



INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 12:3-17

“Administering discipline is a parent’s job. No one disciplines someone else’s children. The one who disciplines is treating the recipient like a son or daughter. When Solomon [in the book of Proverbs] writes to his own son, whom he disciplined, he essentially says, “You should take the Lord’s discipline as the sign of how much he loves you, in the same way that I discipline you because I love you.” The writer of Hebrews assumes that discipline is an act of love by the righteous parent who understands his child’s need.

Discipline is by nature unpleasant. It is painful, but it has a purpose. Parents know what they’re doing. Children don’t always know why they’re being disciplined or how the discipline is an act of love, but it’s not necessary that children understand these things at every point. If children understood all this in advance, they would not have done whatever it was that required the discipline. Certain lessons can only be learned by discipline.”¹

Watch It Bible Principles

Watch Bible Principles #19; Heb. 12:3-13 & #20; Heb. 12:14-17 www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples

Open it

1. Describe what discipline was like in your household when you were a child. As you reflect on it, was this helpful or harmful to you?

¹R. Albert Mohler, *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews*, Christ-Centered Exposition (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Reference ; B & H Publishing Group, 2017), 198–99.

Apply it

When we studied Hebrews 11, we saw a list of people from the Old Testament who showed faith in God. They all had struggles and they all persevered. But Jesus endured so much more than any of them. He endured the cross! This involved shame, suffering, and abuse from people. These were people that He had created! On the cross, He suffered for sins and completed the work God had for Him to do (John 17:4).²

7. It can be easy for Christ's death to lose its impact in your heart. Why is it important that you continue to be moved by Christ's sacrifice?

8. What are some things you can do in order to be reminded of what Christ has done for you?

The people who originally read Hebrews eventually died, but the author reminded them that when they first read the words of the book, they were still very much alive. They had not died for their faith. At least "not yet." Christ had died, but they had not.

9. Many Christians throughout history have died for their faith. We call them martyrs. If you have read the story of a Christian martyr, write one or two details from their story that impacted you. If you've never read about any Christian martyrs, go to the website below and pick an ancient martyr to read about.

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/martyrs/>

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 323.

“The ‘not yet’ in verse 4 is critical. Although some Christians might not yet have experienced physical persecution, it remains a real possibility for all of us. We must always remember that the comfort we know now is not guaranteed to last forever.”³

10. List some ways Christians can prepare for persecution.

Read Proverbs 3:11-12. When Solomon wrote those words, he was encouraging children to see discipline as a positive thing. The author of Hebrews quotes these proverbs (Verses 5-6) as he begins a section comparing a father's discipline to God's discipline.

11. Describe why it is sometimes hard to believe discipline from a parent is a good thing.

12. Describe why it is sometimes hard to believe discipline from God is a good thing.

³ Mohler, *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews*, 198.

There is tension all over our world. Family members hold grudges. Politicians battle each other. Nations fight wars. It can seem like no one can live in harmony! And yet, the writer of Hebrews encourages us to strive to live at peace with everyone.

13. Describe a situation either in the past or present where it has been difficult for you to maintain peace with someone. Why was it so hard to be at peace?

14. We are told to strive to be at peace with everyone. What are some ways you can strive to be at peace with people?

In his classic book *The Pursuit of Holiness*, Jerry Bridges encourages people to work hard to live a holy life. One of the reasons for this is because we can never experience true joy when we are pursuing sin. “The Christian living in disobedience also lives devoid of joy and hope. But when he begins to understand that Christ has delivered him from the reign of sin, when he begins to see that he is united to Him who has all power and authority and that it is possible to walk in obedience, he begins to have hope, and as he hopes in Christ, he begins to have joy. In the strength of this joy, he begins to overcome the sins that have so easily entangled him. He then finds that the joy of a holy walk is infinitely more satisfying than the fleeting pleasures of sin. But to experience this joy, we must make some choices. We must choose to forsake sin, not only because it is defeating to us but because it grieves the heart of God.”⁴

15. Would you describe your life as holy right now? Why or why not? Remember, living a holy life isn't about perfection. Only Christ is perfect. Living a holy life is about gaining victory over sin in God's power and strength.

⁴ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2016), 125.

16. What are some ways you protect yourself against sexual immorality?

In the book of Genesis, brothers Jacob and Esau have a dysfunctional relationship from the beginning. Esau was promised a big inheritance, called a birthright, because he was the oldest son. The birthright was the extra portion of a father's goods which ancient custom dictated must go to the eldest son.⁵ But Esau didn't value this inheritance and gave it to his brother Jacob for a meal. Read Genesis 25:29-34.

17. Think of two people in your life who either offer positive or negative examples of holiness. Describe what makes them holy or unholy and how that can help you grow. (Please do not write the name of the people you are thinking about if they are negative examples and keep their names private from your small group.)

⁵ Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 61.