

Consider Jesus Week 9 Do You Remember

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: When Love Looks Like Discipline

Devotional

Have you ever wondered why a loving God allows difficult circumstances in your life? It's one of the most challenging questions we face as believers. We live in a culture that often equates love with comfort and ease, but God's love operates on a deeper level. Think about the best parents you know. They don't give their children everything they want or shield them from every difficulty. Instead, they guide, correct, and sometimes allow their children to experience consequences because they love them too much to leave them immature and unprepared for life. God operates the same way with us. His discipline isn't about punishment or anger - it's about development. When we face challenges, setbacks, or seasons of difficulty, God isn't being cruel. He's being a loving Father who sees our potential and refuses to let us settle for spiritual immaturity. The word 'discipline' in Scripture literally means 'training.' Just like an athlete submits to rigorous training to become stronger, God allows certain experiences in our lives to develop our character, deepen our faith, and prepare us for what He has ahead. This doesn't mean we should enjoy every difficult moment or pretend it doesn't hurt. But it does mean we can trust that behind every trial is a Father who loves us deeply and is working for our ultimate good. His love isn't soft or permissive - it's strong enough to do what's necessary to help us become who He created us to be.

Bible Verse

'The Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastens everyone he accepts as his child.' - Hebrews 12:6

Reflection Question

How might viewing your current challenges as God's loving training rather than punishment change your perspective and response to them?

Quote

The Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastens, which literally means punishes everyone he accepts as his child.

Prayer

Father, help me to see Your hand of love even in the difficult seasons of my life. Give me the wisdom to understand that Your discipline comes from Your deep love for me, not from anger or punishment. Help me to trust Your process of growing me into who You want me to be. Amen.

Day 2: The Purpose Behind the Pain

Devotional

Pain without purpose feels unbearable. But what if every difficult experience in your life had a specific, loving purpose behind it? What if God wasn't just allowing random suffering, but was carefully orchestrating your growth? When we're in the middle of a trial, it's natural to ask 'Why me?' or 'What's the point of this?' But God's discipline always has a target - our holiness, righteousness, and peace. He's not interested in making us comfortable; He's committed to making us complete. Consider how a master craftsman works with precious metal. The goldsmith doesn't heat the gold to harm it, but to purify it - to remove the impurities that weaken it and prevent it from becoming something beautiful and valuable. The heat serves a purpose. Similarly, the difficulties you face aren't random acts of cruelty. They're purposeful tools in the hands of a loving Father who sees what you can become. Every challenge is designed to burn away something in you that's holding you back from experiencing the fullness of life He has planned. This perspective doesn't minimize your pain or suggest you should be happy about every hardship. But it does offer hope. Your struggles aren't meaningless. They're not evidence that God has forgotten you or stopped loving you. They're proof that He loves you too much to leave you unchanged. When you can see purpose in your pain, you can endure it with hope, knowing that God is working all things together for your good.

Bible Verse

'God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.' - Hebrews 12:10

Reflection Question

What areas of your character or faith might God be trying to develop through the challenges you're currently facing?

Quote

The pain has a point. The pain has a point.

Prayer

Lord, when I'm struggling to understand the purpose behind my pain, remind me that You are always working for my good. Help me to see beyond my immediate circumstances to the character You're building in me. Give me patience with Your process and trust in Your perfect timing. Amen.

Day 3: Avoiding the Trap of Justification

Devotional

One of the most dangerous responses to life's difficulties is using them as justification for sinful attitudes or behaviors. When we're hurting, it's tempting to think our pain gives us permission to respond in ways that dishonor God. Maybe you've heard yourself say things like: 'God made me this way,' 'Nobody understands what I'm going through,' or 'I have a right to be angry after what happened to me.' While these feelings are understandable, they can become dangerous when they lead us to justify attitudes or actions that God wants to change in us. This is what happened to Esau in Scripture. He was hungry and tired, and he used those legitimate needs to justify trading away his birthright for a bowl of soup. He let his immediate circumstances dictate his choices, and he lost something precious in the process. When God allows difficulties in our lives, He's not giving us permission to sin - He's giving us opportunities to grow. The very struggles that tempt us to justify wrong attitudes are often the exact areas where God wants to develop our character. Instead of using our pain as an excuse, we can use it as a catalyst for growth. We can ask God to show us what He wants to teach us through our circumstances. We can choose to respond with faith rather than bitterness, with hope rather than despair. Remember, God's goal isn't to make your life easy - it's to make your character strong. Don't let temporary pain rob you of the permanent growth God wants to accomplish in you.

