

## Hebrews 12:12-17 “Demonstrating Jesus to the world”

### I. Introduction

#### II. Vs. 12-13 Designed to take a beating

#### III. Vs. 14 Loving people, loving God

#### III. Vs. 15-17 What the Grace of God is missing

##### I. Introduction

The writer started out in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter by providing historical ancestors who went before the Jews, successfully completing the race of faith. The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter is an exhortation towards endurance and to do this the writer answers the pressing question as to “*Why, these trials are necessary for the believer.*”

1. First, the writer makes the argument that the “*POSITION*” of the believer in light of these trials is the indication that we ARE God’s children because they are not punitive in nature but guiding and instructional. Along those same lines he reminded them that such instruction was not limited in scope or duration as family discipline is as it is not only concerned with 12 years and making an adult but reaches into eternity with all the wisdom of God the Father. The focus of this was to show the “*INWARD*” purpose of persecution as it **develops maturity!**
2. Now in this section the writer mentions more reasons for the trials of persecution. The purpose here is not to teach truth but to encourage the exercise of it. Instead of the “*Position of Persecutions*” for the believer the writer moves from the positional to ***PRACTICAL*** and answers what **the immediate PRACTICAL PURPOSE OF TRIALS beyond making us more like Jesus**. The focus of this section is “*OUTWARD*” as we learn that such trials are used by the Lord for ***demonstrating Jesus to the world!***

#### II. Vs. 12-13 Designed to take a beating

The primary practical results of persecution and trials in a person’s life outwardly is: ***Making a visible demonstration of the advantages of living life by trusting in Jesus Christ!*** Oft times all the world sees with Christians is negative in their estimation as they notice that followers of Christ are those folks who “*Don’t do what they used to do!*” *The world sees us as those that sucked the wind out of what they consider essential for living and having fun!* Though believers have stopped many practices that enslaved us and destroyed us, doing so isn’t what attracts non-Christians to Christ. ***Instead, what causes the world to stand up and take notice is what Followers of Jesus can do that they are unable to do, it’s how we handle the trails and difficulties of life that separates us from others in this world!***

1. Vs. 12-13 First the writer uses very descriptive language saying: “*Strengthen the hands and which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet.*” The writer goes back to his marathon metaphor and is saying that Jesus in our lives will strength our hands and feeble knees: ***The trails and difficulties in the lives of ordinary people tend to cause them to immediately lose their productivity (hands that hang down and feeble knees) and their reason for continuing on as they lose their purpose and passion.*** But saints this ***ought not be true with believers in Christ as the things that weaken the purpose and passion for living for non-believers has the opposite effect upon followers of Jesus as we are strengthened by these things as nothing can separate us from the love of Christ for when we are weak then we are strong.*** The other aspect of this phrase is that trials and tribulations in the life of non-believers tend to make their journey far more difficult to travel upon their course

non believers tend to make their journey far more difficult to travel upon, their course becomes full of obstacle's instead of opportunities. The Greek word for "path" refers to the tracks a cart or chariot makes and it use suggest that we are living a path to follow an example to others so its best that we make sure we are running a straight race. Where as the ***trials have a strange way of removing the clutter of the world for the believer and our direction straightens right out.*** Saints, ***Christians are built and designed for the obstacles of life and we are trained and empowered by the Word of God and the Spirit of God to travel this course. So where the world sees only obstacles and their life grinds to a halt the believer's life sees the obstacles as opportunities and overcomes them in stride!*** That is why the wrier says, "so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed".

### III.Vs. 14 Loving people, loving God

2. Vs.14 Second the writer says, "*Pursue peace, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.*" This phrase has caused some confusion as to the meaning but it is clarified in the Greek as "*holiness*" is a word that is also translated "*sanctification*" which is defined as being ***set apart for it's proper purpose.*** It specifically is used to describe the temple instruments that had a designated purpose in the temple. What this verse is saying is that ***trials enable the world to observe two distinct qualities in a believer that they don't see in anyone else:***

1. ***Pursue peace with all people: Loving people! Persecution gives those in the world the opportunity to see transformed humanity's interaction with their fellow man.*** When the world is under duress we often see the worst in man's inhumanity to their fellow man. There is no civility, no love for others it is replaced by self serving hatred. But when trials come upon Cristian's we ought to witness an other's centered mentality that considers others better than one's own self. ***Persecution upon the follower of Christ brings out the best in them towards humanity even those that mistreat them and spitefully use them.*** It's a powerful witness to the work of Christ upon a heart as believers become more giving and compassionate towards others when they are themselves suffering!
2. ***And holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: Loving God!*** The next quality is that they better fulfill what their true purpose is upon this earth. The question is; "***What is the purpose of the Christian?***" Jesus tells His disciples what that is in Matthew 5:14-16 when he declared to them, "*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*" You see without persecutions and trials humanity would never witness us treating them better than we do our selves while in the worst of circumstances and they would never see is exercising our purpose of bring Jesus' light and love to a broken world!

### IV.Vs. 15-17 What the Grace of God is missing

3. Vs. 15-17 Third the writer says, "***looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God***": This verse again call attention to the fact that as believers we are living out our lives in front of the world. There is a reality and authenticity to our lives that can not be faked or manufactured and the writer calls it the unmistakable "***grace of God***". Rather than trying to define it in positive ways the writer describes two things that the "grace of God" in our lives is absent of:

1. ***Vs. 15 Bitterness:*** "*lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.*" The grace of God in any life will always be devoid of bitterness, no one can say that they are full of God's grace and be bitter towards others. Resentment, envy and bitterness are always a byproduct of the flesh and old carnal nature. These things are highly contagious and if one person becomes bitter and continues to be so with an unforgiving spirit it

will spread and cause others to be infected by the same condition. It is impossible to grow in the grace of God if a person remains bitter as such a heart condition affects a whole person's life. So you can always diagnose your heart in the "Grace of God" as it will mean an absence of bitterness.

2. **Vs. 16-17 Indifference:** *"lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears."* The other thing that will be absent in a believer's life that is full of the "Grace of God" is that ***they won't take the things of God lightly***. Esau becomes the poster boy of what an "***indifferent heart***" looks like. The unfortunate story of Esau is found in Genesis 25:29-34, 27:1-40 where we are told that he sold his birth right being the first born for a bowl of red lentils soup. The birth right had two parts to it, the right to the property and the right to the spiritual leadership of the family. Esau had no interest in spiritual truth, we see this not only in selling his birth right but his polygamist marriage to Canaanite women. Esau lived for the here and now and didn't think that the things God had for him or his family were of any value. Persecution causes people to realize the value of the things of God especially when come too the things God has given each person; TIME, TALENT and TREASUE! Esau's life centered around self gratification in which the above three gifts were given over to those pursuits instead of the things of God. The grace of God in a believer's life will always lead them to invest TIME, TALENT and TREASUE in spiritual pursuits not worldly ones. Esau's pursuits revealed where his heart was and wasn't. ***The truth of this story is often forgotten as Genesis 25:23 where God had already chosen which of the two twins would have the birth right when He declared to Isaac and Rebekah that the older Esau shall server the younger Jacob. Esau knew this, but in spit of this professed to have what he didn't posses and that demonstrated that he wasn't in possession of it all along by selling it for a bowl of soup!*** The phrase saying that Esau, "found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears." Is best understood in the Greek when we consider the different Greek words for "repentance" the first word means "***regret or remorse for one's actions because of the consequences***" where the other means a "***change of mind consisting of a reversal of moral purpose***". Esau was sorry for the consequences of his actions not because they were wrong but because they didn't turn out the way he had wanted them too.