Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

19 April 2015 Message 10 of 12

NLT 40 Minutes

**Don’t Despise Discipline**

Title

***Hebrews 12:4-17***

**Topic:** Endurance

**Subject:** Why should we welcome God’s discipline?

**Complement:** Don’t despise God’s discipline because of its many benefits.

**Purpose:** The listeners will welcome God’s discipline rather than despising it.

**Reading:** Hebrews 12:1-17

**Song:** “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2svZhZT6Pro)

# Introduction

### Interest: [Too often we think God should make life easy for us.]

#### [A farmer killed a butterfly while trying to help it as he prevented necessary struggle.]

Cocoon

##### An old grain farmer looked out his kitchen door one morning and saw a butterfly cocoon. The man watched as the creature struggled. Finally the struggle became so intense that the man thought the butterfly would die. He thought that, without help, the butterfly wouldn’t escape from the cocoon.

##### So the man took his pocketknife and carefully cut a slit in the side of the cocoon. Almost immediately, one wing appeared and then the other. The butterfly was free! It took a few steps, fell over on its side, and died.

##### You see, its body was large, but its wings were small and weak. It needed to struggle to become strong enough to be able to fly. The struggle was part of the plan for its development.

#### Too often we think God should make life easy for us. But sometimes the struggle is exactly what we need. What do you need? Do you view struggles and hurts as a good thing?

Easy or not?

Struggle

### Need: Is life easy or difficult for you right now? How?

#### If life is easy, then thank God for a respite.

#### But most of us will admit that life has many challenges. If you know God, then you will realize that he is all-powerful and could give you a smooth road, but he doesn’t do that very often. He is disciplining us for better things.

### Subject: Why should we respond positively to God’s discipline? Why should you even *welcome* God allowing things to get difficult in your life?

Subject

### Background: The letter of the Hebrews teaches about divine discipline. But what is God’s discipline?

Bkgrd

#### The readers had already undergone a fair amount of suffering.

10:32

##### As young Christians, they remained faithful through suffering (10:32).

10:33

##### Their suffering included public ridicule and beatings (10:33).

##### They were even imprisoned and impoverished as all they owned was taken from them (10:34).

10:34

#### They were believers tempted to live like unbelievers to avoid difficulty—so God disciplined them to bring them back.

Wood chisel

##### The author has just sought to encourage his readers with many examples of faithful endurance in the Bible’s “Hall of Faith” (Hebrews 11). This included young and old people to imitate—as well as a variety of occupations. Some were parents, farmers, others shepherds, judges, politicians and prophets.

Hall of Faith

Moses in basket

##### The best of these great models was Jesus himself, so the author has just told the readers to fix their eyes on Christ, who also endured to the point of death on the cross (12:1-3). Our theme is to "Press On!" towards Christ. He has just told them to lay aside every encumbrance—like Greek runners who ran naked!

Naked runners

Press On!

#### To motivate them not to turn back to Judaism, God disciplined them—not punished them. He does the same for us in our day, too. So hang with me if you are like the lady I noted last week who prayed, “Dear God, Please stop teaching me how to deal with difficult people”!

Difficult People

### Preview: Today we’ll see three reasons *why* we should welcome God’s discipline.

Preview

### Text: Hebrews 12:4-17

(What is the first reason we should welcome God’s discipline? Why have a positive perspective when God allows things to get difficult in our lives? First…)

# I. Discipline confirms that we are God’s holy children (12:4-11).

MP

[The Lord corrects those he calls sons and daughters so they will grow in righteousness.]

## Discipline reminds us that we are God’s children (12:4-9).

4-9  
(5 slides)

### What does it mean that God disciplines his children?

Harsh Father

#### I think it’s helpful to distinguish between punishment and discipline.

Discipline v. Punish

##### Punishment is difficulty in our lives from *past sin*. We punish people by withholding privileges due to their failures: being on probation, making them work at tasks less than their abilities, etc. It’s a judgment for doing wrong.

• Pay  
• Past  
• Judge

##### Discipline refers to difficulty with the positive goal of giving them *future blessings*: expecting responsibility so they can handle more responsible positions in the days to come, toughening us up for future challenges, etc. It instructs us and trains us.

