

Dont Grow Weary and Fainthearted

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[0 : 00] If you would turn with me to Hebrews chapter 12, please. Hebrews chapter 12, we'll be looking at verses 3 to 17 this morning. While you're turning there, let me give you just a quick review.

This has been a couple weeks. I want you to remember that the book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were suffering and were tempted to return to their old covenant ways to find relief from their sufferings.

The book of Hebrews was a sermon written to show them that the old covenant was not effective and was only a shadow that pointed forward to the real work done by Jesus Christ.

Up to this point, we have seen the writer of the book of Hebrews build a case for how Christ and his work in the new covenant is better than the old covenant. And what these suffering Hebrew Christians were tempted and better than the old covenant and better than what these suffering Hebrew Christians were tempted to go back to.

Broadly, we could say that Hebrews 1 through 7 has told us who Christ is and that Hebrews 8 and 9 have told us what Christ has done. Chapter 10 was a culmination of what the writer of the book of Hebrews has been sharing about the work of Christ.

[1 : 23] And that passage summarized and shared with us how Christ is the perfect sacrifice and the only sacrifice God was pleased with. Then in the last part of chapter 10, we looked at how the writer began to give us the proper response to all that he's been teaching us about Christ and the new covenant.

We were exhorted to hold fast the confession of our hope and consider how to stir one another up to love and good works. The proper response is not to turn away from Christ because of what we are going through.

And then in chapter 11, we looked together at how the old covenant saints were commended because they trusted in God and his promises to be assured of the things that they had hoped for. And they were convinced of these things not seen because of their faith. And then last time, we looked at how to stay in the race.

We are to put aside the weight and the sin that so easily besets and look to Jesus who ran the race with his eyes fixed on that goal. And we took and looked back at chapter 11 and showed how those folks did that very thing to stay in the race.

[2 : 39] And so today we look at Hebrews chapter 12, verses 3 to 17. Let me read that. Hebrews 12, 3 to 17. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted.

In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastens every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you have endured.

God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom the father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline in whom all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the father of spirits and live?

[3 : 55] For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them. But he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant.

But later it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore, lift up your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

Strive for peace with everyone and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God, that no writ of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.

Let's pray together.

Father, I thank you for this passage, and I pray that you would be with us. There is so much here that in the reading of it, we just might struggle to even get the gist of it.

[5 : 16] And I pray that you would be with us, that you would make your word plain and clear. I pray that you would bless and guide through this, that we would see these exhortations that you give and apply them to our lives.

Because the very thing that he is addressing is a thing that we face regularly. And I pray that you would be with us, that we would be prepared, and that we would be faithfully walking so as to serve you and to not turn back.

I pray that you would be with us as we look at your word. In Jesus' name, amen. I've entitled the message, Don't Grow Weary and Fainthearted, from one of the first verses that we read here.

Don't Grow Weary and Fainthearted. And I'm going to give you our goal right up front. Our goal today is to see what we are to do so that we may not grow weary or faint-hearted in our trials.

Remember, that's what was happening to them. These people were growing weary and faint-hearted in their trials. They were going through persecution, and they were ready to go back. And the writer of the book of Hebrews has given them all this understanding of what they had.

[6 : 32] And now he's tying it together with an exhortation, saying, I want you to remember to do this. So we're going to see today how not to grow weary and faint-hearted during our trials.

We're going to see three things. What should we think when the world is against you because of your faith? Secondly, we're supposed to see, since God is in control of everything, and I am his child, we're going to answer this.

Why are these trials happening to me? Ever been in that situation? Well, I'm a Christian. Why is God doing this to me? I can't fathom why this makes any difference.

Why is God doing this? Why are these trials happening to me? And third, what are some of the dangers that we need to be careful of when going through these kinds of discouraging trials?

So we'll look at those three things, and I'll come back to them and state them as we look at them.

First, let's begin by talking about the world hating us. And he encourages us, don't give up because the world hates you.

[7 : 39] And this is primarily in verses 3 and 4. We gathered through our introduction and what we've looked at in the book of Hebrews that the Hebrew Christians were ready or tempted to turn away from Christ because they were offended that the world hated them.

These people were really struggling. As they were walking for Christ, they were finding that the world looked at them and hated them for walking with Christ, for trusting in Christ, for their faith in Christ.

They were discouraged because here they were trying to serve God, the God of the universe, and everywhere they went, people were persecuting them because of that very thing.

