

Running The Race With Endurance Requires Looking too Jesus & casting off Distractions & Sins — Fall Retreat Theme

FALL RETREAT SUNDAY | Hebrews 12:1-4

NOVEMBER 3, 2019

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: AT A GLANCE



INFORMAL: (8 minutes)

Take attendance with the LEAD App. Ask guests to complete a connection card. Allow for informal conversation with your group but be prepped to transition. This would be a good time to remind them about the \$500 goal and ask for donations/encourage sacrifice.



INTRODUCTION: (7 minutes)

OPENING QUESTION: Do you ever find it hard to be a follower of Jesus? How?

EXPLAIN: The DIG Method of Bible engagement briefly.

PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to desire, see, understand, & live the truth.

READ: Hebrews 12:1-4 out loud, & then begin the DIG Method.



DISCOVER - Asking Who, What, Where, or When (4 min)

WHO are the characters?

WHO are the cloud of witnesses and what do we know about them?

WHAT are the obstacles to our endurance?

WHO do we look to?

WHAT motivated Jesus to endure the cross, embrace the shame & the hostility of sinners against Him?



INVESTIGATE - Asking Why or How (5 min)

WHY is endurance so important?

HOW do distractions and sins inhibit our endurance in the race of faith?



GO - Asking Questions That Require Action (6 min)

HOW does Jesus' willingness to endure great trial on your behalf encourage you not to grow weary or fainthearted?

WHAT distractions/sins are hindering you currently in the race of faith set before you?



ACTIVITY: Individual Reflection (5 min)

Evaluate our lives with the "Put On/Put Off" Handout.

PRAY: Ask God for His grace to help you Put On/Put Off what honors Him?



COMMUNITY & CONCLUSION (10 min)

CLOSING QUESTIONS: Related to this morning's DIG study & the activity... How can we pray/encourage you this week? How can we hold you accountable this week?

PRAY: Spend time praying for each other.

ENCOURAGE them to follow up with each other.

Provided Supplies

Put On/Put Off Handout



Sermon Connection

Today's discussion will not connect to Owen's sermon.



Emmaus Connection

When a connection is being made to our discussion we will outline that here.

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: EXPANDED

INFORMAL: (8 minutes)

Take ATTENDANCE with the LEAD App.

Ask GUESTS to complete a CONNECTION card. Find ways to learn about the guest.

Allow for informal CONVERSATION but be prepped to TRANSITION to allow time for Bible discussion & community. This would be a good time to remind them about the \$500 goal and ask for donations/encourage sacrifice.

INTRODUCTION: (7 minutes)

OPENING QUESTION: Do you ever find it hard to be a follower of Jesus? How?

- *Some students may not have any awareness of difficulty because they either are not followers of Jesus or are so lethargic spiritually that they never experience any tension. Regardless, both situations are dangerous and are in need of great encouragement to engage spiritually and follow Jesus. You might help with this question by outlining some of the struggles and difficulty you encounter spiritually in regards to being obedient in a fallen world, fighting temptation, proclaiming/displaying Jesus, etc.*

EXPLAIN: The DIG Method of Bible engagement.

- *The Dig Method is a series of questions one can ask about the Scriptures to arrive at a proper understanding and response without the aid of devotions or the insights of others. Devos/study notes are not bad but it is important that Jesus followers learn how to be self feeders with the Word of God. DIG stands for Discover, Investigate, Go.*
- *In **Discover** we observe facts and info only. We **Investigate** by working through the meaning of these facts. In **Go** we think specifically how to respond to the Lord and His Word. This is a very different approach for many when reading the Bible. It will take time to understand and utilize.*
- *Explain that we will look at some Scripture today using this method and then we will spend some time together memorizing Scripture.*

PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to desire the truth, see the truth, understand the truth, and live the truth.

- *We never want to approach God's Word like we approach books we read for school/learning. We are not merely acquiring information. We are encountering words that are alive and change people through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's position ourselves in humility and ask God for His help and to transform us!)*

READ: Hebrews 12:1-4 out loud, & then begin the DIG Method.

- **Hebrews 12:1-4** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. **4** In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*



DISCOVER - Asking Who, What, Where, or When (4 min)

WHO are the characters?

- *Us, Cloud of witnesses, Jesus, God, sinners.*

WHO are the cloud of witnesses and what do we know about them?

