

Hebrews 12:3-13, Bible Devotions

❑ **Monday - The Two Sides of God's Sovereign Love.** Hebrews 12:6
Here are two sides of God's sovereign love toward His people: [1] "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness" (Jer. 31:3), and [2] "For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives" (Heb. 12:6). God draws His people with *affection*, and drives them with *affliction* ever closer to Himself. If God is not in sovereign control of all our trials, then the command to "rejoice always ...[and] in everything give thanks" (1 Thess. 5:16,18), would be utter nonsense. But take comfort in this, child of God: when you are in the furnace of affliction, the One whose hand is upon the thermostat is not some maniac fallen angel, but your own loving heavenly Father. And it is in that furnace where God forges his choicest servants, that they may come forth as pure gold (Job 23:10; Psa. 66:10; Isa. 48:10). "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11).
Read 1 Peter 1:3-7

❑ **Tuesday - God, the First Cause.** Hebrews 12:6
The Bible explains, "And we know that God *causes* all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). How does He do that? Does God come to His children after a trial, saying, "I can turn this around for good"? No, that is not a cause but a repair. It is the difference between the surgeon who plans the incision for our good, and the emergency room doctor who sews us up after an accident. This text says, God is the doctor planning our surgery, not the doctor repairing our lacerations (Piper). God is the first cause of all our trials, though He often works through second causes, e.g. people, circumstances, cause and effect, etc. Yet in all our trials God's cause is always just and His purposes always pure, that He might bring about our eternal good and His eternal glory. Read Genesis 50:15-20

❑ **Wednesday - A Sign of Sonship.** Hebrews 12:7-8
"It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons ... But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons" (Heb. 12:7-8). Our chastisement is never a sign of rejection, but of adoption. Godly discipline is corrective, not punitive. He chastens us without anger and we must respond without anger, for God's chastening is motivated by love.
Read Philippians 4:11-13

❑ **Thursday - No Pain, No Gain.** Hebrews 12:10-11
God "disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:10-11). The writer of Hebrews outlines the fourfold fruit of God's discipline: our good, our holiness, our peace, and our righteousness. And so we see that our trials are not meaningless, but masterfully designed by a wise and loving heavenly Father.
Read Job 1-2

❑ **Friday - Wisdom in Trials.** Hebrews 12:10-11
When we pray and ask God to remove a trial, if He takes it away, then we know that it was a divinely appointed obstacle to be overcome by faith – yes, even to increase our faith. But if the trial persists then we know God wants to teach us something through it. This is why James recommends a prayer for wisdom in the context of enduring trials.
Read James 1:2-5