



Chapter Twelve
Part 1

12:1 We cannot ignore that this chapter builds upon the previous. “Therefore” here translates a compound Greek word composed of three lesser particles, each meaning “therefore” or “wherefore.” This very strong combination word occurs only one other time in the New Testament and that is in **1 Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.** Here the emphasis is in view of the great cloud of witnesses to whom our author has called attention in the last chapter and whose presence he now puts forward as strong inducement for the faithfulness of his readers.

The writer of Hebrews is winding down his discussion regarding the fact that faith has always been the true and identifying characteristic of God’s people.

Hebrews 12:1 (1) Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

The picture paint is that of a great cloud of witnesses. Cloud frequently stood for a great host

in both secular Greek literature and in the Old Testament. The Greek word translated witnesses gives us the English word “martyrs.” It first meant one who saw or experienced something, then, one who gave a testimony or bore witness of his experience. Because one’s testimony often led to his persecution or even death, the term gradually came to designate one whose witness cost him his life. So derives our word “martyr.” The word carried this idea in several biblical passages although it only later gained this exclusive significance.

Nehemiah 9:26 But they became disobedient and rebelled against You, And cast Your law behind their backs And killed Your prophets who had admonished them So that they might return to You, And they committed great blasphemies. **Acts 22:20** 'And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.' **Revelation 2:13** I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Some of the witnesses of chapter eleven were martyrs in the narrower sense, but they all were witnesses. They had seen Him who was invisible, and they had seen the realities of the world of faith. They had given their testimony to these realities, usually in a hostile environment and to an unbelieving audience. They had been the subject of other testimony, as God gave them a witness that He was pleased with their faith.

The term compassed about or surrounded, as well as the clear athletic imagery which follows, suggests that these individuals are now witnesses in still another sense. As in each section of the great relay race, and, handed on the torch to his successor, has joined the multitude of interested spectators and skilled judges. That these witnesses are spectators of our race must be inferred from the context.

Because of these faithful saints who encourage us by their record, and perhaps by their own watching, we are admonished negatively to lay aside every hindrance or distraction, and positively to run with patience or endurance the course which has been laid out for us.

Encumbrance or in the KJV we see the word weight is used in literature to point out excess poundage, frequently of obesity and stoutness, which the athlete must shed before they run. The Christian must put off all that does not measure up to his calling and is not becoming to his intentions. The term also suggests the weights worn by an athlete in training which are then laid aside for the actual contest. Some of the things we must struggle through are trials, sinful struggles, temptation, persecution, hurts, hang ups, habits, pains, discouragement, and times in the spiritual wilderness. We are told to lay down those things that hold us back and slow us down.

Sin surrounds the believer to distract him from the goal. Like the flowing garment worn in the first century, it also clings to him and impedes his progress. Sin itself, of every sort and kind, must be renounced by the man running the race of faith. This present context suggests the particular sin of disbelief which results in apostasy.

It is not enough to begin the race only to fall during its course. This was the point of Israel's example in chapters three and four, and the thought which

triggered the present discussion in **Hebrews 10:36** For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. The Christian must run with patience and endurance, the race set before them. The object is not speed, but faithful endurance. The prize is not for the first runner finished but for every runner that completes the course.

Paul uses the imagery of the runner in several epistles. The terms “fight,” “strive,” and “conflict” often represent a single Greek word also taken from the vocabulary of the athlete or soldier. **1 Corinthians 9:24** Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. The race we run is until the end. **James 1:12** Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

12:2 Patience for the course may be found by looking intently and constantly unto Jesus, who is not only a witness of faith but is its author and completer and its finisher. Jesus has experienced faith’s trials and its reward. The joy set before Him

may refer to His delight in doing the will of God, but it has special reference to the promised position of Savior and Lord which He would be given on behalf of His people. Jesus received God's promise in faith. He placed Himself within the Father's purpose in simple and wholehearted trust. He then endured all that came in the course of the Father's will with forward-looking faith, hope, and joy.