- *This answer isn't obvious from this passage. However this is a great chance to teach them some basic Bible Study skills.*
- *Identify the word, "Therefore". It is a transitional word meant to point us backward. In this case, Hebrews 11. Cloud of witness is a reference to all those men/women who by faith followed Jesus. Clarify that these people were not perfect. Many of them sinned and struggled with their humanity, yet they endured, some of them, very difficult challenges.*

WHAT are the obstacles to our endurance?

- *Verse 1 states, "weights (distractions) and sin".*

WHO do we look to?

- *We look to Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith.*

WHAT motivated Jesus to endure the cross, embrace the shame & the hostility of sinners against Him?

- *The joy that was set before Him, which was being obedient to the Father and giving us an example of endurance.*



INVESTIGATE - Asking Why or How (4 min)

WHY is endurance importance? (answers may vary)

- *The fact that endurance is needed means that there is difficulty ahead. Difficulty can stand as an obstacle to finishing the race. It matters not if we merely start the race. Finishing the race set before us is of utmost importance. Endurance is the ability to push through the things that seek to prevent us from finishing.*

HOW do distractions and sins inhibit our endurance in the race of faith? (answers may vary)

- *Distractions are not always issues of sins. Sometimes some of God's good gifts are misused and become sinful because we make these good gifts our God.*
- *Sins are much more overtly opposed to God's will and plan for his creation. He knows what is best for us. Abstaining from sin is not merely about trying to be good but trusting God's plan is good and His heart to protect us from destruction.*



GO - Asking Questions That Require Action (6 min)

HOW does Jesus' willingness to endure great trial on your behalf encourage you not to grow weary or fainthearted?

- *It is important that we first understand that we benefit from Jesus' endurance in fulfilling what God set before Him. Even Jesus, the Son of God, was tempted to depart from God's plan and give in to the temptation. But He did not thankfully.*
- *It's also important to see that Jesus determined that the reward of being obedient to God would bring Him greater joy than the reward of giving into the temptation. This encourages us to consider what will ultimately be our greatest joy in eternity. Living for Him or ourselves?*

What distractions/sins are hindering you currently in the race of faith set before you?

- *Answers will vary. This may be a pretty hard question to answer in the group context. Don't force anyone to answer, but encourage it.*

ACTIVITY: (5 min)

EVALUATE our lives with the “Put On/Put Off” Handout. This will be more of an individual activity.

After a few minutes, LEAD students in a time of prayer encouraging them to ask God for grace to help them to Put Off the things that seek to prevent them from finishing and to Put On things that will certainly help them.

COMMUNITY & CONCLUSION (10 min)

CLOSING QUESTIONS: Related to this morning's DIG study or other spiritual struggles... How can we **pray** for you? How can we **encourage** you this week? How can we hold you **accountable** this week?

- *Please use the above questions and **refrain** from using the statement, "Does anyone have any prayer requests?" This is too general and doesn't ask the student directly about spiritual issues. Until your group develops greater community invite students to connect with you individually.*

PRAY: Spend time in prayer as a group.

- *This will depend upon the life of your small group and the willingness of the individuals. A big win would be that everyone gets prayed for and every person prays. However, if your group isn't there yet take small baby steps throughout the year.*

ENCOURAGE: Pray for each other & check in with each other for encouragement & accountability.

- *As the adult encourager set the tone and be the lead prayer warrior this week. Give them an example to follow by checking in with your small group via text, GroupMe, or whatever means your small group has adopted for regular communication.*

POST SMALL GROUP STUDENT CONNECTION

CONNECT: With your small group or the students as individuals this week by...

- *Create a jpg (picture) through YouVersion App for the verse Hebrews 12:1-2 and share it with your small group.*
- *Encourage them to take specific steps towards "Putting Off/ Putting On".*
- *Ask them how you can specifically encourage them and pray for them.*

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP (For Parents)

PARENTS: What are the distractions and sins that are influencing your family and home life?

- *The joy and reward of putting off these distractions and sins is greater than the reward of protecting these distractions and sins.*
- *What practices within the home do you as a family need to begin putting on as to help you endure and enjoy your greatest eternal joy.*

"PUT OFF"

What are the things in your life (sins & distractions) that are designed to prevent you from finishing the race Jesus has started for you?

You will tempted to think that the sins & distractions are merely "small bumps in the road" of your journey, and yet they are compounding to bring about your ultimate demise spiritually.

Identify some of these things for the purposes of prayer and finding help.

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"PUT ON"

What are the things that will help you "look to Jesus" and "consider him" and his example of obedience?

Identify some of these things for the purposes of prayer and finding help. Who in your life can help you Put off and Put On (help you finish)?

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Fall Retreat Sunday Discussion

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