

## ***Endure God's training as His children*** (Hebrews 12:3–13)

Many have asked why the righteous suffer. The recipients of “Hebrews” had suffered and at least some were apparently in danger of spiritual exhaustion. But the author encourages them to remember that suffering is part of God’s training of His children, which they are called to endure, just as Jesus, the perfect, beloved Son of God endured His suffering. Considering Him should encourage and strengthen them.

### **I. *Endure by beginning with Jesus (12:3).***

1. *Jesus faced opposition no less than believers today.*

2. *Carefully examining Jesus will help avoid weariness and losing heart.*

Jesus has been presented as supreme above all others, the perfect High Priest, and the perfect sacrifice. Now the readers are expected to consider Him in relation to the suffering they must endure.

### **II. *Endure by relating your struggles to His (12:4–6).***

1. *Jesus struggled unto death, but the recipient had not (12:4).*

Jesus suffered when facing temptation (Hebrews 2:18), but the greatest test was obedience unto death on the cross (Philippians 2:8). The recipients of this letter had not gone to that extreme yet. Jesus showed that they could, if it was needed.

2. *Jesus suffered as a Son being trained, and so do all children of God (12:5–6).*

Jesus is the beloved Son of God (Hebrews 1:2, 5; Matthew 3:17) who suffered as part of His divine training (Hebrews 2:9–10, 18; 5:8). Believers have become children of God (Hebrews 2:10; cf. John 1:12) who must recognize that the Father’s dealing with His children includes the discipline of suffering (Proverbs 3:11–12). Do not dismiss lightly His instructions, nor give up when corrected.

### **III. *Endure by learning from the father-son disciplinary relationship (12:7–11).***

1. *Discipline is essential to the relationship (12:7–8).*

Good fathers train their children (teaching and correcting). A lack of training implies a lack of relationship.

2. *Heavenly discipline is in a class far above earthly discipline (12:9–10).*

If respect is given earthly fathers, much more should we submit to divine discipline (12:9). Earthly fathers discipline briefly (in childhood) and imperfectly. God’s discipline is always for our good and prepares us for His presence to share in His holiness.

3. *The process of discipline is unpleasant, but the product is good (12:11).*

The intensive training that produces results is painful and does not seem to be a joy. But consider Jesus who for the joy set before Him endured the cross (12:2). A lifestyle of submitting to God’s training (by not complaining or being bitter) yields the “peaceful fruit of righteousness.” Peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and a result of committing our anxieties and thoughts to the Lord (Philippians 4:8–9). Consistent, proper response also produces a righteous life-style.

### **IV. *Endure by applying these truths (12:12–13).***

1. Their condition (at least of some) was pictured as near spiritual exhaustion and crippling. They were in danger of spiritual collapse and restricted spiritual progress.

2. To gain strength and healing they should keep to the straight path and not turn off it. (See Proverbs 4:25–27.) are called upon to strengthen those weak hands and knees and make straight paths for your feet.

The ‘path’, the Way, is Jesus, who opened the way to God, went before us, and provided the model to follow. The way to God is only through Jesus. And the way to endure on the journey to keep Jesus in focus. Hardship does not mean abandonment by God, nor must it mean sin in us. It is part of the training by a loving, heavenly Father, just as Jesus experienced. So consider Jesus, and endure God’s training as His children.

#### *Questions for further thought and discussion:*

- Give some examples of painful training. What are the benefits? How might this help better understand the need for divine training of God’s children?
- How is the gospel a promise for a “better” life now and how is it not? How must the gospel be correctly stated to avoid misunderstanding? Should the role of suffering be an early part of Christian instruction? Why/why not?
- Name three specific ways, other than His death, that Jesus suffered. How might His example in these areas encourage you to endure?