The cross was a symbol of great shame in the first century world. It represented a death reserved for political insurrectionists or the basest of criminals. Roman citizens were not only guaranteed immunity from crucifixion but Cicero urged Romans not to talk about, look at or think on this death. Yet Christ despised or considered as insignificant this ignoble suffering when measured against the joy to be had through patient submission to the will of God.

Nor was His faith in vain, for when this epistle was written Christ was already set down at the right hand of the throne of God. The verb tense here indicates not only that He had taken this seat but that He still occupies it! Christ led the way in the procession of faith. He has now arrived at faith's goal. He now guarantees the sage passage of all

who follow Him in trusting endurance.

Hebrews 12:2 (2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The present tense of “fixing our eyes” indicates that it should be a continuous action. Run with endurance is present tense which continuous action. Fixing our eyes is present tense also with a continuous action. Lay aside is aorist tense which means a past, completed action. This phrase of “fixing our eyes” means to look away from everything else in order to attach our gaze to something. This indicates more than a casual glance toward Jesus. The point is that we should constantly be giving Jesus our undivided attention. Fixing our eyes on Jesus constantly is helpful advice for how to run the race to completion. We run into danger when we take our eyes off of Jesus. Peter learned this the hard way. **Matthew 14:30** But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

There is a story about a farmer who was teaching his son to plow with a mule. ““To make straight furrows, son, just pick out an object beyond the field and keep your eyes fixed on it.”” The boy nodded to his understanding, and the farmer left. When he came back an hour later, the farmer was shocked to see a field with twisted furrows. ““What happened, son? I thought I told you to keep your eye on an object beyond the field.”” ““I did, Dad,”” the boy replied, pointing to the “standard” he had chosen, it was a cow out in the adjoining pasture! Whether you are plowing a field or running a race call the Christian life, it is critical that you keep your eyes on the right target. The idea is for us to think about His greatness and His perfect example. We may take glance at the great cloud of witnesses, but we fix our eyes wholly on Jesus.

Jesus is an even better example of faithfulness than any person mentioned in chapter 11. He will use the rest of this verse to describe something about the Jesus that we should have our gaze fixed upon. He is also using this to transition into pointing to Jesus as an example of faithfulness even in the midst of suffering. He is first described as the “author” of faith. The same phrase was used in chapter 2.

Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. The word “author” means first in a long procession; a leader of a line who pioneers the way for many others to follow. When it says Jesus is the “author” of faith it is speaking of the fact that he has paved the way for us by going first.

Secondly, He is described as the “perfecter” of faith. The Greek word for “perfecter” is not used anywhere else in the New Testament. It means to bring something to its completion. Some versions properly translate this as “finisher.” It is not that He is the finisher of “our” faith. He is the finisher of “faith” in general. Jesus also successfully ran the race marked out for Him.

Next, he speaks of the fact that Jesus endured the cross. Notice that it does not just say that Jesus endured the cross. It says He endured the cross with joy. It seems difficult for us to consider enduring the cross with joy. It does not seem like a joyous occasion. He could endure the cross with joy because of several reasons. Knowing His death was a redeeming act for many. Knowing His death

was obedience to the Father. Knowing the future glory awaited Him. The prophet Isaiah says that God was pleased to crush Him. Notice the fact that He “endured” the cross. The cross certainly required endurance. For most crucifixion victims, they did not have a choice in it. There is nothing they could say or do that would get them out of it. Therefore, endurance would not be needed in the same way it was for Jesus. Jesus endured it in spite of the fact that He could have avoided it or come down from it. **Matthew 26:53 Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?** Jesus’ faithfulness to the cross requires endurance the same way we are required to have endurance in our lives. He scorned or despised the shame of the cross. The cross was full of shame. Everything about the cross was intended to bring torture and public shame. It was in physical sense as He hung naked and exposed on the cross. It was in a spiritual sense as He experienced the shame of sin. In the mind of God all the sin of all the world was upon Him that day. It was in a social sense as the cross was reserved for criminals and slaves. He suffered wrath.

