# Hebrews: No Turning Back

## Week 8

**Main Scripture: Hebrews 12:1–11**

### Getting Started

**Read Hebrews 12:1–3.**

God has a race marked out for each of us. We are called to run that race with perseverance, casting off anything that hinders us and the sin that so easily entangles us.

As we run, we are to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. He endured the cross because of the joy set before Him.

But what happens when the race becomes difficult? How should we respond when we experience hardship, opposition, or suffering?

Hebrews 12 gives us three truths to help us understand what God is doing in those difficult seasons.

**Opening Discussion:** What are some things that make it difficult to remain faithful when life becomes hard? How does fixing our eyes on Jesus help us endure?

## 1. View Suffering as Discipline.

**Read Hebrews 12:4–7 and Romans 8:28–29.**

Suffering is part of living in a broken world. We experience hardship because of sickness, the sinful choices of others, our own decisions, and the difficulties of life.

But as believers, we know that God is sovereign over everything. Nothing happens outside His control, and He is working in and through our suffering.

When we hear the word *discipline*, we often think of punishment. And while there can be a corrective aspect to discipline, **the word the writer of Hebrews uses is really a word we call training.**

In Greek culture, this word described the process of training and developing a child over many years to prepare them for life.

**We endure hardship as training. There's a purpose in the difficulty. God is training us.**

What is the goal of that training?

Our sanctification. God is making us more holy, making us more like Christ.

Romans 8:28 reminds us that God works all things together for our good. Verse 29 tells us what that good is: being conformed to the image of His Son.

**It's not to destroy us. It's not to demoralize us, but it's to train us.**

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How does viewing discipline as training rather than punishment change your perspective on suffering?
2. Why is it important to understand that God's definition of our good may be different from our own?
3. How has God used a difficult experience to make you more like Christ?
4. What might God be teaching you through a hardship you're facing right now?

# 2. God Disciplines Those He Loves.

**Read Hebrews 12:5–10.**

When we experience suffering, it's natural to wonder whether God truly loves us. We sometimes assume that if God loves us, He will protect us from pain and difficulty.

But Hebrews teaches us something different.

Think about a good coach who cares deeply about his players. He doesn't remove every challenge or make every practice easy. He pushes his players because he wants them to grow and reach their potential.

**God trains us because He loves us.**

As our heavenly Father, God uses the circumstances of life to develop us spiritually. His discipline is not evidence that He has abandoned us. It is evidence that He is actively working in our lives.

Hebrews 12:10 tells us that God disciplines us for our good so that we may share in His holiness.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why do we sometimes interpret suffering as evidence that God doesn't love us?
2. How does the example of a loving father or coach help us understand God's discipline?
3. According to verse 10, what is God's purpose in disciplining His children?
4. How can remembering God's love help us remain faithful during difficult seasons?

# 3. Discipline Produces Fruit.

**Read Hebrews 12:11.**

"*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.*"

Discipline is painful, but it's beneficial. God uses the difficulties we experience to produce spiritual fruit in our lives.

**Suffering draws us closer to God.**

There's nothing like pain and suffering to expose our inadequacy and remind us of our need for Him.

In Job 42:5, Job says, "*My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.*"

Through his suffering, Job came to know God in a deeper, more personal way.

**Suffering equips us to help others.**

Second Corinthians 1:3–4 reminds us that God comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort others with the same comfort we've received.

The difficulties we endure can prepare us to encourage and strengthen someone else.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why is it often difficult to recognize spiritual growth while we're experiencing hardship?
2. How have difficult circumstances deepened your dependence on God?

3. What does Job's statement in Job 42:5 teach us about knowing God through suffering?

4. How can God use your experiences to encourage someone else?

# Living It Out

We may not always understand why difficult things happen. Sometimes we can look back and see how God was working. Other times, we may never fully connect the dots.

But we can trust that God is present and working in our lives.

When you don't know what to do, **do what you know to do.**

Continue seeking the Lord through His Word and prayer. Love your family. Fulfill your responsibilities. Remain faithful to what God has called you to do.

Keep running the race, fixing your eyes on Jesus.

**Final Questions:**

- Am I viewing my current hardships as opportunities for God to train me and make me more like Christ?
- Am I trusting God's love even when I don't understand my circumstances?
- What spiritual fruit might God be producing through this season of my life?

## Closing Thought

**God is not removed from your suffering. He's not standing at a distance watching you go through it. He's actually working in and through your suffering.**

## Closing Prayer

Father, help us trust You through every season of life. When we experience hardship, remind us that You are present and working for our good. Use our difficulties to train us, strengthen our faith, and make us more like Jesus. Help us recognize Your love, depend on Your strength, and encourage others through what we've experienced. Give us the perseverance to keep running the race You've marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus. Amen.