• Restore  
• Future  
• Instruct

#### Discipline paidei÷a, aß, hJ (paideu/w) in 12:7 is **“the act of providing guidance for responsible living, *upbringing, training, instruction*,** in our literature chiefly as it is attained by ***discipline, correction***” (BDAG 748).

Definition

### We don’t discipline other people’s kids because discipline confirms that we are true children.

Who to discipline?

#### You probably have seen, as I have, mothers with their children in public who were showing them who was boss. At times I have wanted to intervene—but I never have—why not? They weren’t my children!

Victorious girl

Drill sergeant

#### Other times I have felt that other parents were too harsh—like a drill sergeant—but since they were not my kids, I didn’t intervene. But I intervened for my own sons.

Writing on wall

### The past week two of our three sons thanked us for disciplining them.

Sons

#### Our oldest, Kurt, got married last September and shows a lot of discipline, actually.

Kurt & Cara

#### But this past week, our 25-year-old son Stephen is first officer who had to fly with a drunken 59-year-old pilot whom he had to wake up upon approach. When Susan commended him for counseling this man whose marriage was ending, he wrote, “That’s how I was raised.” He will get married next month and we pray that he will respond well to God’s discipline in his own life.

Stephen & Katie

Stephen & Susan

#### Our 22-year-old son John told me, “Dad, you weren’t a perfect Dad” and then informed me of one of my major blunders when he was in fifth grade. But then he said, “But thank you for being a great Dad.”

Strawberries

Susan & John

## Discipline teaches us righteousness (12:10-11).

11

10

### The Hebrews needed to endure difficulty without falling away. Perhaps they saw the very existence of trials as indicating that God wasn’t with them.

### However, the opposite was the case. They needed to see that God was trying to accomplish holiness in their lives through difficulty.

(So why should we welcome God’s discipline? We need to see that God’s discipline confirms that we are God’s holy children. This will help us not say, “Thanks a lot for making my life difficult, God!” But besides building holiness in us, why else should we welcome discipline?)

MPI

Subject

# II. Discipline strengthens our resolve to obey God (12:12-13).

MP

[God’s correction helps us better relate to him.]

## Discipline strengthens resolve to obey God (12:12-13).

12-13  
(3 slides)

## Some Singaporeans have criticized NS boot camp for being too primitive for such an advanced society.

NS

### Most of the rest of us enjoy air conditioning; therefore, some ask why can’t we afford to do that for those defending the nation? Why show so little respect for soldiers by putting them in rustic barracks, forcing them to endure such backbreaking hikes through the jungle, etc.? A few weaker soldiers have even died while in NS.

Pull-ups

### To their credit, the commanders and generals have responded that they are trying to prepare recruits for *war*—not for a *picnic*! If they cannot handle difficulty when bullets are not being shot at them, how can they handle it in real battle?

Jungle war

### Discipline is good for our resolve—like a trainer here who helps future recruits make it. I like the website name: body-by-rick.com!

Body-by-rick.com

(So why should we welcome God’s discipline? It confirms that we are God’s holy children, and strengthens our resolve to obey God. Thirdly…)

MPII

MPI

Subject

# III. Discipline strengthens our relationships (12:14-17).

MP

[God’s correction helps us better relate to others.]

## Peace with others is needed to be truly holy (12:14).

14

## Holy relationships stop the spread of bitterness (12:15).

15

### AIT (Agape International Training) was the three-month missionary training course that I endured at age 22. The thing I remember most was when they told us that the chief reason for missionaries returning from overseas was their inability to get along with other missionaries.

AIT

#### The goal was to train the 72 of us Campus Crusade staff members how to minister effectively cross-culturally in community. Since nearly all of us where middle-class, white Americans, the leaders reasoned that they should train us in a missionary-like environment within the USA.

#### So we were all shipped into the black community of downtown LA. We were, as far as I know, the only Caucasians that lived there. We attended African American churches, lived in run-down apartments or with black families, and stayed within this environment for three months.

#### Susan was paired with another white girls to do door-to-door evangelism. Most were shocked to find a young, white woman at their door to share the gospel! One older lady even told her and her friend, “Please come in! Last week four people were killed out on the sidewalk in a drive-by shooting.”

