

Resistance & Striving Against Sin
Hebrews 12:4-13

Introduction

This morning I want to continue in a series of sermons I began last August after finishing preaching through 2 Thessalonians. I have been looking at foundational principles related to living content, joyous and successful lives for Christ's glory regardless of whatever circumstances come upon you. The series began with three sermons explaining God's purpose for your existence. You must know your purpose in life if you are to actively pursue accomplishing it.

The first sermon was on *The Purpose of Creation* which can be summarized as God created everything for His own glory, and creation does give Him glory from the smallest subatomic microbe to the largest galaxy, whether man is aware of it or not. The second sermon was on *The Purpose of Man* which can be summarized as man was made in the image and likeness of God to reflect His communicable attributes and also to be God's regent on the earth by being fruitful and multiplying, subduing it, ruling over the creature of the earth, and cultivating and keeping it. Where man fulfills this purpose, nature is blessed and flourishes. Where man neglects this purpose or does the opposite, nature suffers affliction. The third sermon was on *The Purpose of Redemption*. Man's fall into sin made it impossible for mankind to fulfill the original purpose since it marred man's character and brought a curse upon the earth, but redemption enables the Christian to be a better reflection of God and become a better steward of the earth. More importantly, redemption displays attributes of God such as mercy, grace, love, forgiveness, patience, holiness, justice, sacrifice and faithfulness as He conforms vessels of mercy into the image of Christ. Those that do not know God and those who reject the gospel (2 Thess. 1:8-9) are vessels of wrath (Romans 9:22) upon whom God displays other attributes such as His power, longsuffering, anger and righteous judgment.

I then spent two weeks speaking about the pursuit of holiness since Ephesians 1:4 states that a purpose of redemption is that the elect be holy and blameless before Him. I defined holiness - being separated unto God - and explained why it is essential for Christians. First, it is a fundamental purpose in the life of a Christian. Second, God will produce holiness in the life of a Christian, but the experience of how it is produced will be directly related to either the cooperation or resistance of the individual. I then covered obstacles and blocks to holiness which include false professions of faith, ignorance and immaturity, laziness and selfishness and a wrong view of sin. I also covered what aides the development of holiness which includes humility, genuine professions of faith, knowledge and maturity, diligence and pursuing holiness as an internal reality and not just outward conformity.

I also spent two weeks to expand on how to deal properly with sin through confession as demonstrated by David's example in Psalm 51 & 32, as well as the necessity of being involved with the church, the body of Christ, in which spiritual gifts are mutually exercised and you are close enough to both others to encourage one another in the pursuit of holiness and admonish one another when there is a stumbling into sin. Last week I covered the necessity of truth in the pursuit of fulfilling God's purpose in your life of becoming holy and blameless before Him. God is the origin of truth while Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). You cannot live the Christian life successfully apart from a vigorous pursuit of the truth. Truth is essential for the Christian because it 1) reflects this attribute of God in you. 2) Truth leads you to God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and God's word for all are true. 3) It brings you freedom from bondage to sin. 4) Sanctification is tied directly to truth. 5) Pursuit of truth results in maturity. 6) Truth protects from the attacks of our adversary, the devil and his forces.

This morning I will be expanding on this spiritual warfare we are in which encompasses not just the devil and his forces, but also the world and our own personal desires. We are in a war against sin in both

defensive and offensive position. We must mount a defense against the attacks and pressure to yield to temptations and commit sin. We must also mount an offensive against sin in the pursuit of holiness and seeking to bring others into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, is an offensive weapon as well as a defensive one. Our war is against sin entering our own lives and in rescuing those entrapped by it.

Resistance & Striving Against Sin - Hebrews 12:4

Prior to the fall of the iron curtain, I recall hearing from a pastor that had gone to the Soviet Union and talked with pastors there about how they prayed for us in America. They were concerned for the spiritual health of Christians who lived in a society in which material wealth made it easy to fall into the traps of materialism and hedonism both of which would compromise the pursuit of the Lord Jesus Christ in holiness. That shocked me at the time because our normal prayer for believers in countries that persecuted Christians was so often related to their impoverishment and lack of resources including Bibles. During that time, Russian Christian Radio, one of our supported missions organizations, was sending Russian language Bibles to individuals in the Soviet Union because they were not available, and if available, usually not affordable by poor Christians.

