

MIDDLE SCHOOL

**CHRIST FIRST
OTHERS SECOND**

**I AM THIRD
I AM THIRD**



CENTENARY

Memory Verses for the Middle School Hebrews 12:1-6

1989 NRSV

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, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children— “My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are corrected by him; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts.”

What is I AM 3RD?

I AM 3RD is based on a simple belief that Jesus Christ is first, others are second, and I am third.

We strongly believe that Jesus Christ is the most important person in our lives. (Matthew 25:40)

Do our best in everything: We want to work at everything with all our hearts, as if we are working for the Lord.

(Colossians 3:23-24)

Studying Scripture: We believe all Scripture is God-breathed (from God) and is useful for teaching, correcting, and training in goodness, so that through studying Scripture we may be equipped (ready) for every good work.

It is our prayer that we would gain a deeper understanding of what it means to follow Christ through our weekly devotions and times of prayer, in order to help us learn more about Jesus Christ and His importance in our lives.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

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Video Link



Week 1:

“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...”

This soccer season we will memorize Hebrews 12:1-6. This passage is about perseverance through trials. Perseverance is often depicted as an individual activity. Movies or shows may come to mind for you of an athlete persevering through the difficulties of life and hard training in order to win in the end. For that reason, it is quite interesting that the writer of this passage on perseverance begins by reminding us that we are not alone. We are surrounded by a community of believers who support us through prayer, encouragement, love, and care. As we struggle and grow in our pursuit of God, we must remember that we are not alone.

Questions:

Who are some people in your life that support you and pray for you?

Memory Verse:

“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...”



Week 2:

“...and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross...”

Long distance runners often run with a partner to help them set the pace. Keeping with a partner helps these runners go farther and prepare for competitions. The writer of this passage portrays Jesus as the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, setting the pace for our lives. The moment of Jesus's life that is in focus is his perseverance through the suffering of the cross. Life is full of joys and sorrows. One of the marks of the Christian life is joy in the midst of suffering. That sounds odd right? Those things don't go together in our world, so much so that we cannot achieve this joy on our own. We need the Holy Spirit, and to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus as the pacesetter of our lives.

Questions:

What would it look like to maintain joy through suffering?

Memory Verse:

“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, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross...”





Week 3:

“...disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.”

People desperately want to avoid shame. We so badly want to fit in, be cool, or at the very least go unnoticed. At this Middle School stage of life we are often hyper-fixated on trying to avoid shame. Even still we often find ourselves stuck in a cycle of feeling ashamed of who we are and wishing we could change. Jesus knew what shame was like. He was raised in a poor family from a small town. He endured bullies and other enemies even into his adulthood. The greatest shame Jesus endured was his death on the cross. Jesus, the God of the Universe who became human suffered and died a cruel death at the hands of people he created. Yet, it was at this horrible low point that God honored Jesus's humility. Because Jesus took on shame, even our shame, he was elevated to the highest place, the throne room of God. That's how God works. The first shall be last and the last first. God does not honor power and status, He honors humility. We worship a God who knows what it is like to be human shame and all. And we worship a God who honors humility over the pursuit of status.

Questions:

What does it mean to you that God knows what shame feels like? How can you show humility?

Memory Verse:

“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, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.”



Week 4:

“Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.”

If the life of Jesus sets the standard for our lives it puts our suffering into a new perspective. This does not mean that when we suffer or when we are hurt we should just deal with it because Jesus endured worse on the cross. Rather, the intent of this passage is to instill hope. We can look to Jesus and recognize all that he endured and know that through him we can do the same. When we are weary and on the verge of giving up we can remember that Jesus has been there too and overcame it. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus deeply lamented the pain that he would experience on the cross but he persevered in love for you. He was also highly exalted for his humility and sits at the right hand of God. Because of Jesus’s death and resurrection we know that our story never ends with suffering and death, our story will always end with resurrection and life eternal. Knowing this gives us hope.

Questions:

How does having hope change the way you act? What does it look like to offer hope to someone else?

Memory Verse:

“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, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.”

Week 5:

“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood...

This is one of the many passages of Scripture which at first glance seems so odd. What does our struggle with sin have to do with shedding our blood? The book of Leviticus says “the life of a creature is in the blood.” With that in mind, this passage reminds us that as long as we are still alive we still have hope. We will make mistakes and there will be hard seasons but we can always hope for a better tomorrow. Rather than stay in the place of despair, Jesus gives us hope that we can change, our situation can change, and that someday all will be well.

Memory Verse:

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, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.



Week 6:



“And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children— “My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord...”