#### I lived with three other men in an apartment. One night we went shopping and were driving back to our apartment and could see a helicopter circling overhead with its lights shining on a building below. As we got closer, we saw the road blocked off in front of our apartment. Pulling over, the police officer told us, “Sorry, you cannot pass through due to a shooting in the complex.” But I told him, “But we aren’t passing through. We live here!” I’ll never forget the shock on his face!

### Verse 15 reminds of us the “bitter, butter or better” principle.

Men in Circle

#### When relational problems surface, we often get *bitter* towards others.

• Bitter, Butter

#### Some think the solution is just to be like *butter*—“Cut into me if you wish!”

#### Instead, we should be *better*! Become a better listener, better at compassion, or learn how to be a better friend.

## Purity prevents sexual sin and godlessness like Esau (12:16-17).

16-17

### Immorality destroys relationships.

### Godlessness destroys relationships.

Subject

(How should we respond to God’s discipline?)

# Conclusion

Subject

MI

### Don’t despise God’s because of its many benefits (MI).

### Why we welcome God’s discipline (Main Points)?

#### Discipline confirms that we are God’s holy children (12:4-11).

MPI

#### Discipline strengthens our resolve to obey God (12:12-13).

MPII

#### Discipline strengthens relationships (12:14-17).

MPIII

### Application Q & A

#### How is God confirming your identity as his child by disciplining you right now?

##### Have you thought that God has withdrawn his hand from you because things have gotten difficult?

##### Or do you see that the Lord has been with you all along—correcting you because you are his precious son or daughter?

#### How can you strengthen your holiness, resolve and relationships?

##### What area of holiness is the Lord speaking to you about right now?

##### Have you asked God to give you that inner resolve that you need?

##### Is your struggle leading to isolation and loneliness—or does it draw you into the circle of Christian friends? Let it do the latter. This will help you to become a channel of God’s peace to others.

### “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2svZhZT6Pro)

YouTube clip

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### The author has just sought to encourage his readers with many examples of faithful endurance in the Bible’s “Hall of Faith” (Hebrews 11). This included young and old people to imitate—as well as a variety of occupations. Some were farmers, others shepherds, judges, politicians and prophets.

### The best of these great models was Jesus himself, so he has just told them to fix their eyes on Christ, who also endured to the point of death on the cross (12:1-3).

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### The Hebrews needed to endure difficulty without falling away. Perhaps they saw the very existence of trials as indicating that God wasn’t with them.

### However, the opposite was the case. They needed to see what God was trying to accomplish in their lives through difficulty.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### No one in the community had yet been martyred (12:4).

### However, the readers had gone through the trials of public ridicule, beatings, some thrown in prison, loss of homes and property (10:32-34).

# Questions

### How does 12:4 hinge the preceding and the following verses?

#### Translations differ whether it goes with 12:1-4 (NLT) or starts a new idea as part of 12:4-17 (NIV). I hold to the latter. Some even begin earlier with 12:3-17 (NAU) or 12:3-11 (BKC).

#### The NLT makes 12:5 a question to start a new section, but the Greek section begins at verse 4 and puts 12:5 in the indicative. Therefore, I favor the NIV that has 12:4-5 as statements beginning the next section.

### Is God’s discipline the focus of 12:4-17?

### What does it mean that God disciplines his children?

#### I think it’s helpful to distinguish between punishment and discipline.

##### Punishment is difficulty in our lives from *past sin*. We punish people by withholding privileges due to their failures: being on probation, making them work at tasks less than their abilities, etc.

##### Discipline refers to difficulty with the positive goal of giving them *future blessings*: expecting responsibility so they can handle more responsible positions in the days to come, toughening us up for future challenges, etc.

#### paidei÷a, aß, hJ (paideu/w) in 12:7 is **“the act of providing guidance for responsible living, *upbringing, training, instruction*,** in our literature chiefly as it is attained by ***discipline, correction***” (BDAG 748).

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Ethics of Endurance

God’s boot camp prepares us

Benefits of discipline

Reasons God disciplines

# Possible Illustrations

### Some Singaporeans have criticized NS boot camp for being too primitive for such an advanced society.

#### Most of the rest of us enjoy air conditioning; therefore, some ask why can’t we afford to do that for those defending the nation? Why show so little respect for soldiers by putting them in rustic barracks, forcing them to endure such backbreaking hikes through the jungle, etc.? A few weaker soldiers have even died while in NS.

