**Fixing our Hearts on Jesus**

We’re pretty much in the home stretch in our study in Hebrews. We are set to finish up in about 4 weeks. And in the last part of Hebrews, which Pastor Aaron brought up last week in his sermon on Hebrews 12:1-2, *endurance* is a key theme that that author emphasizes repeatedly.

I did a lecture at the BCTC earlier this year called “Teaching Counselees to Wait.” In the that lecture I read a quote from a short biography that John Piper wrote on Charles Simeon. It’s a quote that struck me the first time I read it years ago, and it still years later grips me as vitally important today...

A typical emotional response to trouble in the church is to think, If that’s the way they feel about me, then I’ll just find another church. We see very few healthy, happy examples today whose lives spell out in flesh and blood the rugged words, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds” (James 1:2). When historians list the character traits of America in the last third of the twentieth century, commitment, constancy, tenacity, endurance, patience, resolve, and perseverance will not be on the list. The list will begin with an all-consuming interest in self-esteem. It will be followed by the subheadings of self-assertiveness, self-enhancement, and self-realization. And if we think that we are not children of our times, let us simply test ourselves to see how we respond when people reject our ideas or spurn our good efforts or misconstrue our best intentions.[[1]](#footnote-1)

You see Charles Simeon was man who pastored a church for 55 years, and for the first 11 years his church largely hated him and tried to get rid of him...and he stuck it out. You might ask, “how?” You might also ask, “Why?” Short answer: the glory of God and he believed God wanted him to persevere there. And I think he was right. But you may want to pick up the book and read the longer answer to that question.

Now our text today focuses specifically on one reason we must endure...and that has to do with the topic of discipline...**Enduring Discipline from our Heavenly Father**

This is a very important topic that I believe in my experience in counseling and in pastoral ministry that there is a fair bit of confusion on. And the confusion doesn’t end up producing the endurance that this passage is encouraging.

Rather, confusion on this topic produces all sorts terrible consequences.

So the way we’re going to work through this passage this morning is through 4 questions...

**4 Questions to clarify and encourage faithful endurance under Your Heavenly Father’s Discipline**

 Here are the 4 questions so you can have them in your mind as we read the text.

1. What is the discipline of the Lord?
2. Who receives the discipline of the Lord?
3. What do we risk when we reject the discipline of the Lord?
4. What does it look like to be subject to the discipline of the Lord?

[Read Hebrews 12:3-17]

# What is the discipline of the Lord?

Here we are really asking what’s the definition of the Lord’s discipline. Or what is included? Or what is excluded?

This is a key, key question.

First, it is...

## It is God’s purposeful providence to produce holy character in his children. (vv.9-11)

Now where do I see that...

**Hebrews 12:9–119 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 good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful**

One of the key illustrations that is given to help us understand God’s discipline is the discipline that our physical parents gave to us.

* Now I know that we are living in a time when fewer and fewer people are growing up in homes where they are seeing good or positive examples of parental discipline.
* So if you grew up in a home where you believe your parents discipline was harsh, self-serving, mean or even abusive, in no way is this text condoning that kind of “discipline” from parents to their children.

So please know that we understand this may be a very challenging concept for you if you grew up in an environment like that.

But the Lord knows better than anyone that parents fail to discipline their children well or in love and yet God still draws the parallel to the way parents, in general, do love their children and try to discipline them as best as they can for their kids good. God’s discipline is the similar...but the key difference between God and man is that God always knows what’s best, and as the text states very matter of fact, “he disciplines us for our good, so that we may share in his holiness.”

So the text it is pretty clear that goal of discipline is that we’d produce godly, holy character.

But why would I say, *“It’s his purposeful providence...”*

* Because the text doesn’t limit the tools or means of God’s discipline very narrowly.
	+ The text doesn’t say that financial problems are the discipline of God, but physical pain or illness isn’t.
	+ The text doesn’t say that relationship turmoil is the discipline of God, but car trouble isn’t.

Those may be dumb examples, but the point is God doesn’t narrow the tools he’s going to use for disciplining his children...it’s left very, very broad.

Second answer to what is the discipline of the Lord...

