

# HEBREWS: THE INFINITE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST

## XX. Following Christ In Living By Faith

(Hebrews 12:1-2)

### I. Introduction

- A. We live in an era of great need for an encouraging word amid man's discouraging spiritual failure, so a word from God on the infinite supremacy and sufficiency of His Son Jesus Christ is both desirable and fitting.
- B. The Epistle of Hebrews offers it, and Hebrews 12:1-2 admonishes us to follow Christ in living by faith, so we view it for our application and edification (as follows):

### II. Following Christ In Living By Faith, Hebrews 12:1-2.

- A. The long list of Old Testament believers in Hebrews 11:1-40 who lived by faith in God's promises should motivate us Christians today to follow their example to live by faith in God's Word today, Hebrews 12:1a.
- B. To follow their example, we like them must take practical spiritual steps to do so, Hebrews 12:1b-2:
  1. First, we must lay aside every "weight" that hinders our "running the race" of faith, Hebrews 12:1b:
    - a. Paul clarified that some such "weight" could be something that is Biblically innocent in itself but that it becomes unhelpful in a particular believer's walk for some unique reason, 1 Corinthians 6:12a ESV.
    - b. Paul also claimed that some such "weight" might be something that is Biblically pure in itself but comes to enslave a believer in some way so that he is hindered from obeying the Lord, 1 Corinthians 6:12b ESV.
    - c. Paul added that some such "weight" might be something that is Biblically pure in itself but that indulging in it wounds the conscience of another spiritually weaker believer, requiring a believer not to indulge in it lest doing so wounds wounding his spiritual brother's conscience, 1 Corinthians 8:10-13 ESV.
  2. Second, we must lay aside every "easily ensnaring" (*euperistatos*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 324) sin, the sin that a believer finds unusually difficult for him individually to avoid, Hebrews 12:1c. The means of accomplishing this feat is through relying on the indwelling Holy Spirit to boycott living by means of one's sin nature (Galatians 5:16, 22-23).
  3. Third, we must "run" the race of faith with "perseverance" (*hupomones*, Ibid., p. 854), relying on the Holy Spirit Who provides the self-control and faithfulness needed for this task, Hebrews 12:1d; Gal. 5:22-23.
  4. Fourth, we must "run the race that 'lies before' (*prokeimai*, Ibid., p. 714) us" (Heb. 12:1e), and we explain:
    - a. Every believer has been gifted by God the Holy Spirit with a supernatural spiritual gift for service, with a divine service assignment and with an activity of Christian service that makes his ministry assignment different from all the assignments of all other believers, 1 Corinthians 12:4, 11 ESV.
    - b. Thus, each believer has his own "race" to run to please God, using his own spiritual gift of service with his own service assignment and with his own service activity as noted in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 et al.
    - c. Therefore, the "race" we are to "run" with "perseverance" involves fulfilling our own unique ministry assignment from the Lord as a life-long calling by relying on the Holy Spirit to succeed in our ministry.
  5. Fifth, we must look unto Jesus as our ultimate Example of living by faith, Hebrews 12:2:
    - a. First, Jesus is the "Author" of the path of faith uniquely for Christians to follow (Hebrews 12:2a ESV) and the "Perfector" of our life of faith, One Who brings it to fruition (Hebrews 12:2b ESV).
    - b. Second, Jesus exemplified how we Christians are to focus on the joy set before us, and in Christ's case, it was the joy of gaining an eternal throne, Hebrews 12:2c with 1:9; *Bible Know. Com.*, N. T., p. 810.
    - c. Third, Jesus exemplified how we Christians are to use this focus on the joy set before us to endure the trials we must endure in a life of faith, for Christ thus endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God in great power and glory, Hebrews 12:2d ESV.

***Lesson:*** *May we be motivated to live by faith like the long list of Old Testament saints who have gone before us. To do so, may we lay aside every weight and easily ensnaring sin that hinders us and run the race God has uniquely assigned us as individuals, doing so with perseverance in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. May we run by looking unto Jesus as our Supreme Example, He Who is the Author and Perfector of our life of faith, anticipating the joy set before us of God's reward so as to offset the trials that we must endure to reach our goal.*

***Application:*** *(1) Since we believers in Christ are part of a long line of saints who have lived by faith, the Supreme Example being Christ Himself, may we follow our Lord's example, taking the practical steps required to reach the goal of gaining God's ultimate reward. (2) Since we each have a unique assignment in the "race set before us," may we focus on God's personal calling for us and not compare ourselves with other believers.*