People, I'm sorry, the world hates the people of God because they are the people of God. And right off, as he's summing up this teaching, the writer of the book of Hebrews is saying, don't give up just because the world hates you.

The world has had a hatred for Christians that has caused them to persecute Christians without mercy. It always has.

[8 : 56] In this situation, the Christians were growing weary. Trial after trial, only because they loved Christ. Temptation after temptation, only because they wanted to please Christ.

Is that such an awful thing? All I want to do is serve Christ. Can't you leave me alone? All I want to do is serve Christ. Why do you have to treat me that way? I don't care if you live your life. Now, that's not the right way to say this, but you could put yourself in their mind in the weary.

I don't care that you don't want to serve Christ. I want to serve Christ. Leave me alone. Just let me be. But they were growing weary because the world kept trying them, testing them, persecuting them because they just wanted to follow Christ.

And he's telling them, don't give up because the world hates you. He wants us to understand, among other things, that the world hates Christians. And I want you to understand that, brother and sister here today.

If you're trusting Christ, I want you to understand that if you trust Christ, the world hates Christians. The world has hated God's people since Cain killed Abel. And that's been exactly the case.

[10:11] Since Cain killed Abel, the whole world has hated Christians. And we shouldn't be surprised because Jesus said the world would hate us. Matthew 10, 22, Jesus said, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake.

He said again, as it's recorded in Matthew 24, 9, they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

In John 15, 18, he says, if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. And the world did hate Christ and does hate Christ.

And so therefore, the world hates his people. If you profess the name of Christ, if you are trusting in Christ, if you want to serve Christ, you can mark it down.

Since Cain killed Abel, the world hates those who love God. That's a truth you and I need to have in our mind. Now, he's going to be careful to balance it.

[11:14] It doesn't need to twist our mind. It doesn't need to make it an us against them. It doesn't mean that that truth is to make us to all of a sudden hate people who hate us.

In fact, that is not the case. It's unfair, but we're to love the people. Now, it's not unfair from God's standpoint. But in the scheme of things, you would think God would say, well, since they hate you, you can hate them.

That's not the way it is. But, be assured of the truth. The world hates God's people. And so, he reminds us here of that fact and he goes on to mention what we should do.

What do we do when the world's hatred for us brings trials that cause us to grow weary and faint-hearted? And that's exactly what this passage is pointing out.

He's saying, this is what you do. When the world hates you and persecutes you and those persecutions make you weary, what are you to do?

[12:18] What are you to do in the midst of trials when you just can't, oh, just, I'm so tired of being in trouble with the world. I'm so tired of them persecuting me. What do you do? He says in verse 2, which we didn't read, I almost went back and read it, to look to Jesus.

And I didn't go back and read it because we dealt with it in the last sermon. That is part of how we are to keep going. We're to look to Jesus. We're to look to Jesus to be able to run our race. And in a thought, that phrase goes with what he encourages in verses 1 and 2 to talk about.

But he carries that same kind of thing into this passage here, this section here, starting in verse 3. We're to look to Jesus. He endured because the goal was worth what he had to go through.

And he was rewarded for finishing the course. We're to keep those things in mind. Our master kept his eye on the goal and he was rewarded.

And it was such that he went through all kinds of troubles. In verse 3, he really brings that about and makes that the thing he's centering their thoughts on. They need to keep this in mind.

[13:33] He says in verse 3, Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself. Consider that Jesus endured the same kind of hostility from sinners against himself.

He's not saying, well, what he is saying is think about Jesus. As he went through life, he faced the same kind of things. people hated him because he was from God.

And what the writer of Hebrews is trying to get us to realize is that this is not an unusual circumstance or situation. When you look at, and this ties right back to the verses we've already talked about, when you look at the sayings that Jesus said, they will hate you because they hate me, he's saying, think about how they hated me.

Think about all the ways they tried to trip me up. Think about all the ways they tried to accuse me. Think about all the ways they tried to shame me and trip me up. They're going to do the same to you.

The word says to consider that Jesus has endured this same kind of suffering as those people who the writer of Hebrews is writing to were suffering persecution. He's trying to get them to realize that this is not new.

[14:48] You're going through the same kind of thing that Jesus went through. So look at him. Be mindful of him. Consider how he went through it. If they hated him, why wouldn't they hate you?

There's every reason to believe that trials are normal. We live in a nation and in a time that doesn't talk about that often.