I went to Ukraine in 2006 and talked with who recalled those years of persecution, and though they rejoiced in their freedoms to worship and spread the gospel without fear of being hassled by the police, taken to jail or sent to a gulag, they also noted that there were negative aspects too. While missions and evangelism work rapidly expanded with the fall of communism in those lands, there was also a flood of cults that came in and rising affluence fed both materialism and hedonism. Lack of persecution resulted in having to battle more false doctrine, greater temptations and complacency.

Complacency is a problem in the battle against sin. Elements of it show up in the corrections Jesus gives to five of the seven churches He addresses in Revelation 2-3. The Ephesian church left its first love (Rev. 2:4). The church at Pergamum tolerated false teaching (Rev. 2:14-15). The church at Thyatira was a mix of those who held fast to truth and those that tolerated both false doctrine and immorality (Rev. 2:20-24). The church at Sardis only had a few left in it that were still resisting sin while the rest of the church had fallen asleep to spiritual matters (Rev. 3:1-4). The Laodicean church had become lukewarm and did not even recognize their problem (Rev. 3:18).

The descriptions of the churches in Revelation 2-3 fit much of American Christianity which is complacent in the battle against sin in both its defensive and offensive positions. False doctrine and practices of sin by its members are tolerated, while evangelism is non-existent or is replaced with a false gospel that refuses to address repentance from sin. Fire insurance policies are handed out on the quick with a repeat after me prayer in order to save people from eternal hell instead of whole life policies being offered that will save from sin those that will turn from their former beliefs to place their faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ to be justified and receive the promise of eternal life in Him.

Hebrews 12:4 is a verse that is very pointed on the fact that you cannot be complacent in the war against sin. It states, *“You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.”* The passage continues on to explain God’s discipline of those who belong to Him in order bring about the peaceful fruit of righteousness which I will talk about later in this sermon. But first, I need emphasize this verse which is preceded by both the hall of faith in Hebrews 11 and the commands in Hebrews 12:1-3 which we will look at in a few minutes.

Hebrews 12:4 is a statement of reality of which the author is aware. It is the current condition that needs to change. The verse contains two related aspects of what they were failing to do. First, they had not resisted to a high enough degree, and second, their striving against sin was inadequate because of the insufficiency of their resistance. The concepts of resistance to sin and striving against sin are both important.

Resistance to Sin. Resistance (ἀντικαθίστημι – antikathistāmi) is to “actively oppose pressure or power,” “to stand against.” A related word is used in Ephesians 6:13, “*Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*”

This word covers the defensive position. Sin advances against us and we must stand firm against it. There are three sources of sin which will attack us. The first is demonic in origin as in Ephesians 6:11-12 describe - “*the schemes of the devil . . . against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.*” The second is the world as described in several passages. Romans 12:2 - “*Do not be conformed to this world . . .*” is a command to resist the pressure by the world to force you into its mold to live by its standards. In Matthew 13:22 in the parable of the sower, Jesus describes the “*worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth*” that choke the word, so that it is unfruitful in the life of someone that has heard the gospel message. Related to this but also personal in nature is the third source which is described in 1 John 2:15-16 - ¹⁵“*Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*” These are all desires related to one’s own person - flesh, eyes and pride - physical cravings, quest for what pleases the eyes, and what feeds pride.

However, whatever the origin, ultimately sin is a personal issue as explained in James 1:13-15 - ¹³“*Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.* ¹⁴*But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.* ¹⁵*Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*” I hope you see the sequence here. Regardless of the original source, temptation arises because it arouses and entices personal desires. When those desires have been conceived - literally, its seeds have been sown - it brings forth sin as its fruit.

However, keep in mind that sin means to miss the mark, and as seen in the example of Jesus in Matthew 4 compared to Eve in Genesis 3, temptation does not result in sin unless the desires aroused, which could be legitimate, are sought to be satisfied in some manner contrary to God’s will. James 1:2 describes falling into various trials - same word as temptation (πειρασμός / piasmos) - as a normal part of life. James 1:3-4 then describes it as a test of faith that can produce maturity. Whether the trial / temptation is a test of faith or an enticement to sin will depend on the response to it. Jesus was tempted / tested in the same areas as Eve and described in 1 John 2:15-16 which are the desires of the flesh, of the eyes and pride, but He refused to satisfy them in the ways proposed by the devil. He chose to trust God to provide what was desired in His timing. Eve did the opposite and fell for the devil’s deceit and chose to do as he suggested. Jesus resisted sin, and both Eve and Adam did not.

