

Mar 8, 2026 – Small Group Questions

Hebrews 12:1-13 - “Formed as Citizens of the Kingdom”

The preacher to the Hebrews describes life as a race using the Greek word “agon,” from which we get the word agony. Life, he suggests, is an agonizing journey through a broken world. Yet he invites us to see these agonies through a governing metaphor drawn from the ancient Greek gymnasium. In that world the gymnasium was not merely a place for exercise but a place where citizens were formed through resistance, discipline, and instruction.

In the same way, the preacher suggests that the agonizing realities of life can become God’s training ground, where he forms us as citizens of a new city, his coming kingdom, enabling us to live the life of that future now.

In this study we’ll explore how the scriptures 1) invite us to live within the mystery of suffering, 2) that God forms us in the agonies of life to lay aside sin and every weight, and 3) we can endure as we fill our vision with Jesus and hear the cheers of those who’ve gone before.

Read Hebrews 12:1-13

1. The preacher describes life as a race that requires endurance. What do you notice about how this race is described, and why do you think endurance is emphasized?

Read Genesis 50:20

2. The sermon pointed to the story of Joseph as an example of living in the tension of a mystery. Holding onto both human responsibility and God’s sovereignty without compromising either, without pitting one against the other. Why is it important that we hold both together when thinking about suffering?

3. The word “discipline” appears repeatedly in this passage. What do you think the author means by this word?

4. Hebrews calls us to “lay aside every sin.” How can the agonies of life sometimes reveal sinful patterns in our lives or in the world around us?

5. The passage also calls us to “lay aside every weight.” What might be the difference between a sin and a weight in the Christian life? Have the agonies of life exposed in you any

6. The preacher calls believers to “look to Jesus.” Why do you think fixing our vision on Jesus is essential when we are in the middle of suffering?

7. The passage says we are surrounded by a “great cloud of witnesses.” What encouragement might that bring when life feels overwhelming?

8. Looking at the passage as a whole, where might God currently be inviting you to:
i) endure in the race, ii) lay aside sin, iii) lay aside a weight iv) fix your eyes on Jesus?