Christian churches don't talk about the fact very often that the Bible says that the world will hate you. In fact, so many quote Christian churches go about trying to make their Christians say and do things and not say and do things so that the world loves them.

And it's not that we're to go out and provoke the world. We're not to go out there and call them names and jab them and everything else just to try to get them to hate us. All we have to do for the world to hate us is to love Christ and to want to serve him.

But we must be mindful of the fact that there is going to be hatred for that. If we have a burden for Hazleton and we desire to go out and give them the best message there ever was, the thing that will give them hope, the thing that will satisfy their souls to the very core, the thing that is exactly what they need, what's going to be their response?

[16:14] Oh boy! No, they're going to hate us for it. Now God will work in hearts and bring people to himself in spite of the world hating us.

He will draw people to himself and they will lose their hatred and they will trust Christ and they will be saved. But we need to disavow ourselves of this kind of thinking that's in American churches today that we can live lives that the world will like us.

They won't. And when trials come and they're coming more and more, when trials come that shows that the world is hating us, we should not go, oh no, what did I do wrong?

We should say, I expect this. Not, we shouldn't say, oh I'm so glad for this. I love pain. I love people persecuting. That's not the issue.

But we should say, this is not abnormal. For the world to love the church, that is abnormal. For the world to love Christians who want to love and serve God, that is abnormal.

[17:30] If they hated him, why wouldn't they hate us? Trials because of the world's hatred are not unusual, nor should they be unexpected. And that is a truth we need to keep in mind.

So as you go out into this world this week, and you just seek to love God, and you seek to serve God, and you seek to obey God, and people don't appreciate that, you should expect it.

If you go out and try to share the gospel, and they don't like that. Now I'm not talking about us being an offense in and of ourselves. I'm not talking about us being nasty or stupid or anything like that.

But if you lovingly desire to share the gospel, and you endeavor to do it, just be it known to you, the world will hate that. And the world will work against that.

That's a truth we need to keep in mind. And it will be true today, it will be true this next week, it will be true if the country goes better than it has been.

[18:34] If revival breaks out, the world will still hate us. That will always be the case. We will never have a world, we will never live in a society where the world loves Christians.

We need to nail that fact down in our minds. So let us not go weary or faint-hearted because the world hates us. It's not unusual for Baronelle Stutzman, Jack Phillips, David Daleiden, and many others to be hated and vilified in the world.

So many of them just want to live for Christ. They love Christ. They love people. But no matter if they love people or not, since they love Christ, the world hates them.

And the same will be true with us. It is not unusual to face trials at school, at work, or in our neighborhood for following Christ. It's normal.

And so we should consider him who endured from sinners such hostility and let that be a reminder not to grow weary. Christ didn't grow weary, well, 33 years his whole life, there is a sense in which he suffered, but the last three in his ministry.

[20:01] He suffered much more openly. And he ultimately died, now we know it's at the hands of God for our redemption, but he died at the hands of wicked sinners because they hated him, because they would not have him.

Now God used that for our redemption. So it's normal and consider Christ and what he went through that that would be an encouragement.

He goes on in verses 5 through 11 to speak about how, well, let me rephrase it in the way I've asked the question earlier.

Because in trials, we sometimes ask this question and the writer of Hebrews is going to answer this very question. He's not going to use the term God's in control.

He's not going to use the term God is sovereign. He's not going to use the term I'm his child, but let me put it this way. Since God is in control of everything and I am his child, why are these trials happening to me?

[21 : 08] I mean, he saved me. Why is my life hard? And again, this goes against so much of what is taught in this world today.

Health, wealth, and prosperity gospel. If you trust Christ, you have enough faith and you pray, you will be healthy, wealthy, prosperous. Is that biblical?

No. But it isn't such that we should ask ourselves, well, since I'm a child of God, why are these things happening to me?

That's part of their discouragement. We know that because of the way he exhorted them. And we'll get to that in just a second. But these people were stuck in that thing. I don't know about you, but I've been there.

I was there recently. A trial came into my life and I said, God, I don't understand. Why? I just don't understand this trial.

[22 : 10] God was gracious, brought truths to my mind, still struggled with it. But sometimes we ask, well, God, if you're in control of anything, why did you let this happen?

I mean, all you had to do was, what, think? You know? And we get all bent on a shape thinking, oh, you know, God doesn't love me anymore.

