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PRAYER

Lord, thank you for being faithful. Thank you that you have given us a vocabulary to know how to praise you amidst processes, pressures, and even pain. We thank you that we worship Jesus who bore scars in his hands and feet as a testament to the pain you suffered in order that we may lean into your ability to both heal and deliver us from and in the midst of our pain. In Jesus' name, Amen!

WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

What is your most funny memory as a child?

NOTES

WORD

³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

[HEBREWS 11:35-40](#)

¹ 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.

[HEBREWS 12:1-3](#)

The author of Hebrews is highlighting that the pain we might experience is not unique to us, but there have been many great men and women, who for their faith, were able to endure much persecution and trial. These passages find their height in understanding that Christ, the founder of our faith, knows extreme suffering and endured for us to the glory of God the Father.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = completely weak, 10 = completely strong), how do you rate your threshold for pain? Why do you rate your ability this way?
2. When the author of Hebrews encourages believers to “lay aside very weight” (12:1), what might this look like in your life? Have you laid aside every “weight” that hinders you in your journey with God?

3. The “great cloud of witnesses” described in 12:1 are those who had gone before us and had proven faithful to God in the midst of dire circumstances. How do you respond, knowing that there is a great cloud of witnesses from throughout history who are surrounding you and cheering you on?
4. “Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith (12:2)”. What are the things that tempt you to not look towards Jesus, and are you willing to lay them aside today?
5. Looking at Hebrews 11:39, what does it say about the faith of these people and how does that relate to your faith in God? (How we thank God for verse 40!)

PRAYER LIST