

Discussion Queries

Hebrews 12:1-27

READ 12:1-3

Discuss

- (A) What difference does that “cloud of witnesses” make in our experience?
- Their testimony shows us how our hope in God’s promises will be realized.
 - God has, in Scripture, testified to his approval of their loyalty.
- (B) What is that “sin which so easily entangles us”?
- It is the sin of disbelief, of abandoning faith in Jesus.
 - Apostasy is a possibility for all Christians and a reality for some.
- (C) How does “looking at Jesus” or “considering him” help us?
- It is Jesus himself who inspires our faith and leads us on to maturity.
 - Jesus’ example of endurance serves as our model.

READ 12:4-7

Discuss

- (D) Just how difficult is it for most Christians to remain loyal to Jesus?
- Most do not suffer martyrdom.
- (E) What is God’s purpose in allowing unpleasant experiences or even persecution?
- He is training us to exercise authority as the “sons of God” in his Kingdom.
 - He is assuring us of his love for us, by investing in our development.

READ 12:8-11

Discuss

- (F) What are some beneficial outcomes of a proper response to adversity for Christians?
- The Father of spirits grants us life, and a share in his holiness.
 - When trained, we enjoy “the peaceful fruit [which is] righteousness”.

READ 12:12-17

Discuss

- (G) How can we obtain “the holiness without which no one will see the Lord”?
- It is Jesus himself who makes us holy (2:11; 3:1)
 - By the offering of his body and blood (10:10; 10:14; 10:19; 12:10; 13:12).

(H) What kind of counsel should we give to those who want to give up on God?

- Rectify any behavior that you know displeases God.
- Pursue peace (with God) along with other Christians.
- Let God's powerful grace operate in you.
- Be sure that immoral, godless behavior will cost your community dearly.

READ 12:18-21

Discuss

(I) What did Israelites experience God under the first covenant?

- They did not want to hear any more from him.
- Even believers could not cope with his severe commandments.
- He caused terror and trembling.
- No one had direct access into the presence of God. Even Moses had to be invited.

READ 12:22-24

Discuss

(J) What awaits those who remain loyal to the new covenant?

- We have come to Mount Zion, to the city of God.
- We reside in heaven with the living God.
- We meet scads of angels throwing a party.
- We have become the "chief sons" of God (over angels, the former 'sons of God').
- We stand exonerated before the Judge of all.
- We meet first covenant believers who are now perfected with us.
- We dwell with Jesus who died for us, and is fulfilling the promises that he made to us.

READ 12:25-27

Discuss

(K) Again, what is the sin that can so easily entangle Christians?

- To refuse Jesus, to turn away from him who warns us.

(L) What is one day going to happen to the world as we know it?

- Both the created planet and the spirits that rule it will be removed.
- Only the new heaven and earth, and those who dwell in them, will endure.

(M) What more lies ahead for Christians who remain faithful.

- We receive an everlasting kingdom, that is, we shall govern God's creation forever to come.
- What did Jesus teach about rewards in the Kingdom?

(N) What does Scripture urge us to do, meanwhile?

- Be grateful (literally, 'have grace').
- Offer acceptable worship (= with faith in Jesus' blood).
- Show reverence (submission) and awe (due respect).

(O) What attribute of God should scare us into submission, if grace and logic are not enough?

- Our God is a consuming fire.