Look at my life. I'm not rich. I'm not speaking personally. But we could say, I'm not rich. My life is hard. I work a bunch of hours. I'm getting old or whatever you could say.

We could say all kinds of things. We say, God, I don't understand. I mean, I'm your child. I should have the strength like Moses until he was 140 years old.

Strength was not abated. Nor his mind, I can't remember the idea, he doesn't diminish. I'm your child. I should be like that. No.

[23 : 12] God doesn't promise that. In fact, God actually promises the opposite. These people who were asking questions, it was showing that they were growing weary and faint-hearted.

And in verse five, I love how he starts this. He says, and have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

He's saying, you should have remembered this passage. You should have remembered this principle. Our brother in Sunday school was talking about the importance of having God's word in our hearts so the spirit brings it to mind.

We can apply it to our situations. This is one of those situations. He's saying, you guys should have remembered this. And what he does is he quotes to them Proverbs 3, 11 through 12.

As we have it here in Hebrews, it says, my son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

[24 : 15] For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastens every son he receives. He's saying that you should have remembered that passage.

That passage addresses what God is doing when we go through trials. He's saying, if you're getting discouraged, I don't understand why God let this happen, you're not remembering the truths of scripture.

I know. I'm there with you. I had to do this. I have to do this. All of us are like this. We forget the truths of scripture and we need to be brought back by sharing with one another, by the ministry of grace through the preaching, by our own knowing the word and applying it to our lives as we think through trials.

We need to be people who say, okay, what does the word of God say about this? And he's saying, you should have remembered that the word of God says you're going to have trials. Why? Because the Lord is disciplining you and he's disciplining you as your child.

God disciplines us in trials. And we shouldn't always think of discipline as necessarily reproof. Sometimes it's just training and teaching.

[25 : 32] We discipline our children not just by corporal punishment, not just by, you know, this, you know, you've lost this privilege because of that. We also discipline our children by saying such things as, you know, it's, don't quote me here.

It's good for every young man to split wood. It builds up her body strength. So I'm going to send you out to split wood in the wood pile today. You didn't do anything wrong. It's good discipline.

It helps you grow. I don't know why dad's got me out here, you know, all this stuff that could go on. Discipline is also training and teaching. James 1, 2 through 4 says, count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

And let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Things happen to grow us.

Romans 5, 3, 3 through 5. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Ghost who has been given unto us.

[26 : 54] These people are saying, God, don't you love me? Why did you let this happen? And he's saying, you should remember my word. I send things to teach you. I send things to grow you.

You should remember that I am sending these kinds of things in your life so that you do grow. He goes on to also speak about in doing these kinds of things in this quote of Proverbs.

Proverbs 5, 3, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6, 6, 7, 7, 7, 7, 8. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves. God, why are you doing this to me?

Because I love you. We've heard that from our parents, but we sometimes don't believe it. Until we get older. And then we go, oh, yeah.

Couldn't see it, but it's true. Why am I going through this trial, Lord? Because I want you to know I love you.

[27 : 58] That's why. God doesn't hate us in trials. God loves us in trials. God wants to do great things in our hearts.

And so he sends the trials and he does those great things. Nothing keeps his hand back. But we need to be careful not to misinterpret what he's doing by forgetting the teachings of Scripture and saying, I don't know what he's doing.

He must hate me. No, the truth of Scripture is he knows what he's doing and he loves you. And you should know that. His love is shown in that he does work in us through trials.

Only unloved children are left to themselves. You want your trials to be gone?

You should only want them to be gone the right way when we get to heaven and they're done. Right now, we don't like it. And I like that this passage deals with this.

[29 : 08] It doesn't seem pleasant. Listen, I don't, I should never go, oh, I'm so glad when I was 12 I broke my arm. Now, I should be glad that he allowed it and it was part of his work.

But I shouldn't go, oh, I love this pain. It's not that. The writer of Hebrews has recognized it's not comfortable. But we need to remind ourselves of the truth that God loves us.

He not only loves us, but he shows us he, we are his children through trials. The hard times you go through, that's God saying, you're mine. Because God doesn't discipline other people's children.

He disciplines his own. And he never gives up. And he never says, I'm going to give you two years off or 10 years off or 50 years off.

He's working in our hearts all the time. Now, sometimes the trials are harder and sometimes they're not so hard. Praise God for times are refreshing. But praise God for the times when he's working intensely in us.