## It is corrective discipline that involves consequences for sin and foolishness. (vv.5-6)

The emphasis here is probably the emphasis that almost everyone naturally thinks of when they think of the Lord’s discipline. If you sin or mess up there are consequences.

**Hebrews 12:5–6** **5 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 SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”**

The underlined words vv.5 and 6 “reproved” and “scourges” both carry the clear idea that there are correction and consequences involved with this kind of discipline.

However...I don’t think that’s the only kind of discipline that is in view here...

And as I think about how I outlined this it may be somewhat confusing...

* Answer A, to the question what is the Lord’s discipline is always true.
* Answer B, that it’s corrective and involves consequences for sin and foolishness is sometimes true.
* Answer C here...is another kind of God’s discipline that is instructive—rather than corrective—for positive training and growth.

## It is instructive, positive training for growth. (vv.5-6)

The emphasis here is that God’s discipline doesn’t only come when you sin and mess up. God’s discipline also involves trials or tests or suffering that isn’t for any specific sin, but simply to help you take the next step of growth in becoming more like Christ.

Now where am I getting that from? I see 2 kinds of discipline here...1 is what we most naturally see, the reproved and scourged kind...but something I hadn’t seen before that the two references to “discipline” might be a different kind of “discipline.”

**Hebrews 12:5–6 5 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 SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”**

So I’m seeing in the two uses of the word “discipline” a different kind of discipline that is more of the instructive rather than corrective kind of discipline. Before I explain that let me give an example to help distinguish the two...

EXAMPLE: I grew up playing baseball. And one of the things that every coach I had would have us do as a team is run laps and run sprints. The goal of the running was to get faster and build endurance and strength.

But all of those coaches also made us run laps, and run sprints if they were frustrated by us goofing off, not listening, or for making errors or having a bad attitude etc.

* The purpose behind that kind of running was to discourage the bad behavior.

So the running that was a result of bad behavior, that is the corrective discipline that comes as a result of sin or foolishness.

But the running that is just part of normal practice, that’s the “instructive, positive training for growth” that has nothing to do with sin, foolishness or wrong behavior.

So I hope the distinction between the two kinds of discipline is clear.

But now, back to Hebrews. Why would I argue that both of those kinds of discipline are in view in Hebrews 12 here?

First, the context of Hebrews is written to believers that are undergoing pretty serious persecution. And the author of Hebrews is seeking to encourage the Hebrews not to give up, not to throw away the confidence and faith they’ve had in Jesus and return to the Old Covenant and Judaism which was not a religion that was being persecuted.

**Hebrews 10:32–39 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. 38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**

So you can see the persecution and hard struggles they have faced and are probably currently facing. And the author encourages them to keep going. Don’t throw away your confidence in Christ!

But notice, there is no such hint in this passage or in Hebrews or in the Bible anywhere that if you’re facing persecution for your faith in Jesus that God is bringing that on you because of your sin.

* In fact the Bible says just the oppositive.

**2 Timothy 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**

So, if the hardship and trials that are brought up in chapter 10 aren’t a result their sin, then why would the author bring up the discipline of the Lord here in chapter 12? *I think in part it’s because the discipline of the Lord isn’t only corrective for when you’ve done wrong. It’s also instructive to help you continue to grow.*

Second reason—the word “discipline” that shows up in vv.5-6 is used in the NT as an instructive and positive rather than just corrective:

**2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**

**Acts 7:22 Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.**

**Titus 2:11–12 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age**

Now, full disclosure I don’t think the view of 2 kinds of discipline in this text is the most common view. Part of the reason I don’t think it’s the most common is because v.4 does say, “In your struggle against sin.” So the nearest context would bring sin right into the center.

However, I think v.4 is very, very, very general. As believers, practically our entire life can be summed up by, “I’m trying to resist sin and grow in holiness.”

So I don’t think v.4 necessarily means that the author is telling them that they are undergoing specific suffering and discipline due to their sin.

No doubt, those that are considering giving up, need to be encouraged to continue resisting the sin of quitting and growing weary. But I think in general what the author of Hebrews seems to be doing in this section is encouraging them to persevere and endure through hardship knowing 1- that lots and lots of past saints have had to endure suffering (that’s chapter 11), and 2- our Savior Jesus had to endure severe suffering (that’s 12:1-4), and 3- your suffering is actually evidence that God is treating you as a son...the suffering is God’s fatherly, loving discipline.

