

Essential: Becoming

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application
Lynn Haven UMC – August 30, 2020 – Pastor Craig Carter

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These last few weeks we have observed how belonging to the church makes us feel a part of God's family, and also provides an environment where we start believing in Jesus and learning God's will and ways. It is essential for us to belong to a community of faith so we might believe in Jesus and then **become** who God wants us to be.

Discussion Starters:

⇒ The question "What do you want to be when you grow up?" is usually answered with a career field. Think instead about the question, "What character traits do you hope to see in your children when they grow up?" What is your answer to the that question?

God is more interested in our character than our career. Who does God want us to be? What kind of character does He want us to develop?

*God knew his people in advance, and he chose them **to become like his Son**, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. (Romans 8:29 NLT)*

In Hebrews 12 the Christian life is described as the running of a race. So we see there are several steps for becoming like Christ.

1) We become like Christ by SIMPLIFYING our lives.

Let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back, and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up... (Hebrews 12:1a TLB)

Christ died once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people...For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of Christ... (Hebrews 9:28; 10:10 NLT)

2) We become like Christ by UNDERSTANDING it is a process.

Let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us. (Hebrews 12:1b TLB)

3) We become like Christ by **FOCUSING** on Jesus every day.

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. (Hebrews 12:2a TLB, GNT)

All of us have that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more. (2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT)

4) We become like Christ by **REFUSING** to give up.

Jesus did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for him, he thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and he is now seated at the right side of God's throne. Think of what he went through; how he put up with so much hatred from sinners! So do not let yourselves become discouraged and give up. (Hebrews 12:2b-3 GNT)

But if we are to share in Christ's glory, we must also share his suffering. (Romans 8:17b NLT)

5) We become like Christ by **GATHERING** with other believers.

Since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith... (Hebrews 12:1a NLT)

*"If you want to go fast, go alone. But if you want to go far, go together."
(African proverb)*

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but [let us] encourage one another... (Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT)

Reflection Questions:

⇒ Which of these five aspects are you doing well? Which area needs more of your attention and effort?

- Simplifying your life? Is your schedule or your mind too full and distracted?
- Understanding the process? Are you pacing yourself so you will finish well?
- Focusing on Jesus? Are you spending time in the Bible and prayer every day?
- Refusing to give up? Are you committed to simply persevering?
- Gathering with other Christians? Are you too alone in the journey?

⇒ What one step will help you reach your God-given destiny of becoming like Christ?