[30 : 13] Sometimes we can see that. Sometimes we can look back and say, oh, I hated that trial. It broke my heart. But I can see some of the things God did.

And I'm so glad he shows me I'm his child and he shows me he loves me. God shows us we are his children in trials. Fathers do not discipline other people's children.

But discipline shows that God is claiming us for his children. Therefore, we should have the right reaction to the Lord's trials.

We shouldn't regard it lightly. These trials are from God. We don't just go, you know, if I just keep a stiff upper lip, I'll make it through.

Oh, we cry out to God. We address him. We all this. It's not that we regard it lightly. Ah, don't worry about it. These are nothing. We're not stoics. We shouldn't be stoics as we go through trials.

[31 : 13] We should look for what we should learn. We should look for God and what is he doing? How is he drawing himself or us close to himself? A lot of times we won't see what he's doing.

Sometimes we will. But the promise is he's always doing and it is always accomplished completely what he's doing.

He sends trials. They may be hard. He's doing what he pleases and he's going to do what he pleases. Now, we have a responsibility to submit to that, but he's still God.

I'm amazed sometimes when you look back at trials and once in a while when you see some of the things that God did in your heart because of it, you go, wow, Lord, I don't know how you did that. I don't know how you made me different in this area, but I can certainly see that I am and I can see that you must have done it because I didn't do it.

So thank you. We should see that the discipline of trials shows us God's love and fatherhood.

[32 : 34] God only disciplines his own children. We've mentioned that. I want you to remember this though. Not everyone who goes through trials is shown to be God's child. child. Okay?

I'm just trying to get this fault, disavow anyone of a false hope saying, my life's hard. I must be a child of God. That's not the definition of whether you're a child of God.

Are you trusting Christ for your hope of heaven? Have you repented of your sin and are you trusting him for your hope of heaven? That defines whether you're a child of God.

But trials do show that we are children of God. Those who are God's children should see, I mean, say it better this way. Those who are God's children should see their trials as proof of God's love and fatherhood.

If you're trusting Christ, you should not look at trials and say, oh, God doesn't love me. If you're trusting Christ, you should say, that's proof God loves me and he is my father.

[33 : 38] That's some of the things that he's pointing out here. In the midst of this, we've asked that question or mentioned the statement that we might ask the question, does God still love me?

Do these trials mean that God doesn't love me? And I've made this point, but I'm going to emphasize it again. We need to be people who remind ourselves of the truth of scripture. Trials are always that God is showing us that he loves us.

And they are always that we are indeed his children. Never let them turn you to think, maybe God doesn't love me. A third right reaction to trials is to endure.

To stay on the course. To trust God through them. To not walk away. That's exactly what these people were thinking to do. And that's the overall point of what he's exhorting here.

Don't walk away. Stay there. There's a good illustration of that we'll mention in just a minute at the end of the passage.

[34 : 55] A right reaction, fourthly, to see trials as a discipline is to see trials coming as a discipline from a perfect father. He uses the example of our fathers. I have a dad.

You have a dad. Some of you knew your dad. Some of you didn't. I knew my dad. I love my dad.

Some of you know my dad. Great dad. Not perfect. Dads, I'm not speaking of him.

I'm speaking of dads in general. Dads do their best. Sometimes dads discipline because they know their children need it. Sometimes they discipline but they're not sure exactly what the child needs. Sometimes they discipline because they're tired of the children doing what they're doing and just want it to stop. Oh, there can be all kinds of reasons. Dads discipline, for the most part, good, but they don't know everything.

And they can only discipline a child up to their own level. In other words, the idea of, you know, what a dad doesn't know he can't train his children about. I'm thankful for my dad.

[36 : 03] You should be thankful for your dad if he at all trained you in the way of godliness or taught you anything wise or good. But they're limited. And a right reaction is to see trials coming from a perfect father.

My dad didn't always know what to do. I didn't always know what to do, even though I got a lot of practice. In fact, I'm befuddled so often. But trials in my life are not a result of God not knowing what to do.

Trials in your and my life are the result of a perfect God knowing exactly what to do. They're a result of God knowing how to work things out to progress you in maturity towards Christ's likeness.

He knows exactly what buttons to push. He knows exactly what knobs to pull. I've told several of you before, I've just been amazed at that fact.

In my life, there have been times when I've been brought to the point of having nothing and going, God, I don't know what you're going to do and watch him provide amazingly and then be brought to a different circumstance where the ultimate overall thing is the same.