So up to this point what have we concluded about “What the discipline of the Lord is?”

1 – it’s God’s purposeful providence to produce holy character in his children.

2 – it’s God’s corrective discipline for sin and foolishness that involves consequences.

3 – it’s also God’s instructive, positive training for growth in his children’s lives.

4 – ...

## It is temporarily painful (v.11)

**Hebrews 12:11 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

Now this is probably one of the key limiting factors to what would we consider God’s discipline. God’s discipline is painful. It’s not the naturally fun, enjoyable situations. He does say “painful for the moment...” but be careful how you interpret for the moment...moment is defined in terms of eternity.

Or it’s defined in terms of v.4...”you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your struggle against sin.” So if it’s painful for your whole life...that’s just a moment. But that’s because of what eternity holds for children of God!

Now I wish we had time to do this...but I’d encourage you to go through and just ask yourself, “What if I believed the discipline of God was only answer B...corrective?”

* In that situation you’d be like Job’s friends...when Job suffered severe loss they concluded, “Job you’ve sinned. You’ve sinned bad.”
	+ That was a wrong conclusion.
* Think through what the implications for your life might be though if you only believed answer B.

Or ask yourself, “What if I don’t really believe that God’s is very painful...so I don’t really grasp answer D?”

* Well...probably when really hard and painful things come you’ll give up easy.

Ask yourself, “What if I don’t really have a category for Answer C...God’s discipline is instructive?”

* What will happen when real painful, hard situations happen?
* If you view it only as corrective then you probably won’t persevere through the hardship you may be tempted like the Hebrews are to give up and quit when you should continue on.

So that’s a HW assignment. Think through each of the answers to Question 1 and really consider what the outcomes are if you don’t believe all of those answers.

Now a second question that I hope brings clarity that encourages us to endure under God’s discipline is...

# Who receives the discipline of the Lord?

The first answer is really quite simple just from reading the text...

## Only genuine believers = true children of God. (vv.5-8)

**Hebrews 12:5–8 5 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 SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” 7 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.**

V.8 makes it quite plain...only sons...only children of God receive the discipline of the Lord. If a person does not receive the discipline of the Lord, then they are an illegitimate child.

This should be extremely encouraging to you and to me when we are undergoing God’s corrective, reproving discipline or his instructive discipline. Discipline is painful and unpleasant, but if that’s an indication that he’s my Father and I’m his child, then that completely changes the unpleasant nature of discipline.

* Discipline communicates to me that God loves me, that he chose me, that I’m part of his family, that I’m completely forgiven by the blood of Jesus, that I’m destined for glory in heaven with the Lord and not destined for wrath, that he’s actively with me and thinking about me and so much more!
* If discipline is evidence of your sonship, then there is great reason to rejoice even in the suffering and to have strong encouragement to persevere!

Now this is one area where I hear a lot of confusion...I have had many people take encouragement in the fact that they are a child of God because they are going through consequences from sin...and they’ll say, “I know that I’m God’s child because he doesn’t let me get away with sin.”

* Essentially what they are communicating is that because consequences for sin came into their life that in and of itself is evidence that they are a child of God.

Now, while that may truly be evidence of God’s discipline in their life I think we need to acknowledge that whether someone is a child of God or not, consequences for sin will come...Everyone experiences the consequences of sin regardless of whether they know Jesus or not!

* So the mere presences of consequences is not enough evidence that you’re a child of God.

**1 Peter 2:18–20 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. 19 For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God**.

Peter’s point isn’t to say there is no benefit to enduring the consequences for sin...the point he is making is that, the general rule is if you break the law you suffer consequences. That’s what’s right, that’s what’s just. No one is all that impressed by a person that goes to prison for DUIs, that endures the sentence...it’s not only Christian’s that suffer consequences for sin...

But what would be impressive is if someone goes to prison for DUIs, and they learn their lesson and when they get out they never go back to drinking because as v.11 says, “they were trained by it...”