Next, this verse tells us He sat down. The fact that He say down indicates that it is permanent. **Psalm 110:1** The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." No Old Testament priest sat down while on duty. This indicates that He redeeming work was done. Since He sat down, we know He sat down in order to reign over His Kingdom, the Church. He reigns now. We are not waiting for some future, eschatological event for Him to come back to reign on earth. He reigns now. He sits now on the throne. He won't even set foot on the earth again; we are going to meet Him in the air. For Jesus, what started with shame would culminate in glory.

12:3 Consider this Jesus, our author urges. Do not merely glance at Him, but literally "draw an analogy" between His situation and your own. He endured verbal and active contradiction or opposition from sinners. Compare your own sufferings to His so that you do not become wearied and faint or fall out in your minds. The words point again to the race track and the runner who tires to the point of exhaustion.

Hebrews 12:3 (3) For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself,

so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Our writer wants for the Christian that is considering or tempted to quit Christianity to consider the example of Jesus. The thing that Jesus endured was, “hostility.” Perhaps the reader found themselves in a similar position to Jesus. Perhaps they faced opposition at every turn. He wants the Hebrews to remember that Jesus also encountered great hostility or opposition. This opposition never caused Him to deviate from His course. He reminds them that the reason they should “consider Jesus” is so that they do not grow weary or lose heart. The phrases “grow weary” and “lose heart” were used in ancient times to describe the way a runner would respond after they crossed the finish line. He is telling them not to stop running the race and not prematurely. The New Testament gives similar challenges elsewhere. **Galatians 6:9** Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. Once more the call is to persevere despite hardship.

12:4 In contrast to Jesus, the readers have not yet resisted unto blood. Some think this expression alludes to the barehanded boxers of the day who

fought until their hands were bleeding and bruised. Your striving or fight against sin has not reached the point of total dedication, our author would be saying. It is possible, however, to regard the words in the most natural sense and say they the original readers of Hebrews had not yet faced the threat martyrdom, though some of their predecessors might have. Jesus followed the way of faith to the cross. His followers must also be willing to die for their faith, if necessary.

Hebrews 12:4 (4) You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

The obvious implication to this verse is the admission that the Hebrew Christians had suffered somehow and in some way. Hebrews already made evident that these people have suffered as Christians. **Hebrews 10:32-34 (32) But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, (33) partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. (34) For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that**

you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. However, he did not want to put into context the level of suffering that they had faced at this point in time. He wants them to know that although what they have suffered to that point was bad, it was not as bad as it could be. They have faced some difficulties, but not to the point of shedding their blood, not to the point of martyrdom. Other Christians in other places had faced martyrdom, but these readers evidently had not arrived at this level of persecution yet. The point he is making here is that Jesus' blood was shed, and he stayed true to His duty and maintained joy. If Jesus could endure to the point of the cross, they could endure in the wake of the opposition and persecution that they are facing.

It is not clear if the writer had in mind striving against our own sin, perhaps specifically the sin to quit Christianity or if he was referring to the sin of unbelievers. We speak out against sin and it gets us in trouble. In our battles against sin, it sometimes can cause us problems. However, those problems should not deter us from finishing the race. It is important to note here that the troubles he has in mind are the trouble that have come as a result of

pursuing God. He is not speaking of the troubles we face in life because we are not pursuing God. Sometimes our troubles are self-caused. The troubles our writer is talking about are caused by following Jesus.

12:5-6 In verses 5-11 our writer presents another figure with different imagery. You have forgotten the exhortation from Proverbs 3:11-12, he says, in which the believer views his circumstances as discipline from a father who loves his children. Much of the wisdom contained in the Proverbs is addressed by the king to his son. The words which follow are taken from that setting and are applied to God's children of the new covenant.

Chastening in the entire context translates a more general word meaning discipline in all its forms. It involves the training of a son by the father. It is the discipline or training which makes disciples. Such discipline is a sure proof of the father's love. For this reason its recipients ought not to despise or belittle its value and purpose. God first disciplines, then receives, His child who has been molded.