#### To their credit, the commanders and generals have responded that they are trying to prepare recruits for *war*—not for a *picnic*! If they cannot handle difficulty when bullets are not being shot at them, how can they handle it in real battle?

### AIT (Agape International Training) was the three-month missionary training course that I endured at age 22.

#### The goal was to train the 72 of us Campus Crusade staff members how to minister effectively cross-culturally. Since nearly all of us where middle-class, white Americans, the leaders reasoned that they should train us in a missionary-like environment within the USA.

#### So we were all shipped into the black community of downtown LA. We were, as far as I know, the only Caucasians that lived there. We attended African American churches, lived in run-down apartments or with black families, and stayed within this environment for three months.

#### Susan was paired with another white girls to do door-to-door evangelism. Most were shocked to find a young, white woman at their door to share the gospel! One older lady even told her and her friend, “Please come in! Last week four people were killed out on the sidewalk in a drive-by shooting.”

#### I lived with three other men in an apartment. One night we went shopping and were driving back to our apartment and could see a helicopter circling overhead with its lights shining on a building below. As we got closer, we saw the road blocked off in front of our apartment. Pulling over, the police officer told us, “Sorry, you cannot pass through due to a shooting in the complex.” But I told him, “But we aren’t passing through. We live here!” I’ll never forget the shock on his face!

### A farmer saw a young butterfly struggle within its cocoon.

#### Once an old grain farmer looked out his kitchen door one morning and saw a butterfly cocoon. The man watched as the creature struggled. Finally the struggle became so intense that the man thought the butterfly would die. He thought that, without help, this butterfly wasn’t going to escape from the cocoon.

#### So the man took his pocketknife and carefully cut a slit in the side of the cocoon. Almost immediately, one wing appeared and then the other. The butterfly was free, but it didn't fly. It took a few steps, fell over on its side, and died. You see, its body was large, but its wings were small and weak. It needed to struggle to become strong enough to be able to fly.

#### Sometimes the struggle is exactly what we need. What do you need? Do you view struggles and hurts as a good thing?

### We don’t discipline other people’s children because discipline confirms that we are true children.

#### You probably have seen, as I have, mothers with their children in public who were showing them who was boss.

#### At times I have wanted to intervene—but I never have—why not? They weren’t my children!

### The past week two of our sons thanked us for disciplining them.

#### Our 25-year-old son Stephen is first officer who had to fly with a drunken 59-year-old pilot whom he had to wake up upon approach. When Susan commended him for counseling this man whose marriage was ending, he wrote, “That’s how I was raised.”

#### Our 22-year-old son John told me, “Dad, you weren’t a perfect Dad” and then informed me of one of my major blunders when he was in fifth grade. But then he said, “But thank you for being a great Dad.”

# Possible Applications

### Text

**NTS NOTES ORIGINAL VERSION 1**

## Those enduring God’s discipline experience righteousness, confidence and relationships (12:4-17).

### The result of enduring hardship from God as disciplined sons is righteousness and confidence (12:4-13).

#### All sons of God must endure discipline in order to become righteous just as earthly fathers train their sons (12:4-11).

#### As a result of responding correctly to God’s discipline, the Hebrews could be strong and confident (12:12-13).

### Endurance must be done in the context of right relationships with others since even perseverance can be done with bad attitudes and improper motives (12:14-17).

#### God requires peace with others if we are to be truly holy (12:14).

#### God requires sanctification in relationships to prevent the spread of bitterness (12:15).

#### God requires purity in lifestyle to prevent sexual sin and greed like Esau (12:16-17).

**VERSION 2**

# I. The goal God seeks through disciplining us is righteousness (12:4-11).

# II. The proper response to God’s discipline is commitment and community (12:12-17).

## The Hebrews should respond correctly to God’s discipline through a commitment to being strong and confident (12:12-13).

## The Hebrews should respond correctly to God’s discipline through community with other believers (12:14-17).

### God requires peace with others if we are to be truly holy (12:14).

### God requires sanctification in relationships to prevent the spread of bitterness (12:15).

### God requires purity in lifestyle to prevent sexual sin and greed like Esau (12:16-17).

**VERSION 3**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The way to respond to God’s discipline as his righteous children is through resolve and relationships.

