

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 25, 2006

Passage: Hebrews 12:12-18

Memory Passage: Proverbs 4:26-27

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Hebrews 12:12-13.** What picture does the writer of Hebrews continue to use in calling these believers to follow Christ with all their hearts (also see Hebrews 12:1-2)?
- (b) How does this picture relate to one of the central concerns we have seen in Hebrews (Hebrews 2:1; 3:12-14; 4:1; 6:10-12; 10:24-25; 10:35-36; 12:3)?
- (c) What is the picture of “lifting up hands” (Exodus 17:9-12)?
- (d) Compare this to the exhortation found in Hebrews (10:24-25)? What is the responsibility of the church to those who are struggling in the “race” (Galatians 6:1-2)?
- (e) What was Job commended for (Job 4:3-4)? What are we encouraged to do in relationship to others in the church (1 Thessalonians 5:14)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Hebrews 12:12 and Galatians 6:1-2. Talk about running a marathon. How are the final miles the hardest? Do you think runners feel like giving up? How is this related to the Christian life? Do people get discouraged in the Christian life? What is our responsibility to them? Pray for someone in your church that is discouraged and struggling to “run for Christ.”

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Isaiah 35.** The writer seems to be referring to Isaiah 35 in this section. Read this chapter and note the similar phrases.
- (b) Who is Isaiah 35 spoken to (Isaiah 35:3-4)? Who is the Letter to the Hebrews written to? What is a central concern in Isaiah 35 (see verse 8 especially)? Is this a theme in Hebrews 12:12-14?
- (c) Why does holiness matter in Isaiah 35:1-2? What is seen whenever God’s people display His holiness by walking in His ways?
- (d) Where will all those on this “highway” go (Isaiah 35:10)? Compare this with Hebrews 12:18-25 and Revelations 21:1-4.
- (e) Why is this described as a highway that people travel on? What does this tell us about the *pursuit* of holiness?
- (f) *Family:* Read Isaiah 35. What is holiness? Why is God glorified when His people walk in holiness? What happens when Christians do not walk in holiness? Pray that holiness will be a concern for all in your family and in your church. Ask God to give you a heart of repentance for your lack of desire “to be holy as He is holy.”

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Hebrews 12:13.** What two illustrations are used in this verse? Read Proverbs 4:26-27. What is essential for someone to run the race?
- (b) How does a person stay on the path instead of turning to the side (Proverbs 4:20-27, especially 20-22)? What happens when they leave the path (1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Timothy 2:5)?
- (c) In Ephesians 5:15-17, how are we told to walk? How can we do this (Ephesians 5:17)?
- (d) What will happen if a person does not respond to God’s discipline and the help of the church (Hebrews 12:13)?
- (e) What happens when a person does respond rightly to the discipline of God and the church?
- (f) *Family:* Read Hebrews 12:12-13 and Proverbs 4:26-27. What happens in a race when someone runs outside the course? How is the Word of God essential for us to know how to run this race (Proverbs 4:20)? Thank God for His Word and pray that each of you will live your life according to the Word that He has given us.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Hebrews 12:14-15.** What two things does the writer tell believers to do in verse 14? How is holiness connected to pursuing “peace with all men” (1 John 4:20-21)?
- (b) Read Romans 12:16-18. What are we called to do? What does Paul tell us to pursue in each of the following verses: Ephesians 4:1-3; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Colossians 3:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:13; 1 Peter 3:11? How are holiness and unity connected?
- (c) What else are we told to pursue? What does he tell us we will not have if we do not pursue this?
- (d) Who can “see God” according to Matthew 5:8? How does a person become “pure at heart” (Hebrews 9:14; 10:22; James 4:8; 1 Peter 1:22)? How are holiness and seeing God connected (John 14:20-21)?
- (e) Read Hebrews 12:15 again. What situation is the writer referring to from verse 14? How does sin that we do not deal with affect us? How does it “defile” others besides us? How does bitterness “come short of the grace of God?”
- (f) *Family:* Read Hebrews 12:14-15 and John 14:20-21. What does it mean to “see God?” How does God allow us to “see” Him in this life? When will we see Him completely? How does sin affect our view of God? Pray that no one will come short of the grace of God, but walk in holiness and “see” God.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Hebrews 12:16-17.** Who does the writer use as an example of failing to receive all God's blessings? Read Genesis 25:31-34. Why did Esau sell his birthright? What did he lose (Genesis 27:36)?
- (b) How is Esau described? In what way was he "immoral" (cp. Genesis 26:34-35)? How is the term adultery used in the prophets (Ezekiel 16:32)? How did Jesus use it to speak of Israel (Matthew 12:39; 16:4)?
- (c) What does "profane" mean? How was Esau's selling his birthright for a mess of pottage "profane?" How is people giving up something eternal to gain something temporary profane? What has been a continual warning in Hebrews (Hebrews 10:35)?
- (d) Why did he not receive it back even when he sought it with tears (2 Corinthians 7:9-11)? What is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow?
- (e) Read 2 Timothy 2:19-22. What two kinds of vessels does Paul say are in the house of the Lord? How does sin and the failure to "set aside every weight" in our lives affect our usefulness for the Lord?
- (f) *Family*: Read Hebrews 12:16-17 and Genesis 25:31-34. Talk together about Esau and his giving up his birthright for pottage soup. How was he thinking only about immediate needs rather than eternal and lasting things? How is this the same for us as believers? How does it affect our usefulness of God? Pray that each of you might have a vision of the surpassing value of eternal things over earthly things.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read **Hebrews 12:12-17**. Discuss Esau and why he gave up something as valuable as his birthright. How do you think this was similar to what these suffering Christians were tempted to think about giving up when they were persecuted? Pray for worship services tomorrow, that believers might be encouraged in their faith and that some unbelieving may come to faith.

DATE: June 25, 2006

PASSAGE: Hebrews 12:12-18

Pursuing Holiness

"Pursue peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord ..."