



Storyline-Week 07
“Patient Endurance” – Ben Foote
March 28, 2021

// Bible References

Hebrews 12:1-13; John 16:33

// Message Summary

This weekend Ben wrapped up our Storyline series, in which we have been looking at what characteristics make a good story. What we find is that any story can start with **compelling vision & relentless conviction**, and many stories include **courageous action** taken with **anointed authority & confident humility**. And there is almost always some sort of **strategic relationships** involved in our stories. Ben explains that only the best stories include **Patient Endurance**, because those are the ones that don't quit when things get hard and painful, and when they encounter obstacles and roadblocks. They make it to the finish line! We looked at Hebrews 12 which reminds us that when we fix our eyes on Jesus, we can keep going & keep running in this with-God kind of life because nothing is wasted.

Ben shared that “hardship isn't pointless or wasted in the Kingdom of God. Instead, when patiently endured, hardship is often a road toward the good stuff. God redeems our suffering. He brings hope into the mix with hardship. And He leverages our hardship to *train us in the art of living.*”

In the with-God kind of life, we can have Patient Endurance because we can trust that God is going to take our hardship and use it (*SOMEHOW!*) for our GOOD. He's going to leverage it to produce holiness, righteousness, and peace in our lives.

// Biblical Context

Ben mentioned the *cloud of witnesses*. Let's talk about what that means. In Hebrews 11 the author lists out the names that are the cloud of witnesses: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc. They are known as a “cloud of witnesses” because of their faithfulness to God and encouragement to us as believers. If you know any of these people and their stories, you know that they were not perfect but faced many hardships and challenges. They are a reminder that we do not struggle alone. Others have gone before us and won the race and their witness encourages us to keep going, to keep fixing our eyes on Jesus. Our lives as believers require focus and training, hence the “running” metaphor. If we look away from

the goal, or Jesus, then we may stumble, but if we fix our eyes on Jesus there is hope. We do that by stripping off excess weight that slows us down or takes our focus away. Fun fact, in ancient times runners ran completely naked to keep anything from holding them back and weighing them down. Ben is not telling you to run naked down the street, but to examine yourself, see what is weighing you down and patiently endure. Not only do we have a cloud of witnesses that ran before us in Biblical times, but we also have people in our lives now that are there to encourage us, such as our family, friends and church.

Baptism

This week Ben challenges us to consider being baptized or baptizing our loved ones on Easter. So, what exactly is baptism?

Baptism is when you come to a point when YOU believe that Jesus is who He says He is. Not “well, my mom believed and she kind of taught me that stuff...” or “my grandma – she taught me some stuff. I go to church. I must be a Christian.” No, no, no. When you believe by faith in who Jesus is, and have confidence that He can and will do all that He promised to do, *that is* when you get baptized.

You don’t have to have it all figured out-- but when you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and you want Him to be your Lord and Savior, getting in the tub is a public display of that private and personal belief. Baptism is the public demonstration by an individual acknowledging that they have been saved by grace through their faith in Jesus. This is depicted by being dunked underwater symbolizing the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus ([Romans 4:9-12](#), [Romans 6:3-4](#)).

// Community Questions

1. Do you like to run for fun or do you think that is the worst thing you could do for fun? If running isn't your thing, what exercise or physical activity do you love?
2. If you could only pick one "immediate gratification" platform/service, what would that be & why? (Amazon, Uber Eats/GrubHub/DoorDash, TikTok, Instagram, Netflix, YouTube, etc.)

// Discussion Questions

Important note to leaders: Please be sure to carve out enough time (15-20 minutes) at the end to do #4 together as group. This exercise can be powerful for groups to connect and be encouraged.

1. Read Hebrews 12:1-2 as a group. Who are your "cloud of witnesses"? Who are the people, past and present, who have encouraged you & cheered you on in your faith? Talk about them and how they specifically encouraged you!

2. Read Hebrews 12:10-13 as a group. Talk about a time that you felt like God was disciplining you or making you wait for something. (ex: getting that job, finding your significant other, having children, breaking the addiction, etc.)

- what was painful about that time?

- what did God teach you through that season? How did you patiently endure?

3. Are there any challenges that you see arising in the next year? If so, what would help you fix your eyes on Jesus as you go through it? What would keep you patiently enduring?

4. Instead of a normal "challenge" this week, we would like to take time to encourage one another. This is sometimes called a "golden hot seat" because each person gets a turn to be encouraged and called out for the good (gold) that people see in them. You have all identified a challenge that you will have to patiently endure this coming year. Each person in the group will have a turn in the "hot seat" and every person in the group will share the good (gold) that they see in them, or a quality that God has given them to overcome this challenge. Then this week, be praying for the person to the right of you.

**TIP: set a timer on your phone and have the group spend just 2-3 minutes on each person. When the timer goes off, transition to the next person.*