To the Point of Shedding Blood. But what about this idea of resist *to the point of shedding blood in striving against sin*? That seems extreme. What exactly is he talking about? Though there are temptations to yield to sin in order to avoid physical harm and death such as a threat to deny your faith or to join in with a sinful action or you will be harmed or killed, most temptations pose no such threat. This particular phrase is used for two reasons. First, it sets the extreme of what God actually does expect from His children. That is, you are to resist sin even to the point that it may cost you your life on this earth. Anything less than shedding of your blood would therefore be much easier. Second, it refers to the actual examples of resistance to sin that were given in the previous sections of Hebrews 11 & 12.

Hebrews 11 is often referred to as the Hall of Faith because of the many examples given of people who demonstrated the nature of true faith in God as explained in verses 1-2 - ¹*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* ²*For by it the men of old gained approval.* ³*By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.*” Faith is critical for salvation and the Christian life as explained in verse 6, “*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*”

Among the examples given in Hebrews 11 are those whose faith was demonstrated in resisting sin, and that resistance cost them. Verses 24-27 say of Moses, ²⁴ *“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.”*

Hebrew 11:33-40 describes various acts of faith in which resisting sin put them at risk of harm or death or even resulted in martyrdom. *“Shut the mouths of lions”* refers to Daniel who continued to pray despite the king’s edict. *“Quenched the power of fire”* refers to Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego who responded to the king’s edict saying, ¹⁷ *“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ “But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”* They were cast into the furnace of fire, but it did not harm them or even leave the smell of smoke upon them. Verses 35-40 states *“others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; ³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated ³⁸ (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. ³⁹ And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.”*

Some of what these people suffered was because they would not yield and join in sin. They resisted sin even to the point of shedding of blood. Others described were suffering because they were striving against sin in advancing the kingdom of God.

Striving Against Sin. Striving (ἀνταγωνίζομαι / antagōnizomai) is *“to engage in an intense struggle against something or someone” “to fight.”* This can involve physical struggle, but it also refers to mental or psychological opposition. Darby translates this as “wrestling” against sin. The Louw-Nida lexicon remarks that an appropriate equivalent might be *“to do all you can to oppose sin,”* or *“to do everything possible against evil.”* This would include the offensive aspects of warfare.

Christians are not just called to overcome and keep ourselves away from sin, we are also called to help others overcome sin. That is why we are commanded to proclaim the gospel and we are to do so aggressively. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-19 is *“going therefore, make disciples of all nations . . .”* The gospel of Luke ends in a similar way with Jesus’ commission to preach the gospel proclaiming His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (24:47). Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:20 that all Christians are new creatures in Christ and are therefore ambassadors of His kingdom that beg others on Christ’s behalf to be reconciled with God. Evangelism is an active endeavor for which we develop strategies and plan and prepare, not something done passively.

It is also why we both encourage each other in holiness and admonish one another if there is sin. That is why Galatians 6:1-2 commands us to *“bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”* as an aspect of helping restore someone that has been caught in a transgression. This is also to be done aggressively, not passively.

Consider Paul’s instructions in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 which applies both to both admonishments and evangelism. ³ *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.”* It is militant for it describes confrontational methods in supporting the cause of Christ in both advancing and preserving His kingdom.

The example of this striving as an offensive action against sin to the point of shedding of blood is Jesus Himself as described in Hebrews 12:1–3,¹ *“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”*

