



Therefore ... Leader Guide

Opening Read aloud, all together, Hebrews 12:1-2, adding the prayer which follows:

¹Therefore, ^Qsince we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ^Rlet us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and ^Slet us run with endurance ^Tthe race that is set before us, ^Ulooking to Jesus, ^Vthe founder and perfecter of our faith, ^Wwho for the joy that was set before him ^Xendured the cross, ^Ydespising the shame, and ^Zis seated at the right hand of the throne of God (ESV). ... Heavenly Father, share with me Your holiness, and let me see You face-to-face eternally. Amen*.

Introduction When you read the title above, do you think cause and effect? Reason and result? Explanation and conclusion? **Comments may include: Some reasoning, cause, or explanation has been stated and a result, effect, or conclusion is given.** Brainstorm several synonyms for *therefore*. **Answers may include: so, then, thus, hence, consequently, accordingly, wherefore, as a result, from now, for that reason, because of that, that's why, etc.**

For the following, list the cause or reasoning, synonym if used, then effect or result.

NOTE to LEADER: The answer to the first passage has been started as an example.

Exodus 4:10-12 God makes mouths / now therefore / go speak

¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue." ¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?" ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak."

Hebrews 7:22-25 Jesus holds His priesthood permanently / consequently / He is able to save to the uttermost

²² This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. ²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

1 Timothy 1:14-16 Paul was the foremost of sinners / for this reason / he received mercy so that Christ might display His perfect patience as an example.

¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinner, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

How does **Hebrews 11:1-3** serve as the cause or reasoning for **12:1-2**? **Answers may include: We understand (in our limited human capacity); by faith; things hoped for/not seen. This includes creation by the word of God; looking to Jesus and His death, resurrection and ascension; the promise of salvation and eternity with God; trust in Word and Sacraments.**

Hebrews 11:1-3 ¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

NOTE to LEADER: Point out the capital letters within Hebrews above. The first Past answer is given as an example. The complete phrases are included below for ease in leading.

Another role of *therefore* is linking segments of timelines. Using the superscript letters within the **Opening** verses, assign the ten phrases to the past, present and/or future. Note: some will fit more than one category.

Answers may include:

Past: V/W/X/Y Present: Q/R/S/T/U/Z Future: S/T/U/Z

Past

^V [Jesus] the founder and perfecter of our faith

^W who for the joy that was set before him

^X endured the cross

^Y despising the shame

Present

^Q since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,

^R let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely,

^S let us run with endurance

^T the race that is set before us,

^U looking to Jesus

^Z and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Future

^S let us run with endurance

^T the race that is set before us,

^U looking to Jesus,

^Z and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Paul experienced *therefore*: *Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this [a thorn was given me in the flesh], that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong* (2 Corinthians 12:8-10).

How do these references enrich the phrases of the **Opening** passage?

^Q Ephesians 2:19-20 _____

^R 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 _____

^S Romans 5:1-5 _____

^T 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 _____

^U Hebrews 10:19-23 _____

^V 2 Cor. 5:14-21 _____

^W Luke 24:25-27 _____

X **Isaiah 53:3-6, 11a** _____
Y **Philippians 2:5-11** _____
Z **Hebrews 1:1-3** _____

NOTE to LEADER: If time is limited, some minutes may be saved by asking individuals or small groups to report on the reference listed for each phrase. Encourage participants to explore the section further in their own study at home.

NOTE 2 Many references could have been chosen to enhance the phrases of this beautiful passage. At least one additional reference has been mentioned for each phrase. You are invited to share them with the group, if time allows.

NOTE 3 (matter of interest only): Many of the references contain *therefore* or a synonym.

Q since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,

Ephesians 2:19-20 Believers are among, and part of, a host of witnesses — saints, members of the household of God, apostles, prophets — with Christ the cornerstone. The Bible records witnesses to numerous events in Jesus' life: teaching; healing; Baptism; The Lord's Supper; transfiguration; crucifixion; post-resurrection; ascension. Others witness to us and we to others. // In **1 John 1:1-4**, the disciple proclaims personal testimony about his crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ: ¹*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—*

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

R let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely,

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 All humans face temptations, but as we rely on God's strength, He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to endure. // Paul tells us in **Romans 6:1-6** that, because of our flesh, we do suffer temptation, but our faith struggles against it. In Baptism, we are raised to walk in newness of life and, under God's grace, no longer enslaved to sin.

