

## NEW CITY DAILY DEVOTIONAL FOR WEEK OF 4/20/2020-4/24/2020

The following content is based on the message on 4/19/20 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. It is not meant to be a full synopsis, but rather a resource to help you analyze and apply the main ideas. To use this devotional effectively, please listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

### MONDAY // THE AGONIZING STRUGGLE

**Read Hebrews 12:1-4.** Evil and suffering in this world weren't God's goal. They are a by-product of the fall, so we shouldn't be surprised when we are hurting. We will face suffering and hurting in this life—much like running in a race. When someone runs or exercises, it hurts. Some would even say that it is agonizing! However, appropriate amounts of pain in exercise is actually good for the body. The same can be true of our character. The agonizing struggle of life can be good for our character because when we persevere in the pain, we follow in the footsteps of our Savior who persevered for us. Jesus willingly took on pain for us so that we could ultimately be freed from the power that sin and death have over this life. When we face the agonizing struggle, we can look to Jesus who persevered in His agonizing struggle.

**We persevere in our pain because Jesus persevered in His pain on our behalf.**

- *It is helpful to write down or verbalize things out loud to process them. What are some specific ways that life is painful for you right now?*
- *Verbalize or write how much it means to you that Jesus persevered in His pain on your behalf.*

### TUESDAY // THE LOVING DISCIPLINE OF THE FATHER

**Read Hebrews 12:5-10.** The writer of Hebrews makes the connection that God actually disciplines His children like an earthly parent with his or her own kids. Most of us have a difficult time thinking about God disciplining us. It might be because your parents were absent or abusive. Louie Giglio says, "God isn't the reflection of your earthly father, he is the perfection of your father." The writer describes God's discipline as an expression of God's love for us. Despite the fact that we will experience pain in this fallen world, God will use that pain to grow us into being more like Him. He doesn't want that pain to go to waste as just pain.

**God uses the pain to lovingly guide us—to discipline us—to be more like Him.**

- *Verbalize or write some ways that you can trust that God loves you as a perfect Father.*
- *Why do you need to remember those things that you listed above when you are in the middle of suffering?*

### WEDNESDAY // DISCIPLINE MAKES US WISE

**Read Proverbs 12:1 and 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.** Both of these passages show us that other writers in the Scripture have a similar view on discipline as the writer of Hebrews.

**Prayer of the week: Ask God to show you His grace in the middle of the brokenness that you see/experience.**

Discipline isn't just God's way to make someone feel pain. God wants to use the pain, from which we cannot escape as a result of the fall, to make us wise in our character. Like a skilled pediatrician, God allows the pain in our lives that is necessary to bring correction and growth. This growth won't come immediately. Often, we have to mourn whatever is causing us pain, but once we have appropriately mourned, then we can begin to ask ourselves what God wants to teach us in the middle of our pain.

**Ask yourself: How might God be lovingly guiding me back to Him through these present circumstances?**

- *Reflect on a time in your life that was really painful. What are some things that you learned during that time?*
- *What are some healthy habits/rhythms that you can build to place your eyes on Jesus? How will you keep yourself accountable to those rhythms?*

### THURSDAY // DON'T IGNORE THE PAIN

**Hebrews 12:9-11.** No one likes to experience pain. We have a tendency to try to ignore or numb pain. However, when we acknowledge the pain that we are in, we are most likely to grow. When we ignore the correction of God and don't step into it, we won't learn what He is trying to teach us. It is only when we acknowledge the pain that we are in, that we can turn to Jesus and allow Him to comfort us in the middle of it. If we don't acknowledge it, then we just turn to different things to numb our pain—things like Netflix, food, alcohol, drugs, pornography, etc. Those outlets will never provide the comfort that we truly need in the middle of pain.

**Only Jesus will be enough for us in the middle of our pain.**

- *What are some ways this time of isolation has revealed to you that you turn to unhealthy outlets to numb your pain?*
- *Verbalize or write a prayer to Jesus that honestly invites Him into what you are experiencing today.*

### FRIDAY // DISCIPLINE REVEALS GRACE

**Read Hebrews 12:12-15.** The author of Hebrews commands us to "strive for peace with everyone" and to "obtain" the grace of God. These are actions we must take. Peace with everyone doesn't come without struggle. However, we must persevere, because if we don't seek peace, then bitterness will spring up in us and grow roots. Rather than allowing bitterness take hold of us, we must seek after the grace of God because that's what we received from God through Jesus. Grace saves and heals us.

**The discipline of God, when received, reveals the grace of God.**

- *Consider the challenge to "strive for peace with everyone." What thoughts or emotions do you experience when confronted with this command? How can you strive for peace with others this week?*
- *Have you received the grace of Jesus in your own life? If not, is there something specific keeping you from doing that? If you have received the grace of Jesus, how are you extending it to others?*