Bible Verse

'Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children.' - Hebrews 12:7

Reflection Question

Are there any areas where you might be using your circumstances to justify attitudes or behaviors that don't honor God?

Quote

Using the difficulties of your life as justification to sin, when God allowed them into your life to grow you and mature you, that just damages this work that he's trying to do in you.

Prayer

God, help me not to use my pain as an excuse for sin. When I'm tempted to justify wrong attitudes because of what I'm going through, remind me that You want to use these very circumstances to grow me. Give me the strength to respond with faith and obedience, even when it's difficult. Amen.

Day 4: Closing the Gap of Bitterness

Devotional

Bitterness is one of the most destructive forces in the Christian life, and it often grows in the gap between our expectations and our experiences. When life doesn't turn out the way we planned or hoped, that disappointment can quickly turn into resentment toward God and others. Maybe you expected your marriage to be easier, your career to be more successful, your health to be better, or your children to make different choices. When reality falls short of expectations, it's natural to feel disappointed. But if we're not careful, that disappointment can grow into bitterness that poisons our relationship with God and others. Bitterness is particularly dangerous because it prevents us from receiving the very things God wants to give us through our trials - righteousness and peace. When we're bitter, we can't see God's hand at work. We can't receive His comfort or learn the lessons He wants to teach us. The antidote to bitterness isn't pretending everything is fine or lowering all our expectations. It's learning to trust God's heart even when we can't understand His ways. It's choosing to believe that His plans for us are good, even when they don't match our plans. This requires a daily choice to surrender our expectations to God and trust His wisdom. It means acknowledging our disappointment while refusing to let it turn into resentment. It means believing that God's love for us is so great that He will work even our disappointments for our good. When we close the gap of bitterness with trust, we open our hearts to receive all that God wants to give us through every season of life.

Bible Verse

'See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.' - Hebrews 12:15

Reflection Question

What unmet expectations in your life might be creating space for bitterness to grow, and how can you surrender those expectations to God?

Quote

What happens when you have that expectation and then your experience in life does not come close to measuring up to that expectation? You know what happens? The gap is filled with bitterness.

Prayer

Father, I confess that sometimes my expectations don't match my experiences, and I struggle with disappointment. Help me to surrender my plans to You and trust Your perfect wisdom. Guard my heart against bitterness and help me to see Your goodness even in the difficult seasons. Fill the gap between my expectations and reality with Your peace and trust. Amen.

Day 5: Living on Mount Zion

Devotional

Where you think you're standing with God makes all the difference in how you experience His discipline. In the Old Testament, Mount Sinai represented a terrifying encounter with God - thunder, lightning, and the threat of death for anyone who came too close. But as believers, we don't live on Mount Sinai. We live on Mount Zion. Mount Zion represents the new covenant - a place where we can approach God with confidence, not fear. We don't have to wonder if God is angry with us or waiting to strike us down for our mistakes. We can come boldly to His throne of grace, knowing we're welcomed as beloved children. This changes everything about how we view God's discipline. When we think we're on Mount Sinai, every difficulty feels like punishment from an angry God. But when we remember we're on Mount Zion, we can see every challenge as loving correction from a Father who delights in us. You have a High Priest who understands your weaknesses because He was tempted in every way you are, yet without sin. Jesus knows what it's like to face difficulty, pain, and even the feeling of abandonment. He's not distant or unsympathetic - He's intimately acquainted with your struggles. Because of Jesus, you can approach God's discipline with confidence rather than fear. You can trust that His heart toward you is always love, never condemnation. You can submit to His training process knowing that He's committed to your good and will never push you beyond what you can bear. Living on Mount Zion means living in the security of God's love, even when His discipline feels difficult. It means knowing that you're safe in His hands, no matter what you're going through.

Bible Verse

'But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.' - Hebrews 12:22

Reflection Question

How does knowing you live on Mount Zion (in God's grace and love) rather than Mount Sinai (under fear and condemnation) change how you view the challenges in your life?

Quote

You're not on Mount Sinai, you're in Zion. You're in Zion.

Prayer

Thank You, Jesus, that because of Your sacrifice, I don't have to approach God in fear. Help me to remember that I live on Mount Zion, secure in Your love and grace. When I face difficulties, remind me that they come from a loving Father's heart, not from anger or condemnation. Help me to submit to Your loving discipline with confidence and trust. Amen.