

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we also keep having and holding such a great cloud [νέφος (*néphos*): **battalion**] of witnesses supporting us [as examples; see Hebrews 11's list of faith-rest heroes], having removed every impediment and all ensnaring sin, let us advance on the run with endurance in the conflict set before us,

The Reason to Advance:

1. The particle “Therefore” resumes the idea stated in Hebrews 10:39 while Chapter 11 presents illustrations that highlight the spiritual exploits of Old Testament winners.
2. This storied lineup of super-grace heroes is presented as an encouragement to each Church Age believer to stay the course God has designed for him.
3. We have the completed canon of Scripture both Old and New Testaments. Those celebrated in Hebrews 11 only had portions of the written Tanakh while Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah functioned on none at all, although Theophanies provided first hand revelations from the Lord.
4. The “removal of every impediment” refers to worldly distractions that hinder the consistent inculcation of the Word of God. None of these are classified as sin, but they serve the purpose by preventing one’s spiritual advance.
5. Sin is a major league distraction that also robs the believer of fellowship with and mentorship of the Holy Spirit and calls a halt to the spiritual life until rebound puts him back in the battle.
6. The final clause is an illustration from warfare, “let us advance on the run with endurance in the conflict set before us.” When the bugler sounds “charge” the army moves toward the enemy on the run using his artillery of thought to “extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one” (Ephesians 6:16).
7. The “conflict set before us” is the Angelic Conflict waged in the scrum of the Invisible War. The battle being waged can be individual or collective: (1) a believer’s own personal situations that require his soul’s divine artillery to extinguish or (2) collectively with other members of the Pivot to fight the good fight of faith against the relentless forces of the Dark Side within one’s client nation.

Ephesians 6:13 Take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (NASB)



The Attack's Objective:

Hebrews 12:2 fixing your eyes
[ἀφοράω (*aphoráō*): “to concentrate”] on Jesus
[occupation with Christ as commanding Officer],
the Founder and Perfecter of our faith, Who, in
exchange for His present happiness set before Him,
endured the cross [spiritual death], having
disregarded the shame [the imputation of mankind's
sins], He has sat down [καθίζω (*kathízō*): session] at
the right hand of the throne of God.

1. “Fixing your eyes” stresses the act of looking steadfastly and intently on an object. The Object here is Jesus Christ upon Whom we are to concentrate. He is given two titles: (1) ἀρχηγός (*archēgós*): “Originator, Founder” and (2) τελειωτής (*teleiōtēs*): “Finisher” or “Perfecter.”
2. What He founded and perfected is “our faith.” An inventory of divine thought contained in the immutable Word of God that is organized into doctrines pertinent to eleven categories of systematic theology.
3. The phrase, “in exchange for His present happiness” is the translation of two words, (1) ἀντί (*antí*): “instead of” and (2) χαρά (*chará*): “joy” or better, “happiness.”
4. The Lord possessed total happiness, but that mental attitude was surrendered so that he could endure the environment of spiritual death while disregarding the shame of being imputed the sins of the world.
5. When the judgment was completed, the Lord's human spirit went to the Father, His soul to the Holy Spirit, and His body to the tomb.
6. Three days later He was resurrected (Matthew 28:6), forty days later He ascended into the third heaven (Acts 1:9), after which His session occurred at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 12:2).
7. “Session” is a theological term that describes the Lord taking a seat at the right hand of the Father. Here is a brief definition of the word *kathízō*, translated, “sat down”:

Session. The Old Testament portrays God as seated on the throne of the universe, thereby signifying sovereignty (1 Kings 22:19; Psalm 2:4; 99:1). In Psalm 110:1 the Messiah is invited to occupy a position of honor at His right hand (Mark 12:36; Acts 2:34; Hebrews 1:13)

To this position God exalted Christ at his ascension (Ephesians 1:20–23, which employs *kathízō*).



Hebrews 1:3; 10:12; 12:2 describe the session as the sequel to his one complete sacrifice on earth. He sits as high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 8:1; 10:12), exercising his priesthood of sympathetic assistance to men and intercession for them (Hebrews 4:14–16; 2:17–18; 7:17–27) until all is finally subjected to him (Hebrews 10:13). His session also points toward his future judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10).³

The Command to Be Occupied with Christ:

Hebrews 12:3 Consider, deliberate in your mind [Aorist⁴ middle imperative of ἀναλογίζομαι (*analogízomai*): “to reason with careful deliberation”⁵] about Him [Jesus Christ], having endured [ὑπομένω (*hupoménō*): persevered] such opposition [ἀντιλογία (*antilogía*): reproach] by sinners against Himself, so that you do not become wearied [κάμνω (*kámnō*): fainthearted], even despondent [present passive participle of ἐκλύω (*eklúō*)] in you souls. (EXT)

4. The verb *analogízomai* is a hapax legomenon in the Greek New Testament. It is borrowed from Classical Greek and used in the writings of Plato, Diogenes, and Philodemus. It is defined by the terms:

Reckon up, sum up; calculate the past and the present in comparison with the future; take into account.⁶

5. The imperative mood of verse 3 actually sums up the information preceding it going back to the final verse of Hebrews 10:

Hebrews 10:39 We are not among those who retreat to their own destruction [**sin unto death**], but rather we are among those who have doctrine preserving our souls. (EXT)

³ D. H. Wheaton, “Session,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 1007.

