

Making Level Paths
Small group study
(Hebrews 11:1-17)

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Making Level Paths

Small group study

(Hebrews 11:1-17)

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." Hebrew 12:1

Introduction

- a. Explain purpose - Hebrew 12:1 (above)
- b. Respect one another, listen, not judge, do not dominate the talks.
- c. The passage does not focus on problems but on solutions
- d. Depending on size of group, may discuss at tables first.
- e. The passage presents 6 actions that help throw off what hinders or walk or race.
- f. First 2 steps are the basis or means by which we are motivated to take the next 4

Lesson 1 - Keeping our eyes on Jesus

1. Read Hebrews 12:2-3

What is the solution in this passage to get rid of that which hinders?

2. Read Matthew 14:22-32

What is the hindrance that entangled Peter?

What were the solutions that dealt with hindrance – when Peter first stepped out and after he began to sink,

3. In Hebrews 12:2-3, how does the example of Jesus enduring the cross help us in our struggles.

4. Read Hebrews 4:15-16

How does this verse give us assurance that we can approach and look to Jesus?

5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

What is our motive to live for Jesus?

with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

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6. Why is it important to keep our eyes on Jesus?

7. How can we better keep our eyes on Jesus in our lives? In our church?

8. How will this make our paths straighter or more level?

9. How might this help us discard some things from the past that we should let go of?

10. Are there some actions steps that we should agree to explore or commit to?

Lesson 2 - Endure hardship as discipline

1. Read Hebrews 12:4-11

What is the solution in this passage to get rid of that which hinders?

2. Read Numbers 11:10-15

What was the hardship (burden) that Moses was bearing?

Who or what was his complaint against? The situation or....?

3. Moses was on the journey from the time when God called him and when he would enter promised land. We are also in that in-between time. This is a fertile time for hardship and then complaints.

Have you ever complained to God? Has the journey ever become too much for you?

4. According to Hebrews 12, why does God discipline us? Is that punishment?

5. Read Romans 5:3

What does suffering produce? Have you ever had good come out of your suffering?

6. What hardships are you facing today or have you faced?

7. Who ultimately gives you these hardships? Why?

8. Do you ever feel that God is punishing you?

9. Do you ever question His love for you?

10. Why is it important to endure hardship as discipline?

11. When we or our church endures hardship, what is a good course of action?

12. How will this make our paths straighter?

13. How might this help us discard some things from the past that we should let go of?

14. Are there some actions steps that we should agree to explore or commit to?

Session 3 - Living in Peace with all men

- read verse 14a

1. Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

2. Read Hebrews 12:1a

What part of this verse is most difficult? Which word?

3. Meaning of Greek word for peace.

- a. a state of national tranquillity
- b. exemption from the rage and havoc of war
- c. peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord
- d. security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous)
- e. of the Messiah's peace
- f. the way that leads to peace (salvation)
- g. of Christianity, the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is
- h. the blessed state of devout and upright men after death

4. What breaks the peace?

5. Read Psalm 46:10

6. Read Philippians 4:6-7

Where does peace within us begin?

How can we be at peace within ourselves?

7. Read Isaiah 26:3

What enables us to be at peace?

8. Read Ephesians 4:29

How can our words help there to be peace? How does this reflect the Prayer of St. Francis?

9. Why is it important to live in peace with everyone?

10. How can we improve this action in our lives? In our church?

11. How will this make our paths straighter?

12. How might this help us discard things from the past that we should let go of?

13. Is there someone you should seek to restore peace with?

Session 4 - Be Holy

1. Read Hebrews 12:14b

What troubles you most about this verse? Are you holy?

2. Commentator Kistemaker states that holiness is not a state of perfection already attained. The original Greek refers to the sanctifying process.

Considering this definition of the use of 'holy' in this passage, we must do everything in our power to obtain holiness. We are to pursue holiness! How are we to do this?

2. Read Romans 12:1.

If we are living sacrifices, we are holy and pleasing to God? How can we be 'living sacrifices?'

3. Holiness means to be "set apart", to be devoted entirely to God'. To what are you devoted? Is your devotion divided?

4. Read 1 Peter 1:15-16

Why are we called to be holy?

5. Read Hebrews 10:10

How are we made holy before God?

How should that affect our relationship with God?

How should that affect our desire to be holy?

6. How can we be more holy in our lives?

7. In our church?

7. How will this make our paths straighter?

8. Are there some actions steps that you should agree to explore or commit to be more holy?

Session 5 - Living with an eternal perspective

1. Read Hebrews 12:16-17

These verses focus on two seemingly unrelated matters. How are they connected?

2. The Message puts it this way

“watch out for the Esau syndrome: trading away God's lifelong gift in order to satisfy a short-term appetite. You well know how Esau later regretted that impulsive act and wanted God's blessing—but by then it was too late, tears or no tears.

How did Esau trade away a lifelong gift? (Genesis 25:29-34)

3. Read John 6:27

What two types of food does Jesus refer to? Give examples of each?

4. Read John 4:34

What should be the food we crave?

5. How does society allure us to satisfy short-term appetites?

6. Can a church fall into the trap of looking at worldly rather than eternal perspective and acting upon that?

7. Why is it important to have an eternal perspective?

8. How can we improve this action in our lives? In our church?

9. How will this make our paths straighter?

10. How might this help us discard some things from the past that we should let go of?

Are there some actions steps that we should agree to explore or commit to?

Session 6 - Get Rid of Bitter Roots

1. Read Hebrews 12:15

2. “missing the grace of God”

It means that we do not experience God’s grace in our lives

We also miss the grace of God by not giving grace to others. When we miss God’s grace to us, we become less gracious to others. We become critical and judgmental, especially when mistakes are made, when decisions are made that we disagree with

The writer to the Hebrews warns us about letting bitter roots spring up within us. These bitter roots can include unforgiveness, hurts, anger, hate. These roots can be so deep inside that we may not even know that they are there until something triggers it.

4. Read Acts 8:9-23

Why was Simon full of bitterness?

Have you ever felt bitter for the same reason?

3. Read Ephesians 4:31-32

How do we defile others when we are bitter?

How do we cause trouble?

4. What has caused you to be bitter at any time? How did you deal with it?

5. Why is it important to be get rid of bitter roots? For others? For ourselves?
6. What have helped you to forgive others and get rid of bitterness?
7. Have you experienced or see bitterness in the church? What caused it and how did it affect the church?
8. How can we get rid of bitterness in our lives? In our church?
9. How will this make our paths straighter?
- 10.. How might this help us discard some things from the past that we should let go of?
11. Are you bitter about anything or toward someone? How is it affecting you and what do you need to do?