Hebrews 12:5-6 (5) and you have forgotten the

exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; (6) FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

We are not sure if this verse is introduced by a statement (you have forgotten) or a serious question (have you forgotten). Different translations render the two words in different order. Either way this is an attempt to use Scripture to correct their thinking in regard to their suffering. The thing he wants to remind them of was a Scriptural "word of encouragement." The word of encouragement referenced as had already stated comes from Proverbs chapter three. The typical Jewish thought at the time was that if everything was working out well in your life, then you must be living in the will of God. If things are not going well, if you are facing difficulties, then it indicates that you have done something wrong. Remember, Job's friends came to him to "help" him by finding out what he had done wrong to find himself in his current situation. Perhaps they would look on what they had faced

and suffered and conclude that God was chastening them for some bad decision in their life, specifically converting to Christianity. They thought that any suffering was an indication of rejection by God as the Heavenly Father. They were most likely thinking that if they would just quit Christianity that their troubles would cease and that would indicate that they were back in the good graces of God. Notice how the Hebrew writer deals with that.

He says that the Scriptures speak of this thing and it addresses you as “sons.” He is alluding to the fact that this Proverb begins with the phrase “my Son.” Hebrews tells us that this God’s Word speaking to us as His children. He is telling them that it is likely that they have misinterpreted their troubles. We all have troubles, but they were looking at them the wrong way. His point to them is that the things that they were going through, such as opposition, confiscation of property, and imprisonment was not evidence of God’s rejection, it was actually evidence of sonship. Their trials were not evidence of God’s anger directed toward them they were evidence of His love. It was evidence that God dealt with them continually as His children. Many of them chose at some point to have a bad attitude in light

of their suffering. The reality is that if we want to have a bad attitude in life, there will always be something to have a bad attitude about. There will always be troubles, obstacles, opposition, and hardships. We have a choice of how we will view those things and that choice will in the end, impact how we live our life.

In the quotation he gives a warning against two responses to God's discipline. First, he warns about the danger of making light of the Lord's discipline. The phrase "make light" speaks of treating something as if it had little value. Second, he warns about someone fainting underneath that discipline. The word "faint" here is the same word translated "lose heart" in verse three. In other words, he is calling for a proper view of what discipline means as well as endurance in the midst of suffering.

There is no doubt or question that some of us are going to face troubles and obstacles as Christians. Have you noticed that two people can go through a very similar situation and have two very different responses. One can come out bitter towards God. The other can come out stronger. One can have a bad attitude. The other can have joy. Often times

the difference between a good attitude and a bad attitude is remembering and believing that God cares. Here it reminds us that “those whom God loves; He disciplines.” Remember that Jesus endured much worse with the attitude of joy. The idea of a direct connection between discipline and love seems so foreign in our world. Most parental discipline is spoken of negatively today and is perceived to be motivated from anger or abuse. The Biblical understanding of discipline was that it was motivated by love in order to teach. The point here is that whatever the Hebrew Christians were experiencing that they may have perceived as the anger of God was in fact the love of God.

Furthermore, their hardships and discipline was also a validation of their relationship with Him. It says that He “scourges” those he received. Literally this is to “beat with whips.” Let us not forget to see God as our loving Father, this is the idea conveyed here. Like a father’s discipline, God’s discipline may hurt for a while, but in the end it is positive. That discipline comes because of the love of God. We learn a lot through hardships, maybe even more that through stable times. It is not just the God loves us nationally or as a group. The picture here is that

God's discipline shows a personal love. It is a personal love that dares enough and cares enough to discipline. Some may see discipline in life and love as incompatible. However, God loves us too much to not discipline us.

12:7 If it is was not for the chastening or discipline, we are given now many would not endure to the end. God is simply treating us as His children, and children are disciplined by their fathers. Your suffering is neither without God's knowledge or His purpose.