So who receives the Lord’s discipline? ONLY genuine believers...but simply having consequences isn’t enough to claim you’re receiving the Lord’s discipline...you have to...RECEIVE the LORD’s DISCIPLINE...

## Receiving the Lord’s discipline means willingly submitting yourself to his discipline. (vv.9-11)

**Hebrews 12:9–119 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 good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

Notice the attitude that most children would have towards their earthly fathers when they were disciplined by them...they *RESPECTED THEM.*

* If you respected your Father when he disciplined you, what that means is that 1) you believed that what he were doing was for your good and 2) you’d be trained by him...there would be a genuine difference in your attitude, your words, your conduct because of his discipline.

Now I’m going to pause on explaining what it looks like to receive the Lord’s discipline willingly because that’s the bulk of question of 4. But I wanted to at least at this point, make it clear that the key evidence of someone being a child of God in regards to discipline, is not someone who simply endures consequences for sin, but someone who *learns and is trained* to be different after receiving God’s discipline.

Now a 3rd question that should help us to endure and not give up under the discipline of the Lord...

# What do we risk when we reject the discipline of the Lord?

## You prove to be an illegitimate son. (v.8)

**Hebrews 12:8 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.**

It is very, very possible to claim with your words to know the Lord and love the Lord, but to not actually be born again.

We’ve talked about the warnings that have come up throughout the book of Hebrews in our study.

* There is a gentle rebuke and warning in this passage to the readers of Hebrews that if they give up and don’t endure through the painful, hard times and persecution they are receiving right now then they may prove to illegitimate children of God...they may prove that they never knew Christ and that they never were truly covered by the blood of Christ.

What should this warning do for a true son? For a true child of God?

* This warning should be received as a loving warning from your heavenly Father who loves you!
* This should be taken as a gracious word TO ME, HIS SON, to encouragement me not to give up, not to stop short of the good outcome that the Lord has purposed for me through suffering.

I am sure that there are men and women here today that are struggling with enduring under God’s discipline...whether it’s corrective in that they have specifically sinned and there are consequences for it, or whether it is just a season where God is trying to help you grow more through difficult circumstances...please allow this passage to strengthen you to resolve not to give up!

*V.11 – all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness!*

Similarly, if we reject the Lord’s discipline...meaning we refuse to be trained by it...

## You follow in the footsteps of Esau. (vv.15-17)

**Hebrews 12:15–17 15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; 16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.**

Esau is the quintessential example of an illegitimate child...

* He was born into the family that was chosen by the Lord...he was the child of Isaac, the promised son of Abraham.
* And yet, what we read about him in Genesis shows that he did not love his father...or anyone but himself.
	+ And the 2 key examples of that are when he sold his birthright to his brother Isaac for a bowl of red stew...showing he despised the birthright and his role as the firstborn in the family...
	+ And 2nd when Jacob...his twin brother deceives his dad Isaac to receive the blessing that Isaac was going to give to Esau near the end of Isaac’s life...

**(Kari can you include these two pictures of Hebrews 12:17 into the powerpoint slide. Put them on the same slide, but I’d like the 2nd picture with the red highlights to be a “click” that will show up after the green highlight one).**

Now v.17 here, if not read carefully, seems to say that Esau desperately wanted to repent and sought repentance with tears! Grammatically, that’s possible but that goes against all kinds of other scriptures that make it clear that the Lord doesn’t refuse repentance to anyone!

But what the Lord does refuse, is someone who isn’t genuinely repentant over their sin, but is only upset and sorrowful over the consequences and wants the consequences to go away.

Esau is rejected, meaning he is rejected from being the one that receives the main blessing...and even afterwards, though he sought THE BLESSING with tears he couldn’t get it back. And why did he find no chance to repent? Because that’s not what he was looking for...he was seeking repentance. He was seeking the blessing he had forfeited.

God’s corrective discipline is aimed at helping his children repent from sin and produce holy character. Don’t be like Esau who didn’t care about repentance but only cared about what he lost and was angry and sorrowful that he lost it.

* I’m sure that are plenty of people here this morning that need to be encouraged to seek genuine repentance...to let the Lord’s consequences on your life for sin drive you to change rather than to drive you to worldly grief that is just selfishly upset about receiving consequences.

