

# GROWTH GROUPS

March 18, 2012

Hebrews 12:1-3

## Conversation Starter –

When you think of the “cloud of witnesses” what comes to mind? Who comes to mind? Are there particular people from the past or present you would hold up as your example or support in your “race” towards faithfulness?

## Understanding –

Hebrews 12:1 speaks of being surrounded by “so great a cloud of witnesses.” Read the list of witnesses referenced in Hebrews 11. These people serve as examples of faithfulness to God. In Presbyterian tradition we affirm a “communion of saints.” These saints are the collection of everyone who has, is, and will be faithful to Jesus Christ. By acknowledging the “witnesses” and “saints” in the faith we can be strengthened in our own race of faithfulness.

1. **Hebrews 12:1** says, “we are *surrounded* by so great a cloud of witnesses.” This word that is most often translated as surrounded, in the Greek also carries the meaning “bound.” In a world focused on being independent and self sufficient, what does it mean to be bound to those who share our faith in history, in the present, and in the future? How does this impact how you view yourself and your role in the Church?
2. We are told to “lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely,” and “run with perseverance the *race* that is set before us.” Here it is important to note that “race” can also be translated as “gathering,” so while we all may run at slightly different paces, this is not a competition. Who is it that you have thought to be competition in the race of faithfulness? Is there an opportunity to learn from their example?
3. Read **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**. Using the example of the church being a body made up of many parts, what part of the **body of the church** do you think you would be? How does your part support the other parts of the body? How are you supported by the other parts of the body?
4. **1 Corinthians 12:26** says, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it.” This causes us to look to the greater body of faith. Who is it that needs help running this race? How can you strengthen them?

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