Notice that verse 1 begins by immediately referring back to this “great cloud of witnesses” described in chapter 11 in following their example to do the same in doing all we can to run the race of faith. Notice as well that it is not just sin that is to be set aside in this race, it is also any encumbrance. That is a reference to something that is not sinful and could even be good except that it becomes a hindrance in running the race of faith in living for God’s glory and serving Him. What exactly those encumbrances might be will vary from individual to individual, but the common tie is that it is something that makes it more difficult for you to walk with Christ and serve Him as you ought to do. In using this analogy of an entangled runner, sin would be putting hobbles on your legs so that you cannot move them properly, and an encumbrance would be wearing heavy boots that weigh you down making it more difficult to run. Encumbrances typically take up your time, preoccupy your mind, or put you into a financial bind that makes it difficult to serve as you would like. Some of the more common financial encumbrances in our society are college, mortgage and consumer debt. Hobbies, social media, games and entertainment are common time encumbrances. These might also be encumbrances that preoccupy your mind, but certain kinds of jobs, news feeds, and some relationships are also common problems in this area. You know it is an encumbrance or possibly a sin when it makes it difficult or keeps you from carrying out God’s commands to you or pursuing what you know He wants you to do.

Jesus is then given as the example of someone that was neither entangled by sin nor encumbrances. He kept that from happening by keeping His purpose in view and continually moving toward fulfilling that purpose. He came to seek and to save the lost, and though He knew from the beginning that it would cost His life, He endured the cross knowing the joy it would bring in accomplishing the Father’s will and providing redemption to sinful man. Jesus lived in the present with an ever present view and understanding of its purpose for the future. As you do the same, you will be able to also endure the hostility of sinners without growing weary and losing heart. God is at work in and through you to accomplish His purposes.

Those are the examples given to encourage us to do the same in both resisting and striving against sin even to the point of shedding blood. The question left then is what is your own resolve in resisting and striving against sin? How much are you willing to suffer in standing against demonic forces and the world as they put increasing pressure on you to cave into their desires and be conformed to the rest of humanity? How far are you willing to go in following the commands of Romans 13:14 to *“put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts,”* and *“consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed?”* How much are you willing to sacrifice in advancing the kingdom of Christ in proclaiming the gospel to the unsaved and helping others overcome the sin into which they have stumbled? Take heart, and follow the examples of Jesus Christ and the many that make up the great cloud of witnesses, both those listed in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11 and those that are not.

The Discipline of the Lord - Hebrews 12:5-11

Hebrews 12:5 continues the correction that began in verse 4.⁵ *“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 reprovved 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. ⁹ 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.”

I tend to reference this passage a lot because though it is a warning I find it encouraging to know the Lord loves His children so much that He will give the needed correction even to the point of chastening us. This is also the model for parents to follow with their own children. Proverbs 13:24 states, “*He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.*” Modern ideas of parenting contradict these truths and the result is the increasing percentage of the last several generations that are currently destroying our society by their lack of self-control, selfishness and laziness. God’s correction and chastening of His children is a comfort because it assures us that we belong to Him even if the discipline received at the moment is sorrowful, we know that in the end it will bring about maturity which yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

How does the Lord discipline and chasten His children? Several ways beginning with the work of the Holy Spirit to convict the conscience and teach us through God’s word. It includes correction through His word, and admonishment and rebuke from other believers when we stumble into sin which can escalate up through all the steps in church discipline to being shamed by disfellowship from the church (2 Thess. 3:14). According to the principles laid out in Romans 1 and examples throughout the epistles, God’s chastening may include letting the person experience the consequences of sin even to the point of turning that person over to Satan that they would be taught not to blaspheme like Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:20) or for *the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus* like the man in 1 Corinthians 5. 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 remarks that the practice of some of them who were partaking of communion “*in an unworthy manner*” and so were “*guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord*” resulted in “*many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep,*” a reference to having died.

The Lord is serious about holiness among His people. He gave the nation of Israel many warnings including the listing of the curses in Deuteronomy 28:15-68 that would come upon them if they did not obey the Lord. He will bring about whatever corrections are necessary upon Christians even to the point of removal of their lives that they will no longer bring shame on His name. That is also seen in the warnings in Revelation 2-3 given to the churches of serious consequences if they did not repent. That is sobering and may seem scary, but worse is the warning in Hebrews 12:8 that if there is not such discipline, then it is a sign that the person is illegitimate and not actually His child. They are like the false teachers warned about in Matthew 7:21-23 that thought they were Christians and even served Him, but will be surprised to instead hear the Lord say to them, “*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*”