To put it a different way...the text also says if you reject the discipline of the Lord that...

## You won’t see the Lord. (v.14)

**Hebrews 12:14 14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.**

So what’s at stake? Honestly, heaven...salvation is at stake.

* Scripture is clear you cannot lose your salvation...salvation is by grace alone through faith and not by works.
	+ So I’m not saying that you have to work you’re way into heaven...
* But Scripture is also clear, that those who are genuinely saved, they will grow. They will be trained by their heavenly Father and respond to his corrective discipline with repentance and change, and they will respond to his instructive discipline with endurance and further character growth.

So I’m hoping that you’ll evaluate your life and see if there is real evidence of a person that endures under discipline or if you’re the kind of person that is primarily looking for anyway to get out from under discipline.

Now to the final question.

# What does it look like to be subject to the discipline of the Lord?

This is critical that we know what this looks like...confusion over this will not be producing or encouraging endurance which will not produce the good outcome that the Lord intends for discipline in our life.

## Encourage each other and strengthen each other to endure under discipline. (vv.12-14)

**Hebrews 12:12–14 12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.**

The most natural way a person in America is probably going to hear this passage and interpret it is, *“I PERSONALLY need to strengthen my hands and knees and make my paths straight.”* This will be read entirely as a personal command to me and will not be interpreted with the body of believers as a community in mind at all.

And while it is important to see this as God’s command to you specifically, it is also vitally important that we understand the community aspect to this command.

The discipline of the Lord is not simply and individual thing that you undergo alone and endure alone. Sadly, that’s how many, many people approach it and as a result many are do *subject themselves rightly to the discipline of the Lord and many are not trained by it.*

* In fact, the solely individualistic approach to enduring the discipline of the Lord is one of the common ways of rejecting the discipline of the Lord.

Here’s what I mean by that...in our individualistic culture that wants to do it all ourselves and not be weak but instead be strong enough to do it on our own, we often do not seek help from our brothers and sisters in Christ and we end up trying to rehab or heal ourselves on our own.

vv.12-13 gives a really helpful picture and metaphor for what it looks like to endure discipline.

* Strengthen weak hands and feeble knees...making straight paths so that limbs will not be put out of joint but rather healed.

The picture is a very physical one.

Imagine a runner who is training or running in a race. How helpful is it to have someone that is encouraging them and pushing them to continue? Very helpful!

* When I ran cross country it’s amazing how much faster and longer I could run if my coaches and other teammates were pushing me.
	+ Were they the ones running for me? No. I had to do it, but there help and encouragement were so critical in helping me grow and keep going.

Or think about this, how often has someone modeled or shown you what is possible that you thought wasn’t?

* Perhaps if you’re a distance runner, it’s like you running your first practice or tryout and hitting a certain time and then your coach says alright by the end of the season here’s the goal...and it’s something that seems way, way impossible. But because that coach has trained hundreds of other runners, they aren’t just guessing they know that it’s possible to accomplish that with hard work.

Having someone who can describe the outcomes, the goals, who knows what’s possible is really helpful and encouraging!

Consider if you’re married and you’re marriage is really, really difficult. There is fighting. There is arguing. It seems like you’re never on the same page. It’s seems like there is no affection or love any more.

* Do you even believe it’s possible for things to be dramatically different? You need the body of Christ. You need to know other marriages that have grown...you need to know other marriages that have been trained by the discipline of the Lord and seen massive changes to the glory of God!
* Changes that seem so impossible and far down the road that they’ll never happen...you need people that can encourage you to strengthen your hands and your knees and be trained by the discipline of the Lord.

Or perhaps your stuck in sexual sin...you just keep returning to pornography, or you keep returning to bad relationships, etc. You need to be around people that know your struggle that you’re honest with that can encourage you truthfully, honestly and help you take the necessary steps to see real change.

* You may think you could never be free of this sin...friend for God’s children they can subject themselves to his discipline...they can risk being open and honest and bearing the consequences of giving up freedom, inviting accountability and actually see healing rather than lameness...

We are going through a serious called, “Caring for One Another” in all our ABFs and small groups...the goal is to help everyone in our church...every member understand that it’s our responsibility to care for each other. Pastors can’t care for everyone. Deacons can care for everyone. No single person or group is tasked to care for everyone.

* The entire church is tasked with caring for each other so that the whole body is cared for and growing.
	+ We need to be cared for and prayed for and encouraged when we aren’t undergoing the discipline of the Lord.
	+ But we certainly need to be cared for and prayed for and encouraged when we are undergoing the discipline of the Lord.

And let me just share something briefly on a personal note at this point...

* This may not be all that much of a surprise considering some of the things that have been going on in our church over the last year.
* But I would probably say, somewhere around late Spring and currently, I don’t think I’ve ever had such a difficult and hard season as a pastor.
	+ I’m very thankful...very thankful that the hardship and difficulty isn’t because my wife and I are at odds with each other. The Lord has blessed Erika and I and I’m very thankful for the strength and support and encouragement I receive at home.
* But this has been a season of tremendous difficulty and it’s not simply in just one area...it’s not uncommon to have one pretty hard thing going on almost always...at least that’s been my experience.
	+ But there have been many...as I’ve gone over this passage in Hebrews 12 for weeks now...I feel like the verse that just keeps going through my head is v.7...”It is for discipline that YOU MUST ENDURE.”
	+ Endurance is hard...discipline is hard.
* And lots of the discipline and hardship that I I’m experiencing right now isn’t God’s corrective discipline for specific sin in my life.
	+ But that’s not to say God isn’t using this season to help me kill sin and expose indwelling sin in my life.
	+ For example, when I think I’ve settled my heart and fixed my eyes on Jesus and am resolved to endure and be trained by this intense season of God’s discipline...it seems like within the very next hour another big trial comes...and my resolve to endure is challenged again and I’m reeling thinking, “I can’t do this. I can’t keep going. How long O, Lord. I just want to be done!”
		- And one of the things I’ve been wrestling with is my sinful heart of entitlement that believes I deserve less difficulty, less problems, more ease...
	+ Well, what keeps me going? Definitely the Lord and his word, but one of the means that the Lord uses to hold me and encourage me to persevere is his people!
		- Specific people in our church that are an encouragement and a help to me.
		- Specific people in my generations ABF...specific people in my pointman group on Thursday morning...specific co-workers and volunteers at Restoration...my wife...some of the pastors
			* Some of them aren’t in a difficult season...
			* Some of them are in a very difficult season themselves...and some certainly in a much more difficult place than I am...
		- I’m am greatly encouraged and helped by both groups.
		- But I’m finding myself in needing lots of encouragement and help to keep going...I need help everyday, often multiple times a day!

I’m very grateful and thankful to the Lord and for brothers and sisters that are seeking to care for me and live for the Lord. And I’m hoping and praying to stick in the discipline and wait for the intended results of the discipline...I’m praying I wouldn’t seek to get out from under his discipline before it’s had it’s work!

Not only are God’s people important...but Jesus himself is the most important...

## Consider Jesus’ endurance (v.3)

**Hebrews 12:3 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

Everyday, multiple times a day...consider Jesus. This is not just a brief passing thought of considering Jesus...I committed to follow Jesus...Jesus suffered and yet he deserved NONE of it!

* Do I expect any less?

**Hebrews 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered**.

Do I really expect to not have to learn to obey more and more through suffering? Jesus was never disciplined for his sin...but he was still “trained” under suffering.

* Do I expect God’s training for me not to include suffering?

And what’s the goal of subjecting yourself to God’s discipline?

## It produces holy character and a peaceful fruit of righteousness. (vv.10-11,14)

**Hebrews 12:10-11,1410 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. ... 14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.**

Brothers and sisters...individually and corporately, can we commit ourselves to not seeking to get out from under the discipline of God too soon?

* You’ll notice that this passage never encourages us to get out of the Lord’s discipline.
* This passage encourages us to stay in as long as the Lord intends it so that it has it’s sanctifying effect in our lives.
1. John Piper, *The Roots of Endurance: Invincible Perseverance in the Lives of John Newton, Charles Simeon, and William Wilberforce*, The Swans Are Not Silent bk. 3 (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2002), 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)