

Lesson # 23

Hebrews 11:32-12:3, Mark 2:1-5

Apr. 15, 2015

Have you ever run in a race? Maybe you've raced your friends on the playground. Perhaps you've watched someone run in a marathon race. I like to watch runners in the Olympics on television. Did you know that running is very difficult work? To get ready for a big race you have to exercise, eat healthy food, and drink plenty of water. To run a great distance or for a long time, you have to practice and train your body everyday. You need to work hard to stay focused and not get distracted. Some days, you may want to give up. You might think, "I'm too tired. I'm sweaty. My legs hurt. I can't run anymore!" To run a good race, you have to keep trying. Instead of thinking about how tired they feel, good runners look at what's up ahead, in front of them—the finish line! When they hear all the people cheering for them, runners focus their eyes on the finish line. Faith in God is like that too.

What is faith? Faith is a special kind of believing. Faith means believing in something even though you can't always see it. We can't see God, but we know God is with us. Did you know that God promises to be with us always—even when we feel like we are running a hard race? The Bible is full of stories about people who had difficult choices and challenges, and God was with them all—Gideon, Samson, David, Samuel, and Moses, to name just a few.

In Mark chapter two, the Bible tells us about a man who was paralyzed. Because he was paralyzed, the man could not walk. He had to sit on a mat on the ground all day, everyday. But this man had some friends who heard about Jesus. They believed Jesus could help their friend walk again, so they decided to take the man to see Jesus. The friends had to carry the paralyzed man on his mat. When they found Jesus, He was teaching in a crowded house. People were blocking the doors and there was no way to get inside. The friends, however, did not give up. They climbed up on the roof, and cut a hole in the ceiling above where Jesus was speaking. Then they lowered the paralyzed man on his mat down through the hole, right in front of Jesus! When Jesus saw their faith, he healed the paralyzed man. Jesus told the paralyzed man to get up and walk. And guess what? He did!

God blesses his people for their faith. You and I can also have great faith, if we don't give up. God sent his son Jesus (and the Holy Spirit) to help us and to cheer us on when we get tired. Jesus helps us to keep trying, even when we feel like giving up. When I think about Jesus cheering me on, and I practice running with Jesus everyday, my faith in Him grows stronger.

Pray: Dear Jesus, thank You for story of the paralyzed man and the faith of his friends. Help me to believe in You always, and not give up. Amen.

Bible Verse: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith..."

Hebrews 12:2a

Grow at Home #23
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Today we learned this God fact:

- God blesses His people for their faith in Him

Live It Out: Today our lesson included the story of a paralyzed man whose friends had faith in Jesus as Healer. They climbed up on a roof and cut a hole in the ceiling to lower their paralyzed friend down to Jesus. Jesus healed the man because of his faith and the faith of his friends. This story highlights not only the importance of faithful obedience as believers, but also the importance of cheering one another on to persevere in faith when life gets difficult.

The Bible teaches us that children have a unique kind of faith. Jesus told his followers that they needed to have faith like little children in order to understand His mission. But even young people grow tired and weary; children are no different from adults in their need for encouragement. As a caregiver, you have a special opportunity to encourage your child's faith when he or she faces obstacles of many kinds. Your positive presence and words of encouragement can help your worried or discouraged child to find both security and boldness to step out in faith.

Here are some Scripture verses about faith that you can learn as a family:

- "All things are possible for those who believe." Mark 9:23b
- "With God, all things are possible." Matthew 19:26b
- "I can do all things, through Christ who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13

Prayer: "Dear Jesus, thank You for story of the paralyzed man and the faith of his friends. Help me to believe in You always, and not give up. Amen."

Bible verse: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith..."
Hebrews 12:2a