⁴ “The ingressive aorist adds the concept that you begin to think because of what you have just learned. This command can be obeyed only when you have mastered the principles delineated in verses 1 and 2: consistency and persistence of positive volition toward doctrine. Once you seize and hold the high ground, your perspective changes and so does your scale of values. You gain an entirely different viewpoint of who or what is important in life. You become aware of Jesus Christ as the only Celebrity, and you begin to concentrate on Him” (R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Follow the Colors* [Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1975], 73–74).

⁵ Walter Bauer, “ἀναλογίζομαι,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 67.

⁶ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., rev. Henry Stuart Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), 111.



1. Chapter 11 is a roster of Old Testament saints who have overcome impediments, challenges, and difficulties typical of the devil's world and with doctrine overcame them.
2. We recently noted the situation report of Abraham in Hebrews 11:17–19 where he utilized his Law of Freedom to reference the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant as the working objects of his faith resulting in his “vindication by works” on Mount Moriah.
3. It would have been better if those who separated the New Testament manuscripts into verses would have left the first three verses of chapter 12 as the coda for chapter 11.
4. The spiritual heroes highlighted in chapter 11 are referred to as, “so great a cloud of witnesses” in Hebrews 12:1. New Testament believers are to follow the examples of those Old Testament heroes.
5. These are individuals who the Holy Spirit singled out to offer us encouragement about keeping our eyes focused on the “Founder and Perfecter of our faith” noted in Hebrews 12:2.
6. You are not to conclude that these individuals are up in the sky looking down on us to be our witnesses. The word “cloud” is the noun **νέφος** (*néphos*), used figuratively for a numberless throng.
7. These heroes are said to be “surrounding us,” the present participle of **περίκαμαι** (*períkaimai*): used figuratively for the throng surrounding Church Age winners.
8. These “witnesses” are not floating around in the sky. Their reputations are clearly demonstrated in the Tanakh and their exploits are reviewed in chapter 11.
9. Therefore, Church Age believers are to be motivated to take their example to “remove every impediment and the easily ensnaring sin.”
10. When engaged in a conflict, a soldier does not need to be burdened with unnecessary encumbrances, illustrated here by the noun **ἁμαρτία** (*hamartía*): “sin.”
11. Verse 2 introduces the first mandate to be occupied with Christ. The first word in the verse is the present active participle of **ἀφοράω** (*aphoráō*): to fix or focus one's eyes.”
12. The customary present indicates this effort is expected of every believer while the active voice indicates that believers produce the action of the verb. The imperatival use of the participle is a command. This gives us the translation: “Be concentrating on” or “Be focusing your eyes on Jesus!”



13. This reminds us of the chorus of the hymn, “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” by Helen H. Lemmel:

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.**
14. Tammy, Eric, and I often choose a special hymn for Sunday’s first sessions. I present the history and background behind the hymn and its writer and the congregation joins in the singing of it. The backstory of ,“Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus,” is in volume 1 of the *Then Sings My Soul* trilogy. At the top of the page of the story accompanying the song is this notation: “... let us run with endurance the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1c–2a).
15. Hebrews 12:2 issues the first of two commands in verses 2 and 3 that mandate the believer to become occupied with Christ. The second occurs at the very beginning of verse 3, just noted.
16. Concentration on Jesus also focuses the believer on the Lord’s sacrifice on the cross where the verse informs us that he endured or persevered against “sinners,” whose sins were imputed to Him for judgment.
17. From this concentration, the verse moves into a negative final clause which is introduced by a purpose, aim, or goal, “so that you do not become wearied in your souls, the aorist active subjunctive of **κἀμνω (kāmno)**: or even exhausted because of living in reversionism.
18. Unchecked, a wearied soul can become despondent, the causal present passive participle of **ἐκλύω (eklyō)**. This is a retroactive progressive present denoting what was begun in the past and continues into the present time.
19. The passive voice reveals that believers in Jerusalem of A.D. 67 were despondent, a status revealing they were in reversionism and are being encouraged to get back in fellowship and refocus on their occupation with Christ.

Principles on Occupation with Christ:

1. Occupation with Christ is the tenth and ultimate problem-solving device. Acquisition of it is the highest spiritual function for the believer in time.
2. Occupation with Christ is the ultimate expression of love toward the three Persons of the Trinity:

Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is
our God, the Lord is one!