Hebrews 12:7 (7) It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

The first phrase is calling them to endure hardships for the purpose of discipline. He is challenging them to view difficulties in the positive light of the discipline of a God who loves us, cares for, and treats us as son. Our view of hardships changes when we see it as discipline rather than as random or as punishment. Not every hardship we face can be classified as the discipline of God, but certainly some can. The things we undergo are sometimes

for the purpose of discipline. The problem was that the readers were viewing their hardships as punishment for being Christians and not as the loving discipline of a father. Discipline is not a bad thing all the time. The thought is that proper discipline produces a good result. He is saying that discipline is showing that God is dealing with us as children.

In the first century it was unthinkable that a father did not discipline his children. It is this cultural fact that prompts the rhetorical question, “what son is there who his father does not discipline.” The answer would have been only a son that is not loved by his father. Good parenting includes discipline of children. As a parent, we do not discipline other people’s children like we do our own, although sometimes we may want to. We do not discipline other people’s children because we do not have the same relationship with them and we do our own children. An ancient father would spend more time disciplining his own son than he would on someone else’s because his own child would be his heir and as a father his goal would be to have a son that was like him in character. He says to consider the

hardship that they are enduring as discipline from the Lord. In other words for them to learn and grow from it. His aim is to promote growth and prevent sin. Maybe our difficulty in the area is why we have difficulty in understanding God as one who disciplines. It is not an acts of meanness, but rather of love. What a joy to know that God deals with us as children and that we can be seen as children of God, adopted by Him. **Romans 8:15** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" All God's children can expect to face that discipline, Jesus made this clear, Paul said, "all who seek to live a godly life will face persecution."

12:8 If you were without any chastisement or discipline there would be cause for alarm, for it is the illegitimate son who is unrestrained, untrained, and sometimes unknown by his father. The son who will bear the father's name with pride in the next generation must bear up under the father's rod now if he is to be fitted for the task. Again, our author joins warning to reassurances.

Hebrews 12:8 (8) But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Illegitimate children do not have someone who cares enough for them to discipline them. As children we usually envy our friends that had no discipline. I had friends whose parents allowed them to go anywhere and do anything. The Christians would be making a mistake if they envied the lives of those free of hardship or opposition. We could say that a lack of discipline indicates the opposite of love. **Proverbs 13:24** He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently. A complete lack of discipline is not the case of someone who is blessed or privileged. The person may not be a child of God. Being without discipline is not enviable. We all can tell children who are not disciplined.

12:9 Ordinary human experience demonstrates these truths. We have all had human, fleshly fathers. They corrected us. We later understood and appreciated that discipline and even then, we gave them reverence or respect. How much rather

should we be in subjection to our spiritual father, whose discipline is part of His grand design to lead us to abiding and true life in communion with Him!

Hebrews 12:9 (9) Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

Discipline from parents may have caused us to think they did not love us. However, our thinking was wrong. Admittedly the phrase “this will hurt me more than it hurts you” did not make much sense to us as children. Now it makes sense if you have children. He says that the end result when looking back on the discipline we received was that we were caused a greater respect. How much more the writer suggests, should we submit to our spiritual Father in Heaven. God’s discipline is to bring about life, eternal life.

This discipline caused us to respect our fathers. This is the idea of “fear” with reverence. The phrase “father of spirits” is unique to this verse. It would seem that it is pointing to the opposite of “father of flesh.” It is speaking of him as the Father of us

spiritually or the Father of the part of us that has been born again. The author makes use of a typical Jewish style or argument. It is a “lesser to greater” argument. In other words, if something was true in a lesser relationship it was even more true in the greater relationship or realm. If it is true that our earthly father’s discipline caused us to respect him, how much more true should this be of our heavenly father’s perfect discipline.

12:10 During the few days of our childhood, our earthly fathers chastened or trained us after their own pleasure. Sometimes they might have acted hastily or in anger; they always acted under human limitations of knowledge and design. Our heavenly Father, on the other hand, know exactly what is needful for our profit as He prepares us to be partakers or sharers of His holiness. This holiness involves not only the judicial pronouncement of a new state because of union with Christ, but also a daily life of godly thinking and behavior.

Hebrews 12:10 (10) For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.