[37 : 33] But because a couple of knobs have been twisted and a couple of levers have been thrown, I'm like, this is new. I've never been here before. Lord, help me.

He's the perfect father for that. He knows how to form our trials. So what should we do? We should not look at trials as coming from a father who doesn't know what to do.

We should look at trials as coming from a father who is perfect, who is infinite and holy and knows exactly what to do. So we should remain true in those trials.

We should be steadfast. An earthly father disciplines the best that he can, but God's discipline is perfect.

God's discipline, he disciplines us that we may share his holiness. Our dad's discipline so that we can come up to their level of proficiency.

[38 : 37] God disciplines us that we can share his holiness. And this is where that phrase comes in that I am so glad that's here. He mentions that for the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant.

And he doesn't go around and say, but you should like it. He's acknowledging that things hurt, that some trials pierce to the very soul.

He's not saying deny that. He's saying acknowledge that, but recognize the truth. Those trials that hurt yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Trials are hard. They will be hard all our days. And God will keep tweaking them so that they're entirely, perfectly effective.

And they may hurt, but they're perfect. And God will give peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who stay there and trust in him.

[39 : 58] So the last section here kind of wraps up with an exhortation. Verses 12 through 17. He commands them, he exhorts them, lift up your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame to me not be put out of joint.

What's he getting at? These people had been looking at their trials wrong. Why am I suffering? Why does the world hate me? They'd been looking at their trials wrong. Does God hate me? Is God just a capricious father? He doesn't know what he's doing?

And the answer is no. God loves you. He knows what he's doing. And these things are for your good. So, what should I do?

I should put away this discouragement. I'm not saying you don't acknowledge pain. I'm not saying that you don't acknowledge the difficulty of the situation. You need to straighten your thinking out so that you don't get messed up in the end.

[41 : 01] You don't let yourself saying, well, these trials must show that God doesn't love me. No, that's a wrong thought. I'm going to strengthen my weak hands and I'm going to work straightly.

Oh, I don't know. The world hates me. Maybe I've done something wrong. Why doesn't the world love me? Straighten that thought out. The world is going to hate all of God's people. Don't let it discourage you.

Don't let it bend you out of shape. Live in light of the truth. Walk straight paths or otherwise you're going to get all twisted up. Pity me.

Walk away just like these people were tempted to do and make a mess of your life. So lift up your drooping hands, strengthen your weak knees and make straight pads for your feet so that what is lame may not be put away, be put out of joint.

If we do not deal with our improper assessment of trials, it may cause us more harm or even our ruin. If you don't get a good perspective of what trials are like, that the world hates us, that God is working in us for good, that he's showing he loves us and that he's treating us as sons, if you don't fix those things in your mind, a new trial comes along, the temptation to think any one of those things, no, the truth is, yeah, but I hurt terribly, but the truth is, yeah, but I'm so discouraged, but the truth is, don't let yourself walk down that path.

[42 : 36] Deal with your assessment of the trials and write them according to scripture. We as Christians need to be reminding ourselves of truth in relations to trials.

They are not unusual. Christ went through them, we should know that we're going to go through them. God is showing his love and his fatherhood towards us. He is training us in righteousness, and we need to be active in thinking these things.

well, in the midst of this, I've hinted to this next point at the beginning. In the midst of this, he's making sure that we keep a balance. If the world hates you and they treat you terrible, well, let's hate them back.

But rather, he says, in pulling this together and exhorting, he says, I want you to strive with peace with all men. Even those who hate you, you should strive for peace with them. we have a responsibility to love our enemies as Christ did. Christ was direct. Christ would rebuke at the right times.

[43 : 42] Christ would say the appropriate things. But he never lashed out in hatred towards people. He was angry, and he was angry towards sin in the temple, but he never turned on people for persecuting him.

In fact, from the cross, he said, among other things, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. So we too, in the midst of a world who hate us just because we're Christians, should strive for peace with all men.

We have a responsibility to love even our enemies as Christ did. We should also strive with holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

That's not talking about working our way to salvation. This is talking about in the midst of trials. I want to do what is right before God. I want to do what is pure before God.

I want to do what is holy before God. I should strive for holiness. Fourthly, he exhorts us to see that no one fails to obtain the grace of God.

[44 : 51] That's where I start looking to you and you start looking to me. I shouldn't say looking to, looking out for. Trials come, we have to be sensitive.

