

**ACCEPT THE DIFFICULTY, REMEMBER THE EXHORTATION,
EMBRACE THE DISCIPLINE, JOYFULLY ANTICIPATE THE HARVEST**

How to Run with ENDURANCE



AND ALL DISCIPLINE FOR THE MOMENT SEEMS NOT TO BE JOYFUL, BUT SORROWFUL, BUT TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY IT, AFTERWARDS IT YIELDS THE PEACEFUL FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (HEBREWS 12:11 LSB).

1. **Accept** the difficulty—the race is hard, 12:3-4.

- (Hebrews 12:3–4 LSB) For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary, fainting in heart. 4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.
- A. This is not saying that we will shed blood but that physical harm is possible maybe unto death.
- B. The lesson here is that we must accept that the race set before us is difficult and may become even more difficult.
- C. Enduring hostility and striving against sin are always on the horizon for those of us who look to Jesus and stay true to the gospel.
- (Hebrews 12:1b–2a LSB) Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus.
- D. Resisting conformity to this world and resisting false teaching in the Church is striving against sin which leads to persecution.
- (Galatians 6:12 NLT) Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised want to look good to others. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the cross of Christ alone can save.
 - (2 Timothy 3:10–13 NIV) You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- E. We need to remember that we began the race by entering through the narrow starting gate.
- (Matthew 7:13–14 LSB) Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it.
- F. We need to understand that entering through the narrow starting gate our raceway is constricted and our only choice is to follow Jesus no matter what.

- (Matthew 16:24–25 ESV) Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

2. **Remember** the exhortation, 12:5-6.

- (Hebrews 12:5-6 LSB) And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE FLOGS EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”
- A. Do not forget the exhortation—the supportive words of the Father to us his sons (and daughters).
- Forget ... to forget completely; to lose remembrance of something entirely.
- B. His love for us and his relationship to us as his sons began before the foundation of the world.
- (Ephesians 1:4–5 ESV) Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.
- C. We must not forget that our Father has clearly spoken regarding his relationship to us as his adopted sons who are also fellow heirs with Christ.
- (Romans 8:15–17 LSB) For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, also heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

D. Do not regard lightly the discipline of the LORD.

Do not take what is heavy from the LORD’s perspective and make it light in regard what is happening in our lives. This teaching is weighty; it is of extreme importance in regard to our sanctification.

E. The discipline of the LORD is a very weighty matter.

Regarding discipline as weighty gives us clarity and perspective. We understand what the

LORD is doing during this time of trial. Regarding it lightly blurs our perspective and replaces clarity with confusion and doubt regarding God's will and his care for us as Shepherd of our souls.

F. Embrace the weighty concept of the Father's discipline as an expression of his infinite, eternal love toward his children.

- i. Discover the Father's amazing love that abounds through this discipline.
- ii. Learn to identify the truly powerful nature of the Father's love in his discipline of our lives.
- iii. Submit to this training in godliness and learn how his discipline is necessary to our sanctification. Discover and praise God for his love to us in this process.

John MacArthur speaking of the love of God ...

He loves us. He has set His love on us. It's an unbreakable love. If He started loving, He will love to the end. It has no deviation. It means completely, perfectly, fully, utterly, to the max, to the end, both in terms of capacity and eternity. He loves as much as He can love. As much as God can love, that's how much He loves.

O HOW HE LOVES YOU AND ME.

G. Do not be so overwhelmed with life that we are tempted to forget what God has told us concerning the trials and tests of life.

- (Romans 5:3–5 ESV) Not 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.

Suffering produces endurance ... produces character ... produces hope. People who are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ are hopeful because the Holy Spirit is pouring God's love into our hearts. **The process begins with rejoicing in suffering.**

- (1 Peter 4:12 LSB) Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you, which comes upon you for your testing**, as though some strange thing were happening to you.

God's discipline should not surprise us, but it does because we, like those to whom the

pastor is writing this text, sometimes forget completely what he has told us.

- (James 1:2–3 NIV) **Consider it pure joy**, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces **perseverance**.

We are to consider it pure joy as we face various assorted trials. Why? Because God is at work in our lives producing perseverance (endurance) which enables us to keep running and continue our training by the hand of God.

H. Do not faint when we are strongly reprovved by the LORD.

- i. Do not **misinterpret** the LORD's discipline and have it to be something that causes us to faint rather than enables us to endure.
- ii. Do not **reinterpret** the LORD's discipline and imagine it do be something that causes us to live in denial which will also cause us to faint and not endure.

3. Embrace the discipline, 12:7-10.

- (Hebrews 12:7–11 LSB) **It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons**; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 **But if you are without discipline**, of which all have become partakers, **then you are illegitimate children and not sons**. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them. Shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, **but He disciplines us for our benefit, so that we may share His holiness**.

A. We need to understand the nature and purpose of the Father's discipline.

B. Discipline is training is sanctification.

C. We run with endurance to continue our training—our sanctification.

D. Discipline is God's means of accomplishing his stated purpose for us in conforming us to the image of his beloved Son.

- (Romans 8:28–29a LSB) And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. 29 **Because those whom He foreknew, He**

also **predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.**

- (1 Corinthians 15:47–49 ESV) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, **we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.**
- (1 John 3:2 ESV) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; **but we know that when he appears we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is.
- (Ephesians 1:4–5 ESV) **Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.** In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will.**

E. THE BENEFIT: SO THAT WE MAY SHARE HIS HOLINESS.

- (Hebrews 12:10b LSB) ... He disciplines us for our **benefit**, **so that we may share his holiness.**

R.C. Sproul ... Holiness is the characteristic of God's nature that is at the very core of His being.

The **benefit** of God's discipline to us is that we will share with God what is at the very core of his being.

God is other than us—different.

Sproul ... That Which Is Different ... I notice in our own language and vocabulary, the term holy seems to be used among us, particularly among Christians, as a synonym for moral purity or righteousness. ... However, the primary meaning of the word is "separate." ... That which is holy is that which is other—that which is different from something else.

When the Bible speaks about God's holiness, the primary thrust of those statements is to refer to God's transcendence, to His magnificence, to that sense in which God is higher and superior to anything there is in the creaturely realm.

MacArthur quoting ... In speaking of the holiness of God, it is good, perhaps, to begin with something of a definition. It was A. A. Hodge who said, "The holiness of God is not to be conceived of as one attribute among others. It is rather a general term representing the conception of God's consummate perfection and total glory. It is His infinite moral perfection crowning His infinite intelligence and power."

Sproul ... God's being, His self-existence, His being is utterly separate from ours, and He made that so clear. His is being and ours is becoming. He is utterly distinct from us. ... He is other than we are as to the essence of His existence, His nature. ... He is incomparable. He is infinite perfection.

4. Joyfully anticipate the harvest, 12:11.

- (Hebrews 12:11 LSB) And all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, **but to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

A. Understand discipline for what God says it is and not for what it may seem to be at the moment.

B. Look past sorrow to joy.

C. Joyfully anticipate the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

- (Romans 15:13 LSB) Now may the God of hope **fill you with all joy and peace in believing**, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- (1 Peter 4:13–14 NKJV) But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, **you may also be glad with exceeding joy.** 14 **If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.** On their part He is blasphemed, **but on your part He is glorified.**
- (Jude 24–25 NKJV) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless **Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,** 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.