Please take note that our parent's discipline was dished out "as they saw fit." Earthly parents may make disciplining mistakes, but God does not make mistakes in discipline. Parents had to be commanded to discipline. Parents had to also be commanded not to be too harsh in their discipline. **Ephesians 6:4** Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. God never disciplines us unfairly or unjustly.

It is saying that His discipline is always for our profit or benefit. Here we see the purpose of God's discipline in our lives. The purpose of God's discipline is that we may share in His holiness. This speaks of a personal holiness that we might grow in. It is not speaking of initial sanctification that happens at our baptism. It is referring to the same growth that we call progressive, continuing, or ongoing sanctification. It is what Paul was speaking about when he talked of being "transformed into the same image from glory to glory," an ever-increasing glory. **2 Corinthians 3:18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from

glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. The purpose of discipline is that we might become of more like God and specifically that we might become progressively more holy. We do not develop holiness overnight. Growing more holy is sometimes a painful process. The purpose of discipline is true worship. However, it is not uniquely the purpose of discipline. It also the purpose of the Plan of Salvation. Our holiness is also the purpose of creation. It is through holiness that our true sonship shines through. God's plan has always been to have a family that shares in His holiness. **Romans 8:29** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; What it is that God predestined? He has predestined that we should be conformed to His image. The ancient idea of being a son was the idea of being like the Father. They saw that you are a son of whatever you are like. You might be a male offspring, but you were not really a "son" until you became like your father in your character. Jesus described that they Jews were not sons of Abraham, but of the Devil because they did what the Devil does. **John 8:39-44** (39) They answered and said to Him, "Abraham

is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. (40) "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. (41) "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." (42) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. (43) "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. (44) "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The idea of being a child of God is that we are like God. The way to achieve the likeness of God is to undergo discipline. The purpose of discipline was seen as a means of teaching character and wisdom. The idea of sharing in His holiness proves that He is different than the pagan gods of the world. The pagan gods did not have the idea of

holiness of their gods, in fact if you read any of the stories they believed that Zeus and the Roman gods to be filled with lying and sexual immorality. God's primary trait is holiness. **1 Peter 1:15-16** (15) but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; (16) because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." God is indeed holy, and we can share in that holiness through a faithful life.

12:11 One writer remarked of this verse that "the only proper commentary is our own personal experience." All discipline, however instructive, is painful at the time it is administered, but later its benefits are seen in those who appropriate the intended training. The peaceable fruit of such training is righteousness. Peace and righteousness are related in both the Old and New Testaments. **Isaiah 32:17** And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever. **James 3:18** And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Here the fruit is peaceable in contrast to the discipline which produced it.

Hebrews 12:11 (11) All discipline for the moment

seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Our writer points out that the immediate sentiment towards discipline is not usually that of joy and happiness. Jesus was able to endure the cross because He could see beyond the immediate moment. The only way we can count discipline as any joy is to see further down the road. Remember, he had said that they suffered with joy because they saw past the immediate difficulties and into the future. **Hebrews 10:34** For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. He is pointing out that the sorrow they do feel should only be temporary. **Psalms 30:5** For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning. He says that it is “sorrowful” at the time. The idea is the discipline is not effective unless it is memorable enough to stop the person from repeating the act that they are being disciplined for. God’s discipline hurts sometimes. He says that discipline yields fruit. For a farmer, the work in the

field is difficult. It is difficult to plow, plant and tend a garden. However, if there is not difficulty there will be no harvest. We may think that the easiest path would be to avoid the “sorrowful” time of discipline, but that would cause us to miss the “fruit” of righteousness. The fruit is personal righteousness. The fruit of personal righteousness is a fruit that would not have been harvested if it were not for the discipline. The end result of discipline is righteousness. With the end result in mind we can find joy in discipline.

The verb “trained” in the Greek is where we get our English word for “gymnasium.” This word “trained” is a perfect participle which suggests the on-going results that flow from the events of training and discipline. He is saying, that the discipline undergone has produced a lasting result of righteousness.