# I. The reason God disciplines us is to make us righteous children (12:4-11).

## One reason God disciplines us is to remind us that we are his children (12:4-9).

## Another reason God disciplines us is to teach us righteousness (12:10-11).

# II. The proper response to God’s discipline is resolve and relationships (12:12-17).

## Discipline strengthens resolve to obey God (12:12-13).

## Discipline strengthens relationships (12:14-17).

### Peace with others is needed to be truly holy (12:14).

### Holy relationships stop the spread of bitterness (12:15).

### Purity prevents sexual sin and greed like Esau (12:16-17).

**Don’t Despise Discipline**

***Hebrews 12:4-17***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The reason the Hebrew readers should welcome God’s discipline is because of its many benefits.

# I. One purpose God disciplined them was to make them his righteous children (12:4-11).

## One reason God disciplines us is to remind us that we are his children (12:4-9).

## Another reason God disciplines us is to teach us righteousness (12:10-11).

# II. Another purpose God disciplined them was to strengthen their resolve to obey God (12:12-13).

# III. Another purpose God disciplined them was to strengthen their relationships (12:14-17).

## Peace with others is needed to be truly holy (12:14).

## Holy relationships stop the spread of bitterness (12:15).

## Purity prevents sexual sin and godlessness like Esau (12:16-17).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will welcome God’s discipline rather than despising it

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Too often we think God should make life easy for us.

### Need: Is life easy or difficult for you right now? How?

### Subject: Why should we welcome God’s discipline?

### Background: The letter of the Hebrews teaches about divine discipline. But what is it?

#### The readers were believers tempted to live like unbelievers to avoid difficulty.

#### God disciplined them for this—not punished them.

### Preview: Today we’ll see three reasons *why* we are disciplined.

### Text: Hebrews 12:4-17

# I. Discipline confirms that we are God’s holy children (12:4-11).

## Discipline reminds us that we are God’s children (12:4-9).

## Discipline teaches us righteousness (12:10-11).

# II. Discipline strengthens our resolve to obey God (12:12-13).

# III. Discipline strengthens relationships (12:14-17).

## Peace with others is needed to be truly holy (12:14).

## Holy relationships stop the spread of bitterness (12:15).

## Purity prevents sexual sin and godlessness like Esau (12:16-17).

(Why should we welcome God’s discipline?)

# Conclusion

### Don’t despise God’s discipline because of its many benefits (MI).

### Why we welcome God’s discipline (Main Points)?

#### Discipline confirms that we are God’s holy children (12:4-11).

#### Discipline strengthens our resolve to obey God (12:12-13).

#### Discipline strengthens relationships (12:14-17).

### Application Q & A

#### How is God confirming your identity as his child by disciplining you right now?

#### How can you strengthen your holiness, resolve and relationships?

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

19 April 2015

Message 10 of 12

**Don’t Despise Discipline**

***Hebrews 12:4-17***

# Introduction

### Too often we think God should make life easy for us.

### Is life easy or difficult for you right now? How?

### Why should we welcome God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

### The readers of Hebrews were under divine discipline.

# I. Discipline confirms that we are God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ children (12:4-11).

## Discipline reminds us that we are God’s children (12:4-9).

## Discipline teaches us righteousness (12:10-11).

# II. Discipline strengthens our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to obey God (12:12-13).

# III. Discipline strengthens \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (12:14-17).

## Peace with others is needed to be truly holy (12:14).

## Holy relationships stop the spread of bitterness (12:15).

## Purity prevents sexual sin and godlessness like Esau (12:16-17).

(Why should we welcome God’s discipline?)

# Conclusion

### Don’t despise God’s discipline because of its many \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea).

### Q & A

#### How is God confirming your identity as his child by disciplining you right now?

#### How can you strengthen your holiness, resolve and relationships?

**Thought Questions**

1. Read the passage aloud. Contrast God’s discipline with his punishment:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Punishment** | **Discipline** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |

1. Give some examples for each category above.

Text

Text

Text

Text

1. When have you been disciplined in own Christian experience? What resulted?

Text