



SERMON NOTES

KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Understanding God's Discipline

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11)

Three ways we may respond to discipline:

1. Escape
2. Fight
3. Grow

To help understand this difficult subject, Nik wrote an article entitled [*A Theology of God's Discipline*](#) that you can use for personal study or group discussion.

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Sermon Overview

Weariness. Sluggishness. Apathy. We have all experienced these feelings at some point—they drain our excitement and energy for living well. So, what do you do when you find yourself in a season of exhaustion and fatigue?

The book of Hebrews is written to a group of Christians who had found themselves in that type of season. In the midst of opposition and life's complications, they were in danger of losing interest in following Christ. So, this book reminds them of the resources they have in Christ and the nature of the journey they are on. All along the way, the author's challenge to them and to us is simply this—keep moving forward!

Praying Scripture

The prayer focus this week is Hebrews 12:1.

"Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?"

Below is an example of how to pray the passage:

Father, help me to endure your discipline and instruction in my life with wisdom and grace, knowing that through it you are forming me into the image of Christ. Give me a teachable spirit and a heart of humble submission and willing obedience so that I may learn what you want to teach me and flourish in all that I do. I pray this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

MARCH 17

In Proverbs 3:11-12, the author reminds believers that God disciplines those he loves. This chapter addresses a question that is often on the minds of believers today. Why do bad things happen to good people? The words in Hebrews 12 remind us that suffering and trials are used by God to instruct and discipline us, not as punishment, but as a pathway to growth and transformation.



DAY ONE

Breathe, listen, pray and ask the Spirit to guide your time.

Read: Hebrews 12:4-29

1. What is the tone in verse 5? Why does the author use the language of family?
2. Why shouldn't we lose heart when God rebukes or disciplines us? (12:5-9)
3. What is the purpose of discipline? What does discipline produce in the life of the believer? (12:10-11)

Reflect on your life. When have you experienced the Lord's discipline? How did you respond?

DAY TWO

Breathe, listen, pray and ask the Spirit to guide your time.

Read Hebrews 12:4-29.

1. What does the writer tell the believers to do? (12:12) Practically speaking, what would it look like to implement the exhortations mentioned in 12:12-13?
2. How does the admonition in 12:14 point back to 12:11? What is the connection between 12:15 and 12:14?
3. How is the example of Esau (12:16-17) a warning to the Hebrew believers? Why do you think the author specifically mentioned that particular example? Read Genesis 25:29-34 to see what specific sinful attitudes caused him to be listed in Hebrews as "unholy."

Reflect on the challenges of living at peace with "all men," and be holy. What do you find challenging about obeying this exhortation? How does 12:15 help clarify the importance of the statement?



DAY THREE

Breathe, listen, pray and ask the Spirit to guide your time.

Read Hebrews 12:4-29.

1. What two contrasting images are presented in 12:18-24? Fill in the chart below to note how each is described. (See also Exodus 19:1-25)

Mount _____	Mount _____

2. In light of the wonders and privileges of the New Covenant, what warning does the author give the readers? (12:25)
3. What does the imagery of “shaking” refer to? (12:26-27) Read Haggai 2:6 to get a better picture of Hebrews (12:26-27). What cannot be shaken? (12:28-29)

Reflect on the final two verses in this passage. How would you describe acceptable worship? When do you feel like your worship is most authentic expressing reverence and awe?

Respond and Apply: This passage has a number of warnings and expectations as well as encouragement. List 3 ways that this passage has impacted you and how you desire to surrender to and obey God’s words spoken in this passage?

After doing the study this week, spend time worshipping the Lord as you reflect on the song [House of the Lord](#). Use this time to remember what God has done for you and how his love includes instruction to help transform you into the character of Christ.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How would you define discipline in general? How does this passage define God’s discipline?
2. Hebrews 12:6 states that God disciplines the people he loves. How has your upbringing impacted how you view God’s discipline?
3. What are three ways we respond to God’s discipline? How have you responded to God’s discipline in your life?
4. How do we discern if our experiences/circumstances are God’s discipline in our lives?
5. Why is it problematic to assume that difficulties in our lives are negative examples of God’s discipline? How can hardships result in flourishing?
6. How does godly discipline help us be a better disciple who makes disciples? (Remember that discipline and disciple have the same root word.)