

Text: Hebrews 12:3-6

Title: Remedies for Spiritual Weariness

Truth: God gives us three considerations to help us handle discouragement.

Date/Location: Sunday October 23, 2011 at FBC

Introduction

Living the Christian life is not easy. Now, it is true that sometimes we cause our own problems and should be aware of that so we do not blame everyone else. But Christians do have three enemies: the foe within, the foe of the world, and the foe that is the Devil.

So, the Christian life can be discouraging. It can be tiring. You can feel like there's not much to live for or there is such a small remnant left that there is little point in trying. Or perhaps the problems are so great there seems to be no end to them and no solution in sight. Maybe you are afraid of how things will work out in a new trial you are facing. You may face a health concern, or a family issue, or the loss of a job, or a relationship problem with another Christian brother or sister.

God, through His Spirit, offers to us a three-fold *remedy* for discouragement if we have it. Better yet, the passage is a three-fold *preventive* for weariness that will try to come our way.

For the Hebrews, the problem was very severe. They faced great persecution because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:32-33 recalls their situation. They were humiliated, they were reproached, and they had trials. On top of that, they were ministry partners with others who were treated the same way.

I. Consider, v. 3

A. The action-word in this verse is a command to **consider** something. This means to reason with careful deliberation, to ponder, or think over.

B. Jesus experienced hostility.

Jesus' experience was not a lot different than the first readers of Hebrews. He ran cross grain to the religious establishment and received utter contempt from the leaders. He was shamefully treated throughout His life in a thousand ways, and particularly so at the trial and crucifixion. You cannot miss this in the gospel accounts. For instance, read John 18:22, 18:40; 19:1-3, 19:6, 19:15, 19:18; then there was the dividing of his garments, the mocking of the two rebels

crucified with Him, the people and leaders scoffing at Him. He was even brutally stabbed after His death while still hanging on the cross.

C. Jesus endured that hostility.

Remember 12:2 said that He disregarded the shame of all that to endure the cross and thus to accomplish redemption for us.

We are told to run with endurance as well. The same root word for **endurance** is used in v. 1, 2, 3, and 7. That has to be part of the point of the section! Do not throw in the towel of belief in exchange for the one of unbelief. Stand your ground; maintain your allegiance to Christ, hold out in the face of opposition. Don't give in!

D. We are supposed to **consider** with the result that we will not be weary and discouraged.

1. The combination of words weary and discouraged conveys the idea of fatigue and exhaustion, even to the point of giving out.
2. As we mentioned before, this medicine can be applied after discouragement sets in or before as a preventive medicine.

When you face discouragement in your soul, **consider** what Jesus suffered in enduring the hostility of sinners. You also endure the hostilities of a life in this sin-cursed world, with the devil, the world, and the flesh all taking potshots at us.

II. Compare, v. 4

A. One of the results of considering Jesus' life will be a realization that you have not yet endured to the length that He did. The plain statement is that you have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. But Jesus did shed His blood. We have not, and if we compare our lot to His, we can gain encouragement that God's grace has put us where it has.

1. We **have not yet resisted** means that we may someday face martyrdom, but we have not endured sin to the full measure yet.
2. In other words, if we are discouraged, it is unwarranted to give up hope because God may take us further into troubled waters and yet not be casting us off. The fact of the matter is that you have not resisted hostility from sinners to the extent that Jesus did, that is, to the point of death. You have not opposed sin and sinners to the extent the OT saints did (see chapter 11).
3. This verse does not mean that God ignores our suffering or that we should disregard it. Rather, it puts our suffering into perspective.

B. The idea of striving against sin.

1. Striving against sin is roughly parallel to enduring hostility from sinners. But it is enough different to cause me to wonder...since it is more general (sin versus sinners), it seems to be all encompassing. It can cover sinners and what they do to you, or sin and what its effects are. In this life, we are locked in battle against sin and sinners and a sin-cursed world and a sin-filled devil.
2. Whether you take sin to be more general or not, the point is that we **struggle** against sin. The struggle is real, and it should be real to us. If we are not striving against sin, beating it back, pushing it away, then we are not living the normal Christian life.

When you face discouragement, **compare** your sufferings to that of Christ. Compare them against what could be the ultimate suffering—martyrdom. And then resolve to keep on doing the difficult work of struggling against sin.

III. Call to Remembrance, vv. 5-6

A. Another thing that will happen when you consider Jesus and His endurance is that you might recall truths like that stated in Hebrews 2:10 (sufferings), 2:18 (suffered, tempted), and 5:8 (learning obedience through suffering).

1. Previously when we studied those verses we emphasized how Christ suffered and that these things made Him perfect and more able to help others who suffer. He was complete in His identification with suffering humanity and knows temptation by personal experience.
2. Now, our thoughts will be focused on the idea that Jesus, though He is the perfect Son of God, experienced chastening and scourging.

B. **You have forgotten** is a terrible indictment. At some point, the believers knew Proverbs 3:11-12. But they had lost sight of it and not applied it to their situation.

1. Let me ask a frank question: how many of you knew that section of Proverbs? That is, the problem is not that you have forgotten, but the problem is you never learned it in the first place?
2. There is also here an implication: do you think we should read our Bibles regularly? Should we read the Proverbs? If you are not doing that, are you ready to start? If not, when do you think you will be?

C. The Biblical Content of Prov. 3:11-12.

1. Don't regard lightly the discipline from the Lord. Do not reject it or refuse it. God uses tests and trials as discipline to make us more holy and more pure in faith. He is training us, as a father does his children, so that we will live responsible Christian lives. He uses or brings consequences for our sin in the same way.
2. Don't get down when He gives a rebuke. Do not be disgusted at His reproof.
3. Why? Because the people that God loves are the ones that He disciplines, like a dad disciplines a son whom he loves. It is the people that God receives into His family that He disciplines, like children in the family. We will see in the following verses how this itself can be an aid to our assurance of salvation.

When you face discouragement, do not forget that God has told us that we should not hate His discipline. We should not be discouraged. We should take to heart what is written in the Word of God and live by those principles and practices. God loves us and wants to make us better Christians more like His one and only eternal Son, Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Do you face hardships because you are a Christian? Don't give up now!

Are there discouragements because of sin in your life? Run with endurance!

Keep on believing. Look to Jesus. Consider His suffering. Compare yours to His. Remember God's exhortation from the Old Testament not to despise chastening and not to be discouraged. Why? Because God loves you. And He receives you as His own child.

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