Oh, brother, you look down. Oh, yeah, I just can't seem to win. It seems like the world hates me.

Now, don't be super righteous, Joe. But it's time to step in and say, no, in a loving and not condescending way, say, brother, remember, the world's always going to hate us.

Well, I don't know. You know, things have gone so wrong. Does God really love me? Am I his child?

Oh, but remember the truths of scripture. We should see to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God.

We're not only to watch out for ourselves, we're to watch out for one another. Just like the writer of the book of Hebrews is doing for these people, he sees them faltering. He sees them wanting to turn back and he's saying, oh, brothers, don't.

Look at all the things you would have to lose. Look at what God is doing. Look how good he is. Look how he's showing you that he loves you.

[46 : 10] See, he told you in the Old Testament. He tells you in the New Testament too. Told you in the Old Testament. Trials are showing you his love and that you're his child. And the fifthly, he exhorts us to be careful that we let no root of bitterness spring up to poison others.

A wrong attitude towards trials or a wrong attitude toward God in trials can spread harm to others.

We need to check our attitudes. We need to watch for wrong attitudes in ourselves and in others. these kinds of wrong attitudes. If I don't think God loves me or I don't know if I'm God's child, they can spread and cause problems. And he ends up this section by alluding to Esau.

Now there's more we can learn from this, but I'm going to tie it to just the direction I've been and mention that sixthly, we need to be careful not to be like Esau.

And the biggest thing that Esau is known for was that when faced with a temporal trial of hunger, he succumbed to do whatever it took to make the trial go away.

[47 : 29] Do you remember the situation? He'd been out in the field and he was hungry and he came in, he says I'm going to die if I don't eat. Sounds like a lot of us guys, huh?

I'm going to die if I don't eat. What do you got? Porridge. Oh, I'm so hungry. I'll even eat your porridge. How about your birthright?

Yeah, who cares? Have my birthright. I just need porridge. And what's the situation? When faced with that temporal trial of hunger, he said, I'm willing to give it away.

I'm willing to quit being who I was called to be. Now, we understand that God from eternity past actually called Jacob, but in the process of time, the blessing had first fallen upon Esau, but he forsook it.

He treated his trial as something that just had to be gotten out of. So I'll give up my birthright if that's what it takes to get out of it. He traded the blessing and privilege of God for some pottage.

[48 : 37] church. We face all kinds of trials, some of them as simple as Esau, some of them as tough as the Christians under Nero or Christians in China or Christians in other places under false religions, where people are faced with threat of their life.

He's saying, don't be like Esau. Esau, there's nothing worth trading for Christ. There is no trial so bad that God will just understand if you choose to say, I'm walking away, rather than standing for Christ.

Don't be like Esau and make a deal with the world to dodge the trials of this life. The end is dangerous and cannot be undone.

Esau wanted the birthright back. He didn't get it. He didn't have real repentance. So let me just wrap up by saying these two things.

Christian, have you had trials that shock you to the bone? Have they caused you to wonder about the love and purpose of God? You need to look to Jesus. You need to consider what he went through from sinners.

[49 : 59] You need to remind yourself of the truths of scripture concerning your relationship to God and his purposes in trials in your life. You need to be on guard against taking the easy way out of your trials.

And lastly, maybe you're here and the thought of what you might go through to be a Christian scares you. We tend to do this in America. We tend to try to hide the ugly facts and make Christ the fixer of everything.

Your life a mess? Come to Christ. Your poor? Come to Christ. Your marriage a wreck? Come to Christ. Are you sick? Come to Christ. Christ? Hmm. The real issue is, are you lost in going to hell under the condemnation of God?

Come to Christ. The world won't like you. You may suffer for it. Christ, trials, persecutions, or eternity in hell.

Doesn't seem like much of a choice, does it? Come to Christ today. Let's pray. Thank you, Father, for this encouraging exhortation from your word.

[51 : 22] Thank you that it hits life where it really is. Thank you that from the very beginning and throughout all the Old Testament and into the New Testament, you have reassured us with the promises that speak to what you're really doing when trials go on in our lives.

That remind us of what's really happening when the world hates us. Thank you, Father, that in the midst of what goes on, you are really showing us that you love us, that we're your children, and that you're making us to be like yourself.

Keep those truths in our eyes and in our hearts. Help us to remind each other of that. And come what may, help us to be true to you and not walk away from the only true salvation.

I pray that you would be with us in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.