A Proper Response - Hebrews 12:12-13

How should we respond to such a sobering warning? Verses 12-13 continue, 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.*” We are to recognize both our own frailties and weakness and those of others and respond by helping one another overcome sin. This matches well the urging in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 to “*admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*” True Christians make up the body of Christ, and each one of us is given spiritual gifts which are to be used in conjunction with the rest of the body so that all of us may grow in Christ and help one another resist demonic forces, the world, and even our

own sinful desires as we strive together against sin (Ephesians 4:11-16). But for you to benefit from that, you must be personally committed to the pursuit of holiness, resisting and striving against sin whatever the cost, be actively involved in the body of Christ, and humble enough to let others into your life so that they may be used by the Lord in your life. What then is your commitment to these things? Your life will demonstrate it.

Sermon Notes - 11/14/2021

Resistance & Striving Against Sin - Hebrews 12:4-13 & Selected Scriptures

Introduction

The Purpose of Creation:

The Purpose of Man

The Purpose of Redemption

The Pursuit of Holiness

Dealing with Sin

The Necessity of Truth

Resistance & Striving Against Sin - Hebrews 12:4

Persecution & spiritual health

The danger of complacency - Rev. 2 & 3

Hebrews 12:4 - a statement of _____ & conditions that need to change

Resistance to Sin - (ἀντικαθίστημι / antikathistāmi) “to actively oppose pressure or power,”

A _____ position against demonic (Eph. 6:11-12), the world (Rom. 12:2), personal desire (1 Jn 2:15-16)

Sin is ultimately a _____ issue - James 1:13-15

Sin is to “miss the mark.” Temptation results in sin only when desires evoked are fulfilled in _____ way

A trial / temptation is either a test of faith or an enticement to sin depending on the _____ to it

To the Point of Shedding Blood

This is the _____ God expects from His children

Hebrews 11 - the “Hall of Faith”

Hebrews 11:26-40 - examples of resistance to this extreme

Striving Against Sin - “to engage in an intense struggle against something or someone” “to fight.”

Christians are called to overcome & keep away from sin and to help others do the same - _____

Christian body life in encouraging and _____ - Gal. 6:1-2

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Hebrews 12:1-3 - the cloud of witnesses and Jesus’ example

Encumbrances make it more _____ to walk with and serve Christ

Common encumbrances

Taking up time

Preoccupy the mind,

Financial debt

The example of Jesus

Examples encourage us to do the same in resisting & striving against sin

The Discipline of the Lord - Hebrews 12:5-11

The Lord's discipline arises from His _____ & demonstrates you are His child

Ways in which the Lord may discipline: *Conviction by Holy Spirit. *Correction by God's word.

*Admonishment & rebuke by God's people. *Church discipline.

*The Consequences of Sin. *Turned over to Satan.

*Divine intervention causing weakness, sickness and even death.

The Lord is serious about _____ among His people

A Proper Response - Hebrews 12:12-13

Help one another _____ sin - 1 Thess. 5:14

Live actively _____ in the body of Christ - Eph. 4:11-16

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - 1) Count how many times the word "sin" is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about the importance of resisting sin and how to do that.

THINK ABOUT IT! - Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What is God's purpose in Creation, Man and Redemption of man? What is holiness and why is it so important that Christians pursue it? What is the proper way to deal with Sin? Why is truth so essential to the Christian life? What are some of the dangers of complacency in the battle against sin? In what ways did five of the churches listed in Revelation 2 & 3 demonstrate complacency? How has this complacency been detrimental to Christianity in America? What does it mean to "resist" sin? How can that be done? What are three sources of sin that will attack you? How do you overcome each one of them? Why is all sin ultimately a personal issue? The same Greek word is used for both "trial" and "temptation." What distinguishes what happens in response to it? What does it mean to *resist to the point of shedding of blood in striving against sin*? Cite some of the examples of this given in Hebrews 11. What does it mean to *strive against sin*? How can that be offensive in nature? Give examples of this. How is Jesus an example of this? What is an encumbrance? How does that differ from sin? What are common encumbrances upon Christians? What encumbrances do you need to set aside? What are you willing so suffer to resist and strive against sin? Why should believers who are disciplined by the Lord be encouraged by it? What are some of the ways that the Lord may discipline believers? What is a proper response to discipline in your own life? In the lives of other believers? What is the importance of being actively involved in a local church body?