

and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Verses 5-8)

What disciplines of faith (Bible Reading, Worship, Prayer and Meditation) do you find helpful in living your Christian life? Write your thoughts and pray that God will reveal wonderful ways in which your faith can grow!

### Thursday, October 5

Read Hebrews 12:1-11. While it is true that we can inspire each other, Jesus is the inspiration for our faith. We should not so much compare our living of the Christian with each other but with the very example of Jesus Christ. How is Jesus the Christ an example for you? Is it what Jesus said or is it something he did. What is it that you admire most in Jesus Christ? Write your thoughts here and ask that God allow you to see yourself in Jesus the Christ.

### Friday, October 6

Read Hebrews 12:1-11. Think of the sacrifice Jesus was called to make for the entire world. Think of the sacrifice that the great cloud of witnesses referred in this passage represent. What about your life? Your ministry? Your family and church? What sacrifices have you made for your faith? What sacrifices have you made for our community of faith? How have those sacrifices made a difference in the lives of others? Write your thoughts here and ask God for strength to offer a bold witness of faith.

## Notes from the Message – October 1, 2023 Personal Par\*

- I. The author of Hebrews provides an image of stadium filled with a “great cloud of witnesses” who are cheering us on in our own \_\_\_\_\_ race.
  - A. It is a race that they themselves have run and have won the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. Jesus is the supreme runner of the race, enduring more adversity and \_\_\_\_\_ than any other runner before or after Him.
  - C. With such an inspiration as Christ and the support of loving witnesses in the stands, we are motivated to do our best and achieve our highest in the race that is our faith and our \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- II. Your personal par is what you have determined appropriate for your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in light of God’s grace and guidance.
  - A. It is important for each follower of Christ to consider what it is that God wants them to give – both your \_\_\_\_\_ and financial gifts.
    1. As Christians we have \_\_\_\_\_.
    2. We are pilgrims who are ever on the way and we should always ask each day, “Am I any \_\_\_\_\_ on?”
  - B. Consider these witnesses’ \_\_\_\_\_ in this wonderful scene painted by the author of Hebrews in two ways.
    1. First and most obvious, they serve as earthly \_\_\_\_\_ of what we should be about in our Christian faith.
    2. A second way that I view that great cloud of witnesses is what can be done for the sake of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ beyond our earthly life.

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\*Hebrews 12:1-11

3. This Biblical image of the cloud of witnesses represents the \_\_\_\_\_ made on behalf of the future church.
- C. Our giving and living for the church must be \_\_\_\_\_ - oriented, sacrificial, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- III. You have to decide how \_\_\_\_\_ you want to become when it comes to the game of golf.
- A. It's the same with the \_\_\_\_\_ life.
- B. We all have the same \_\_\_\_\_ to be the best we can be – the best God calls each of us to be.
- C. The course is before us – but you determine your personal \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ and the great cloud of witnesses are counting on you.

## ***Daily Meditations and Study Guide***

The following is a daily meditation and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

### **Monday, October 2**

Read Hebrews 12:1-11. It is a blessing when a person shares that he or she grew up in a supportive and loving household. That would be a statement that describes my own experience growing up on a farm in southern Michigan. My family was supportive in ways that were not always made available to youth on farms. Because I had asthma, my dad always supported the idea of my going to college to get an education and gain the ability to work in another vocation. My church and the teachers and staff of the schools I attended were also very encouraging.

Hebrews 12:1 states, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” The “cloud of witnesses” refers to those of our faith who are no longer at our sides. From the heavenly realm they cheer us on as we live out our faith here on

earth. The great thing about their support is what it does for us; because of their encouragement, we can “lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely.” We are freed to run with perseverance the race that is our life. How does the encouragement of others free you to enjoy life and meet the calling God has for your life? Write your thoughts here giving thanks to God for those who make up that great cloud of witnesses!

### **Tuesday, October 3**

Read Hebrews 12:1-11. Yesterday you read about the encouragement that frees you from “every weight and the sin that clings so closely.” Today, take time to meditate about the burdensome weight and sin that causes separation between you and God. Write your thoughts here or jot some notes that represent those burdens.

Think about those who have borne the same burdens and struggled with the same sin. Some may be part of that heavenly cloud of witnesses and some may still be alive. How can their experiences help you deal with yours? Perhaps those who are still alive on this earth could offer you direct support and ideas of how to conquer the difficulties that cause separation between you and our loving God.

### **Wednesday, October 4**

Read II Peter 1:1-9. This letter that bears the Apostle Peter's name was most likely written by friends or devotees of Peter in his honor. Included in the Pastoral Epistles of the New Testament, these books are meant to provide guidance for living the Christian life. We are to “make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge,