

III. How to run the race?

- **Practical Humility**

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children.

Hebrews 12:7

- **Practical Obedience**

Max Lucado -*You'll get through this. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. In the meantime don't be foolish, or naïve. But don't despair either. With God's help you'll get through this.*"

- **Practical Evaluation**

Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. Vs. 1

- **Lastly and Most Importantly,**

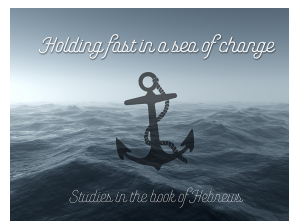
We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.³ Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.⁴ After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.

Hebrews 12:4

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

2 Corinthians 4:17

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How Discipline Works For Us

Hebrews 12:1-13

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.³ Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.⁴ After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.⁵ And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you."⁶ For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he reproves each one he accepts as his child."⁷ As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father?⁸ If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.⁹ Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?¹⁰ For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness.¹¹ No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.¹² So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees.¹³ Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

This is the Word of God

I. Life is a race.

And let us run with endurance the **race** God has set before us. Hebrews 12:1

The word **race** is the Greek word **agon** from where we get our English word, "**agony**". Life, according to this verse, is an agonizing struggle.

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are **trained** in this way. Vs. 11

The word **trained** is the Greek word, "**gymnazo**," from which we get our word **gymnasium**.

The training/racing metaphor is saying in the difficulties of life, though not *your* plan, God does have a plan through the hardships.

We can learn two things:

1. Sufferings are in some way, *necessary*.
2. Sufferings are *paradoxical*.

II. Why run the race?

And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you.⁶ For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he reproveth each one he accepts as his child." Hebrews 12:5,6

For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. Hebrews 12:10

Human parenting is imperfect, but not God's.

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Hebrews 12:7

If you can't see the hardships that come into your life as that, you're not going to grow.

Two incorrect ways of handling hardship in the world.

1. "... do not make light of the Lord's discipline ..." vs. 5
2. "...and don't give up when he corrects you." vs. 5