

Small Group Homework

For the week of February 19, 2017

GETTING STARTED

We heard on Sunday about Abram and Sarai moving to a new area. How did things go the last time you had to move?

LOOKING BACK

Looking back on Sunday, is there anything that stood out to you, confused you, or challenged you?

MY STORY

Read **Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)**: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.”

1. A “witness” in the passage above is like a witness in a courtroom, someone who provides credible evidence from their personal expertise and experience. Who are some people you look up to as witnesses to the life of faith?

2. The author of Hebrews calls sin a weight that slows us down as we try to run the race God set for us.
 - a. We all carry inherited sin--a nature that is bent towards rebelling against God--that goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. But Jesus offers us a new nature, crediting us with righteousness we didn't earn (Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10). How does trading your inherited sin for the righteousness of Christ become a weight lifted off of you?

 - b. In addition to an inherited sin nature, we also commit sins against God by having attitudes and behaviors that fall short of His glorious standard. Jesus paid the penalty for these sins on the cross, once for all time (Hebrews 9:12, 26-28; 10:2, 10). Even though the eternal penalty is paid, how does continuing in sin keep us from living well?

 - c. How could you employ the discipline of a partial fast with prayer to address an area of sin in your life?

DIGGING DEEPER

Continue in **Hebrews 12:2 (NLT)**: “We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne.”

1. Jesus had a vision for a preferred future (“the joy awaiting him”) that kept Him moving forward in His mission, even through the most brutal circumstances. What preferred future do you think God may have in mind for our own community?
2. What are some of the challenges that keep us from experiencing that preferred future today?
3. What role do you see God’s church having in moving us towards that preferred future (not just New Day, but all the churches who teach and trust Christ as Savior)?
4. What role do you see yourself having in His church in order to participate in advancing God’s vision?
5. What difficulties might you/we have to personally endure in order to be part of God’s vision and mission for this community?
6. How does keeping our eyes on Jesus and the huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith help us run with endurance?

BRINGING IT HOME

God has a course set before us. It leads to a future that glorifies Him. Everything we do as a church should be done in an effort to keep us on course together, fixing our eyes on Christ, stripping off the sin that holds us back, and encouraging each other in faith. Thank God for your Small Group as you run the race together! Consider how you might incorporate a partial fast into your journey, starting March 1.

PRAYERS: