Hebrews 12:4-17

*“The Disciplined Son!”*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:4-17

**Memory Verse:** *“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”* Hebrews 12:11

**Lesson Focus:** God disciplines us so that we can run our race to Jesus.

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring page, Word Search

Craft for 1st & 2nd Graders:

**Introduction:** Ask the kids: “How many of you like to be disciplined?”

 “How do your parent’s discipline you?”

 “Why is discipline not fun?”

 “Why do your parents disciplining you?”

**Bible Study:**

 **Hebrews 12:4-11 – *The Discipline of the Lord***

Hebrews 12:4In the first verse of Hebrews 12 we were told to lay aside every sin that trips us up and run the race that Jesus has set for us. Jesus has a race or the plan for our lives that we are to follow. Sin gets in the way of that race. That is why in Hebrews 11:4 – he reminds them in their striving against sin, they have not had to shed blood like Jesus did for us. Times where hard for these first “Christians” and they were being persecuted for believing in Jesus. But none of them had died for Jesus yet.

 Hebrews 12:5-6

1. Forgot God’s Words: These people had forgotten what God already said in His Word. This is a quote from the book of Proverbs that tells us that God sees every believer as a son or daughter. And because the Lord loves us He will discipline us and move us to change and be more like Jesus.
2. Do not “hate” it when we are disciplined by the Lord. Do not let it make you mad.

√ Why does it make you mad when you are disciplined?

1. Do not let discipline discourage you or get you down.

√ How hard are you on yourself when you do something wrong? Does it discourage you? Are you discouraged after you are disciplined? Why or why not?

1. God loves you! That is why you are not to be overwhelmed by the discipline of the Lord. You belong to Him and He wants to make sure that we all become more like Jesus.

Hebrews 12:7- What to Remember about Discipline:

 What does the word discipline mean in the Bible?

“To teach or instruct as one would a child.” “To correct or punish.” This is what it means here. Discipline for the purpose to educate us. God’s discipline never involves His wrath or anger. God’s wrath is saved for those who do not believe. But God’s discipline is used as a Father to help His children grow up.

1. Hebrews 12:7-9:

 Discipline means we have a parent who cares. Just as a human parent disciplines his children so that they will learn the right way to behave….God will discipline us so that we will stay on His path. It is His love for us that moves Him to discipline.

1. Hebrews 12:10;

God disciplines us so that we can share in His holiness. God wants us to be like Him. This is the way that He designed us to be in the first place. Adam and Eve were created holy (without sin) until sin entered the human race.

1. Hebrews 12:11

Discipline is not joyous at the time it happens. It actually is painful, but once we learn from it then we can see the reason and be joyful.

√ How many of you when you get a spanking think that it is a lot of fun? Why or why not?

√ What do you think would happen if you never got disciplined for wrong behavior? Would you change or keep doing the same wrong behavior?

See here is the thing; we do not always change when we are disciplined. Sometimes we just get mad or keep doing the same things. If you hit your brother and got disciplined for that and then hit him again…you did not learn from your discipline.

So now the writer of Hebrews is going to tell us to get busy and start learning….

 Hebrews 12:12-17; *“No Room for Laziness!”*

 *Illustration Story: Art Carey wrote of his running the Boston Marathon;*

 *“By now, the rigors of having run nearly twenty miles are beginning to tell. My stride has shortened. My legs are tight. By breathing is shallow and fast. My joints are becoming raw and worn. My neck aches from all the jolts that have ricocheted up my spine. Half-dollar-size blisters sting the soles of my feet. I’m beginning to feel queasy and light headed. I want to stop running. I have “hit the wall.”*

*Now the real battle begins. Up the first of many long inclines I start to climb – one-two, one-two, one-two, right-left, right-left, right-left. I keep watching my feet move, one after the other…*

*“Heartbreak Hill” – the last, the longest and the steepest, a half-mile struggle against gravity designed to finish off the faint and faltering.*

*The last four miles are seemingly endless. Some runners, their eyes riveted catatonically to the ground, trudge alone in the bare feet, holding in their hands the shoes that have blistered and bloodied their feet.*

*Finally, the distinctive profile of the Prudential Building looms on the horizon. I begin to step up my pace. Faster, faster…smoother, smoother. Suppress the pain. Finish up strong. Careful – not to fast. Don’t cramp…*

*I can see the yellow stripe 50 yards ahead. I run faster, pumping my arms, pushing off my toes, defying clutching leg cramps to mount a glorious, last-gasp kick…40 yards, 30 yards, 20 yards…cheers and clapping…10 yards…finish line…an explosion of euphoria…I have run the best marathon of my life. The real joy of the Boston Marathon is just finishing…doing what you have set out to do.”*

Running a marathon is not easy. But what that story was trying to tell us is that is not important how fast you run, it is important that you finish. We have been told to run the race that Jesus has set out for us and now the Hebrew writer is going to tell us to get with the program!

Hebrews 12:12-13: Run Tough;

The first signs in a race that you are losing energy in a race are your dropping arms and flopping hands, and wobbling knees. The author of Hebrews is telling us to “straighten up” or “suck it in.” As we follow Jesus and run the race He has given us we are to keep our focus on Him. He is who we follow. We must always be moving ahead and never giving up. There is not “lazy” in following Jesus! We are to be actively running toward Jesus at all times.

Hebrews 12:14-17: “Things to run after and run away from.”

1. Run towards peace with all people. How do you do this? Is there someone who you do not want to have peace? What can you do about it?
2. Run towards holiness. Always be asking God to work in you and to make you more like Jesus. Holiness is to be like Jesus. Holiness is what God wants for our lives and we can only work towards this through the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Run away from “gracelessness.” What is God’s grace? (Undeserved favor) We receive God’s grace of forgiveness through Jesus’ death on the cross. We receive God’s grace every day when we sin and ask for forgiveness. We fall short of God grace because of un-confessed sin in our lives. We fall short of the grace of God by not being in His word and growing in His grace.
4. Run away from “bitterness.” This bitter root comes from Deuteronomy 29:18 when God tells Israel to make sure that they stay away from idolatry that produces a bitter poison in their hearts. Run away from anything that takes your heart away from God.

 The last verses give us the example of Esau (tell the kids his story.) Esau was more concerned with things on earth. When he came home hungry, he sold his birthright for some stew. Food was more important to him at that time than the things of God. Later in his life he regretted his decision, but it was too late. We have to run our race towards Jesus staying away from anything that turns our hearts from God.

**Conclusion:** We are all running a race towards Jesus. We are running the race God wants us to run. I can’t imagine running a marathon, but that is a human race that takes endurance and it is a wonderful race to finish. But how much more do I want to run well the race that God has form me. Boys and girls we need to run the race God has for us. We need to not be lazy and work hard through the grace of God. We need to listen to what God is teaching us and maybe even disciplining us. We are not running this race alone!

