

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

Small Group Study Guide: Hebrews

Week of November 16 (Week 11)

Hebrews 12



CHAPTER 12 SUMMARY

Hebrews 12 is a powerful and encouraging reminder that we are never alone on our spiritual journey. We are encircled by a large cloud of witnesses—faithful souls who ran this race before us and are now cheering us on from above. This chapter encourages us to embrace God's loving discipline, strive for holiness, and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. It assures us that we are members of an unshakeable kingdom and inspires us to worship God with reverence and appreciation.

SERMON DISCUSSION

Topic:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

OBSERVING AND APPLYING THE TEXT

Looking to Jesus (12:1-3)

1. How does the writer of Hebrews exhort his audience in 12:1-3?
2. How can you “lay aside every weight and sin” in your own life?
3. What does it look like to run your spiritual race with endurance?

Reflection: “In the face of impending suffering and a potential unwillingness to endure further trials, believers can be encouraged by the example of many witnesses to persevering faith in Scripture. But the greatest incentive to continue in the race marked for us is to contemplate what it meant for Jesus to be the pioneer and perfecter of faith and to seek his help.” (Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 420).

Submitting to God’s Discipline (12:4-13)

4. “Discipline” is the key idea in verses 4-13. What is the writer’s explanation and exhortation on the idea of discipline in these verses?

5. How do you respond to God’s discipline? What does it teach you about His love?

Pursuing peace and holiness (12:14-17)

6. How are peace and holiness linked in verse 14, and why are they essential for seeing the Lord?

7. What is the warning in verses 15–17, and how does the example of Esau reinforce it?

8. How does the story of Esau challenge your current priorities?

Reflection: “Although the focus of this passage (12:4-13) is on enduring the sort of opposition and persecution Jesus experienced, the principles outlined by the pastor (i.e., the writer of Hebrews) could be applied to a range of situations in which Christians suffer, such as sickness, deprivation, loneliness and the loss of loved ones. As God’s children learn to submit to his will in suffering, his holiness is reflected in their attitudes and behavior.” (Guthrie, 430).

Living as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem (12:18-24)

9. How does the contrast between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion serve the author’s theological purpose? Or, how does the mountain symbolize the old and new covenants?

Reflection: “When the pastor (i.e., the writer of Hebrews) affirms that this access to God’s presence is through Jesus “the mediator of a new covenant” and his “sprinkled blood,” he restates the argument of 8:1-6; 9:11-15; 23-28. When he contrasts Israel’s approach to God at Sinai and the approach of Christians to God in his heavenly sanctuary through Jesus, he restates in visionary form the argument of 9:16-22; 10:1-22. Sinai represents the whole system of approaching God under the law through priestly mediators offering sacrifices at an earthly sanctuary. No such continuing ministry is presented here now because of the finished work of Christ. The vision is presented here to inspire endurance and faithfulness in the face of every form of testing and struggle.” (Guthrie, 447).

Serving God with Reverence and awe (12:28-29)

10. “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is consuming fire” (vv. 28-29). What does it mean to worship God with reverence and awe in your daily life? Reflect on the character and nature of God in Hebrews 12.

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE November 17-21, 2025 Read Hebrews 12

Monday: 12:1 "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." Dear Lord, help me to lay aside any sins or weights that are slowing me down in my spiritual race. Give me a renewed sense of purpose and strength to run the spiritual race you called me to.

Tuesday 12: 2 "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Lord, help me to have a clear focus on Christ and please help remove life circumstances that can overwhelm or distract me in focusing on you.

Wednesday: 12: 3-4 "Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." God, I thank you for Jesus' perfect endurance in the face of hostility. Please remind me of Jesus' endurance and renew my strength when I seem to grow weary in my life.

Thursday: 12: 5-11 "And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as sons? ... 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." Lord, I thank you for loving me enough to discipline and correct me. Help me to have a humble and teachable spirit to recognize and receive your correction without resistance.

Friday: 12:14-15 "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." Lord, give me the grace to live at peace with everyone; reveal any root of bitterness or unforgiveness in my heart, and a commitment to holiness daily.