out, the Father's will. ("Thy will be done.") We often know what direction we should head or even what to do, but aren't willing to **surrender** to the Spirit's lead in our lives. We may think we know what's best for our lives or that we are justified in the position we hold. But **surrender** is about trusting God's ways and leaving the outcomes up to Him.

Example 1: As you read through the thoughts you put down in the **consider** section, ask yourself the following questions:

- What would I need to let go of in order to be more focused on God in my life?
- Am I willing to trust God by doing less of _____ and more of _____?
- If I were to surrender this aspect of my life to God, what do I think might happen?

Example 2: As you read through the thoughts you put down in the **consider** section, ask yourself the following questions:

- What would I need to let go of in order to humble myself and forgive this person?
- How can I allow God to change my heart so that restoration can take place?
- I realize this is out of my control, how can I surrender this situation to God?

After you have completed all three steps of **know**, **consider** and **surrender**, take some time to pray and ask God to help you. Pray specifically about what you know will be difficult to **surrender** to and begin to live out. This is where we **surrender** to God's truths and allow His power to transform our lives and impact those around us.

Now use the following prompts to do this process yourself. You can pick a passage of scripture to walk through or a personal issue or something that is bothering you.

Know

To begin this process, identify a truth from God's Word or something you are dealing with in your life:

Consider

In this step, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts as you **consider** what you should do with what you wrote down under the **know** section:

Surrender

In this final step, you get to practice what Jesus did over and over when He lived out, *not my will, but the Father's will be done*. **Surrender** is about trusting God's ways and leaving the outcomes up to Him:

Know

To begin this process, identify a truth from God's Word or something you are dealing with in your life:

Consider

In this step, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts as you **consider** what you should do with what you wrote down under the **know** section:

Surrender

In this final step, you get to practice what Jesus did over and over when He lived out, *not my will, but the Father's will be done*. **Surrender** is about trusting God's ways and leaving the outcomes up to Him:

PARENT GUIDE

Gather supplies:

- A dozen small toss-able items like coins or buttons
- A non-breakable bowl or bucket

Read Hebrews 12:1-3 together.

Have everyone take turns tossing the items into the bowl from 3 feet away and then evaluate your success.

Share that to achieve our goals we can't give up; we must keep practicing and training to be successful. God gives each of us a special goal to strive for. Our goal is to become what God wants us to be. We can't achieve that in a week, month, or even one year. But, we keep moving forward toward that goal by keeping our eyes on Jesus.

Move the bowl closer to you. Have everyone take turns tossing the items into the bowl again. Once they toss, have them share one way they want to try to follow Jesus. (*For example, reading their Bible, praying, singing songs to God, or showing love and kindness to others.*) Then ask how, as a family, we can encourage each other in those goals.

End in prayer.

