

DISCIPLINED HOLINESS

(Hebrews 12:4-29)

DAY ONE READING AND QUESTIONS:

⁴In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
⁶because the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”

⁷Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹No 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.

¹²Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. ¹³“Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

1. *How is discipline a "word of encouragement"?*
2. *Why does God discipline us?*
3. *How does discipline lead to endurance in our Christian walk?*

DAY TWO READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹⁴Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

1. *What is holiness? How do we become holy?*
2. *How can we miss the grace of God?*
3. *How is Esau an example to us?*

DAY THREE READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹⁸You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it

must be stoned." ²¹The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

²²But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

1. *What is the first mountain described here? What is the contrast between it and Mount Zion?*
2. *How do we share the joy of the angels?*
3. *What does it mean to be part of the church of the firstborn? What did the firstborn receive in Bible times?*

DAY FOUR READING AND QUESTIONS:

²⁵See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?

²⁶At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." ²⁷The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our "God is a consuming fire."

1. *What warning does God give from heaven? Is it kind to warn others?*
2. *How is the kingdom one that cannot be shaken? What is the point of all the shaking language here?*
3. *"Our God is a consuming fire." Is this an encouraging word? A frightening word? Should we ever be frightened of God?*

DAY FIVE READING AND QUESTIONS:

Go back and read the entire passage.

1. *How are discipline and holiness related?*
2. *How do the two mountains, Sinai and Zion, relate to discipline and holiness?*
3. *What does it look like to worship with reverence and awe?*

MEDITATION ON HEBREWS 12:14-29

Among my many faults is this: I am easily discouraged. If something comes easy, I continue to do it. If it's difficult, I generally give up after a few tries.

Discipline is not my strong suit. Yet almost everything worthwhile is accomplished through discipline. Especially following Jesus.

It is hard to follow Jesus. That hardship sometimes takes the form of opposition from others. Most often, it takes the form of discouragement. Today looks a lot like yesterday. Tomorrow will look a lot like today. We grow tired of the same old thing. The road of holiness

is long and our legs grow weary.

What we need is discipline. We need to see our hardships as evidence of God's love and signs of our legitimacy as children of God. We also need to see more clearly where the road of holiness leads. We do not approach a mountain of fear but a mountain of joy. Yes, that joy leads to reverence and awe but not to fear of punishment. For we come to a Savior who gave his blood for us.

Yes, we serve a powerful, holy God who calls us to be his children. Hearing that call, we approach him in confidence and with discipline. Discipline is no fun, but we need it. We continue to run our race with patience, even when it hurts. We do not lose heart for we know we run with a loving Savior toward a welcoming Father. No matter what, our faith will not be shaken.

"Father, give us discipline. Strengthen our hearts. Make us stronger through hardships. May we continue to follow Jesus through pain and through boredom."