¹² Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

S let us run with endurance

Romans 5:1-5 Justified by faith, we rejoice in our sufferings, which produce endurance, which produces character, which produces hope. God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. // **Hebrews 10:35-36** tells us such confidence has great reward: ³⁶*For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised [eternal life].*

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

T the race that is set before us,

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 We are to live the Christian walk with purpose: using self-control; serving and witnessing to others; keeping our eyes on the prize of eternal life with God. // The author of **Ecclesiastes**

reminds us in **9:11** that the race is not always to the swift ... that time and chance — and unexpected events — happen to all. We trust in the power of faith in Christ's death and resurrection.

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

^U *looking to Jesus*

Hebrews 10:19-23 By the sacrifice of Jesus' body and blood, God gives us faith and hope. Confessing Christ, we can draw near to God with a true heart and clean conscience. // Jesus Himself promised in **John 6:40**: *For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

^V *the founder and perfecter of our faith,*

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 God, through Christ, reconciled us to Himself — and we are, in Christ, a new creation. Jesus, Who knew no sin, became sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. The message of reconciliation has been entrusted to us, making us His ambassadors. // Paul writes to the **Ephesians** in **2:4-7** that, because of God's rich mercy and love, even when we were dead in our trespasses, we have been made alive together with Christ, saved by grace.

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^W *who for the joy that was set before him*

Luke 24:25-27 Jesus will suffer crucifixion and death before resurrection and ascension lead “into His glory.” // He explains in **John 10:16-17** that He will lay down His life that He might take it up again, in order to bring other sheep into the fold. Paul explains in **Galatians 3:7-9** that Scripture preached the gospel to Abraham, foreseeing the justification of the Gentiles by faith, saying “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” Christ's love for us moved Him to die on a cross for our sake.

²⁵ And he [Jesus] said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

^X *endured the cross,*

Isaiah 53:3-6, 11a Though righteous, Christ died a painful death on the cross: despised and rejected; carrying our griefs and sorrows; anguished, stricken, smitten, afflicted, chastised, wounded and crushed; bearing the iniquity of us all. // Christ Himself warns the disciples in **Luke 18:31-33a** that, in Jerusalem, everything written about Him by the prophets will be accomplished. “... ³² For he will be delivered over to

the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. ^{33a} And after flogging him, they will kill him, ...”

³ He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ^{11a} Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;

^Y despising the shame,

Philippians 2:5-11 Though Jesus was in the form of God, He made Himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant. In human form, He humbled Himself to death on a cross. // Jesus told the Pharisees in **John 8:28-29** that the Father had sent Him, was with Him, and supported the things He was saying and doing.

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

^Z and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 1:1-3 In these last days God has spoken to us by His Son and heir, through Whom He created the world. After making purification for sins, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high and upholds the universe by the word of His power. // **Mark** reports in **16:14-16a,19-20** that, after charging the eleven to go into all the world to proclaim the gospel to all creation (they went out and preached everywhere that *whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*), the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

The reason is our sin. The result is Jesus’ death on the cross for our redemption. Therefore, what was Paul’s witness in 2 Timothy 4:7-8?

2 Timothy in 4:7-8: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

As Time Allows

Locate and discuss additional passages which include *therefore* or a synonym.

Make a list of witnesses mentioned in Hebrews 11. Add witnesses important in your own life.

Compare Isaiah 53 with Hebrews 12:1-2.

Closing Prayer write *The Christian life is an endurance race, run with remembrance of the saints who have already finished. But, most of all, we look to Jesus and His cross. In Him, our race is already won. Lord Jesus, save me from my sin, which clings so closely, and give me endurance to do Your will. Amen**.*

Closing Hymn Sing or say together “Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus” (*LSB* #529) or “On My Heart Imprint Your Image” (*LSB* #422; *LW* #100; *TLH* #179).

* *The Lutheran Study Bible*, page 2125 ***TLSB*, page 2124