God loves you like you are His own child. He wants what is best for you and cares for you deeply. Like a good parent God at times disciplines us. The word discipline may carry a negative connotation. It may bring to mind memories of being punished for doing something wrong. But as athletes, you know that discipline is not always negative. It takes discipline to become a better athlete. You have to stay persistent, and dedicated to your practice routine, your diet, and exercise. That comes with sacrifices and struggle but it produces effective results that redeem the pain in our muscles from working hard. God loves to make good things out of bad situations. When we struggle, God sees an opportunity for us to grow if we rely on Him.

Questions:

How does discipline help us grow? What’s an example of growth through discipline?

Memory Verse:

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, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children— “My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,

Week 7:

“...or lose heart when you are corrected by him...”

Last week we discussed how discipline produces good things even though it can be hard. We know this, yet it can still be so difficult to overcome the pain to get the reward. People are pain avoidant, we don't want to suffer even if it can sometimes be good for us. When we go through a hard season it can be all we think about, we can lose heart and lose hope for the future. But we must not lose sight of the fact that growing hurts but it can be good for us. Even though it is painful we often grow the most in difficult seasons. This does not mean that everything bad that happens to us is some lesson from God. However, God is so good that He brings life out of death and light from our moments of darkness and pain. God may not cause the pain, but when we rely on Him He can make beautiful things out of it.

Questions:

Has God ever helped you through a hard time? How did you grow through that time?

Memory Verse:

“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, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children— “My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are corrected by him...”



Week 8:

“for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts.”

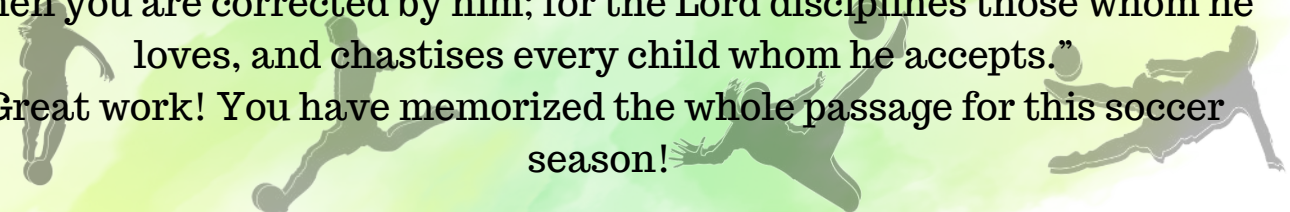
As we conclude our memory verse for this soccer season the writer of Hebrews reminds us of a simple but powerful truth. God loves you. When life is hard, that does not mean that God doesn't love you. Even when you make mistakes, or are going through a difficult season, He loves you. When life is hard we can become angry with God and blame Him when things feel all wrong. It is okay to be angry with God, He can handle it. Wonderful heroes of our faith throughout the Bible are angry with God. Even in their anger God does not change the way He feels about them. Sometimes we question the way God feels about us when things are hard. But the writer of Hebrews gives us a final reminder of hope in this passage about persistence. God loves you and that is a consistent anchor through any storm. God's love for you does not change as the seasons change, or even as our feelings towards Him change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Questions: How does God's love for you give you hope?

Memory Verse:

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, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children— “My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are corrected by him; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts.”

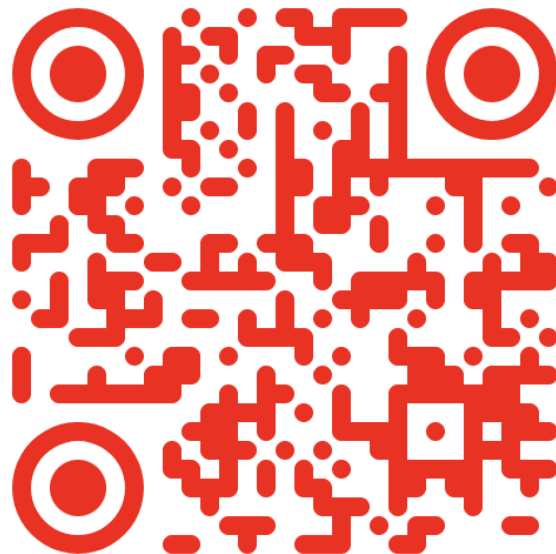
Great work! You have memorized the whole passage for this soccer season!

The background of the bottom section features a light green watercolor wash. Overlaid on this wash are several dark grey silhouettes of soccer players in various dynamic poses, such as kicking a ball, sliding, and running.

I AM 3RD



Video Link





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