

Consider Jesus: Resources for the Race (Part 3) Hebrews 12:1-29

In Hebrews 12 we are being reminded of the resources available to God's children when we feel like quitting, when we have need of "endurance" (12:1). We have already looked at two of our resources: 1) The living illustration of Christ who now lives in us (12:1-3). 2) The unending love of our heavenly Father (12:6-11). Now let's look at three more resources for running "the race set before us" all the way to the end - to the "well-done" of our Father.

Resource #3: The Restorative Power of the Body of Christ (12:12-14). Weak hands, wobbly knees, lame legs... sure signs of exhaustion, symptoms of one about to quit. These times are not the time to pretend, withdraw, isolate ourselves. It is the time to come together as a family in order to encourage, strengthen, stand in the gap for one another (10:23-25). It is the time to be honest with one another and "pursue" together what yields "peace" that is "sanctifying" and empowering (12:14). You want to endure? Stay invested in a local expression of the Body of Christ!

Resource #4: The Energizing Grace of God (12:15-17). Want to endure? Avoid the "Esau Syndrome"! In distress, he lived for the moment (not eternity), for the sensory (not the spiritual), for himself (not for others). In others words, Esau "sold out" for temporary relief. And, as long as he sought the "earthly", his "tears" were in vain (12:16-17)! We will come "short of the grace of God" (12:15) every time we live according to the flesh (Ro 8:5-7). When we feel like quitting, yet by faith choose the eternal over the temporal, the spiritual over the sensory, others over ourselves - the all-sufficient energizing grace of God (which is our "birthright" in Christ!) is at our disposal.

Resource #5: The Eternal Unshakable Kingdom (12:18-29). We usually think about quitting - throwing in the towel - when we are paying more attention to the "seen" than the "unseen" (II Cor 4:16-18). We will never run the race with endurance without an eternal perspective, until we pay more attention to the "unseen" than the "seen". What happens in earthquakes, seismic activity? (12:27-28) Foundations are revealed! (Matt 7:24-27) In every seismic event of life - world shattering, soul shaking, dream crushing moment - God is speaking (12:25). In essence, He is saying, "Don't make your home, ground your life in anything that is here today and gone tomorrow. For "you" (12:22) have received an unshakeable, immoveable, forever kingdom (12:28). Do you want to endure? Learn to stay at home in My holy constants, My greater realities - wherein I cause "all things" to work together for your good and use the 'all things' of your life to further shape you into the living likeness of My Son. In the midst of such things, worship Me with reverence and awe as the One who never changes. Only that which is joined to My unshakeable Life will endure forever." (Ps 102:25-28).

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Greetings

I believe most of us realize (particularly as we age) that this world is not our home. As the political arena, the media stage, the economic dramas increasingly become theaters of the absurd, this may be easier than ever to recognize.

Yet, such an awareness doesn't do much to move us from anger to tranquility, from anxiety to peace, from fear to love, from the profane to the sacred. That kind of move calls for a "disappearing act." It requires nothing less than a full immersion into Christ!

It insists upon a return to Christ, an abiding in Him that transcends the confusions and complexities and disconnect- edness that are inherent symptoms of human life suffering from "DDD" - Divine Deficit Disorder!

In a consistent and loving abiding in Whose we are and who we are in Him, we don't need to hide or run from the world. We get to live in it for awhile with God Himself as our Source, our Guide, and our Goal - realizing that a day is coming when a new heaven and a new earth will be nothing but the theater of His Glory! Until that day, we will lose ourselves in Him- assured we will find all we need for the journey.

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