

Hebrews *Moving Forwards*

7. How Does Faith Grow?

Hebrews 12.1-13

Aim of the study: To think about where discipline fits into making faith grow and the challenges and effects of running the race with perseverance. *(A lot of the questions involve people's testimonies and personal reflection so be wise about dividing the group appropriately and ensuring there is time for prayer at the end.)*

To start with:

Give everyone a sheet of paper and a pen. Ask them to draw a race representing their life. For example, they might have family and friends cheering in the sidelines, or a winner's trophy in sight at the end. Feel free to let people interpret this as they wish, and then spend a few minutes with each person explaining their "race" picture.

Reading the text:

Read Hebrews 12.1-6.

1. What in this passage do you find interesting or challenging? Does it make you feel positive or negative about the race you are running? Why is that?
2. a. What 'hindrances' or 'weights' do you think people often need to lay aside in order to run the race?

Background info: Previously, the writer to the Hebrews has been reminding the reader of all the great 'witnesses' that have gone before them, Israel's heroes of Old Testament fame. This passage uses these witnesses as an exhortation to move forward and 'run the race with perseverance'.

- b. What experiences of 'throwing off' weights do you have? How did that come about and what were the effects?

Read Hebrews 12.6-13.

3. a. What comes to mind when you think of discipline? Is it a positive or negative picture?
- b. What do you think God's discipline actually looks like and why do you think he disciplines us at all?

Divide into pairs/smaller groups if you feel this will make discussion flow easier at this point.

4. Have you felt disciplined by God at any point in your life? What sort of 'fruit' came from it? How do you think you can distinguish best between God's discipline and attacks of the enemy?
5. What do you verses 12-13 mean for you right now? What do you sense God asking you to change/do as you run in this season of your life? How could people encourage you to run the race and not lose heart?

Reflect and pray

Spend some time in your small groups praying for the things God has challenged you about during this discussion.

