

WEEK THREE
YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL
JESUS CONNECTION: KEEP OUR EYES ON JESUS
PARTICIPANT GUIDE

One of the metaphors used in the Bible for Christian life is a race. These races were not to be quick sprints, but long endurance runs, like marathons.

- What advice would you give a person who was going to run a marathon?
- The Author of Hebrew gives advice to people who are running the life of faith, what advice do you think they give?

HEBREWS 12: 1-3 (NLT)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. 3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

- What might be things that slow a runner down? What might trip up a runner? What is the difference?
- For the Christian, what might be things that slow us down and things that trip us up?
- The author suggests that sin trips us up, so then what are the things that weigh us down? What are things that keep slow us down from following Jesus?

KEEP OUR EYES ON JESUS: MATTHEW 14: 25-33: Peter Walks on Water.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

29 "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.

- Why were the disciples afraid when they saw Jesus? Would you be?
- What do you think of Peter inviting himself on the water? Why don't the other disciples join him? What would you have done?
- How was Peter able to walk on the water?
- Why did he take his eyes off Jesus? What happened when he did?

The waves of the world will try and distract and drown us. It is easy to feel alone and afraid. It is then that we often take our eyes off Jesus and start to sink.

- What are some things that distract us from keeping our eyes on Jesus?
- How does keeping our eyes on Jesus during storms of life keep us afloat?
- How does taking our eyes off Jesus cause us to sink? (we lose focus, let sin pull us down, etc.)
- What should we do when we start to sink? (look back to Jesus and call out for help)
- What happens when we call out to Jesus? (He catches us)

Are you floating or sinking? Are you keeping your eyes on Jesus, or are you letting things in your life weigh you down or trip you up? If you are floating, **keep** your eyes on Jesus. If you feel like you are drowning, reach out. Jesus is there ready to grab your hand.

Perseverance does not mean perfection. It means keep going. Perseverance is not resignation, putting up with things the way they are. Endurance is not desperately hanging on; instead, it is traveling from strength to strength. Perseverance is not the result of our determination; it is the result of God's faithfulness.²⁴ - **Eugene Peterson**

- How can we be encouraged to know that perseverance does not mean doing it perfect, but keep going?
- How does God's faithfulness give us strength to keep going?

CALM. QUIET. HOPE. TRUST.

Psalm 131 1-2a (NLT) Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself...

- How does having a proud heart and haughty eyes cause us to drown? How is that like things that weigh us down and tripping us up?
- How does keeping our eyes on Jesus lead to a calm heart and quiet soul?

PRAYER: Psalm 131 (NLT)

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

²⁴ Peterson, Eugene. A Long Obedience in the Same Direction, pg. 125-127