



HEBREWS 12:1-17 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
LEADER GUIDE – Week of 11/28/21

On-ramp to a great time together: What's your favorite part of the traditional Thanksgiving meal?

Pray Together: One of Calvary's shaping values is "Prayer in Faith." What does that mean? We believe that God accomplishes His will through our prayers.

Here is how we would like you to pray with your LifeGroup this week.

To facilitate, open with prayer: Here is a guide on what things to pray for in this time as you open. Readout loud Ephesians 1:15-23- Use some thoughts, ideas, or phrases that help your heart respond to God.

Move into a time of praying out loud together.

Adoration- Read Psalm 100- Together, praise God for his character, will, and accomplishments.

Confession- Read James 5:15-16 – Admit your sins and ask God's overflowing mercy and forgiveness in your life.

If willing, you might ask the Group to do this silently or share with your LifeGroup about your struggle with sin. Use your discernment by assessing where the level of trust is with your LifeGroup.

Thanksgiving- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 – Thank the Lord for everything he has accomplished in your life.

Thank him for the small and significant aspects of your daily life that He sustains.

Supplication- Read Philippians 4.6 – Use this time to pray for each other's needs.

Those requests have been throughout this season and for new submissions that happen throughout the week.

Close your time by thanking everyone for being honest, open, and willing to pray out loud. Ask your LifeGroup if this was hard, easy, and willing to do again sometime?

Read the passage, then select 2-3 questions from below to discuss.

1. This chapter begins with surpassing encouragement for those who live by faith. After reading verses 1-3, what about these verses encourage you to run the race?

The word "endurance" is repeated in verses 1-3, which is the central theme here in the section. The early church, just like us, was to run with endurance that wasn't manufactured by self-will but by looking at Christ. Jesus is the ultimate picture of one who endured. A note from one commentary, Dan Allen states, "Jesus' despised' or 'disdained' the shame of the cross in the sense that he willingly accepted the ignominy of his public crucifixion and did not let either its suffering or its shame deter him from his goal."¹ Plus, we are to lay burdens such as sins and distractions down.

2. The writer of Hebrews has some instruction for those who wrestle with sin and submit to God's will in verses 3-4; why does he point to Jesus' wrestling in the garden?

What has been your experience of sin and temptation taught you?

3. As you read verses 7-11, What is the Lord's discipline reveal about our relationship with God?

These verses compare and contrast God's discipline of his children with a parent's discipline of their children. That means there could be some baggage from our earthly parents and how they disciplined. This is a tricky subject; no doubt we struggle with the concept that God uses discipline to those he loves. As your LifeGroup opens about doubt, struggles, or confusion, move into active listening and kindness. Your allowing space for curiosity, compassion, and encouragement will set the tone of your Group moving forward in a genuine community. Ultimately, the reality that God is a perfect father trumps those earthly fathers and mothers. In addition, discipline is a sign that we belong to God.

4. What is the overall result the writer of Hebrews wants us to understand?

The answer is found in verses 11, "the peaceful fruit of righteousness." Remember, a simple definition of righteousness is "right standing with God." A full explanation of righteousness is those God calls, accepts, and credits righteousness by Christ's obedience and sanctification. Another cross-reference that highlights why we read this Bible is 2 Timothy 3:16, which let us know that all Scripture has an aspect "for training in righteousness."

5. Look and read verses 12-17; there is a call to action; believers must show new commitment and a renewed concern for one another; how do you see this carried out through these verses?

¹ David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 575.

The writer encourages us two different ways in verses 15. We should be aware of both ways others affect the community. Both appeals reflect a concern that the community of believers cares for each of its members. First, we must be careful that no one misses out on sharing fully in God's grace. Second, we must prevent the growth of any **bitter root**. In the Christian life and community, sometimes, individuals can act like a poisonous weed and utterly. Ultimately, we must see holiness in which the Lord sets for us.

How does the description form your commitment as a LifeGroup? What are tangible ways to express your commitment and renewed concerns for each other?

6. Have you ever heard the phrase taken from the Spiderman movies, "With great power comes great responsibility?" As you look at the remaining verses in chapter 12 (vv.18-24), the writer makes a big deal about the privileges of the new covenant and the responsibility that flows such benefits. What do you believe is a proper response to Jesus speaking a better word?

7. In the concluding remarks of verses 25-29, the writer wants us to pay careful attention to God. If you were to think about your last week, how often did you pay attention to God's word and work in your life? Why do you believe it is so hard to recognize the word and work of God in your life?

This could be your LifeGroups time together. How individuals answer this question could lead to more relational intimacy and growth of knowing each other. Be careful not to rush past this question or give time to linger with silence.

8. What do you make out of the phrase in verse 29? Why do we need to see "God is a consuming fire?"

This is a note taken from the Holman Commentary, "We must focus attention on this feature of God's character in addition to celebrating his grace. When Jesus returns in glory, the fire of God's holiness will consume all that is false and evil. Those with wickedness will be consumed by the fire of this judgment. Those who profess faith in Christ cannot expect mercy if they willfully turn from Jesus back to sin, disobedience, the Law, or a false god. We must show the reality of our confession by our obedience and worship. 'Reverence and awe before His holiness are not incompatible with grateful trust and love in response to His mercy' (F. F. Bruce)." ²

Off-Ramp to your time together-

To close this week: Have everyone settle down and sit quietly. Commission your time together by you reading Hebrews 12.1-2 to your LifeGroup. At the end of your reading, simply say, "Amen." Don't forget to thank everyone for attending, praying together, and reading God's word as you gathered.

² Thomas D. Lea, *Hebrews, James*, vol. 10, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 224.