

Hebrews 12:14–17 Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

Sermon Refresher: The key thing is that God wants you to finish the race he marked out for you. But do we know what may trip us up and keep us from finishing? There are at least three sins in Hebrews 12:14–17 that can easily entangle us in our race: relational conflict, spiritual laziness, and sexual immorality. Part of how we will keep going in the race is by having people who train with us, run with us, and support us.

Discussion:

1. How are you feeling about where you are in your race right now?

Read Hebrews 12:14–17.

2. How do you tend to respond to relational conflict? Are you more a fight or flight person, or something else?

3. When we fight with someone, we want to get back at them, to avenge ourselves. Keith listed some ways we might try to make someone pay for what they've done. Which of these do you tend to go to?

- Gossip
- Silent treatment
- Blowing up
- Humiliation
- Rehearsing/replaying in your mind

4. Read the following quote about the cost of forgiveness:

"Forgiveness always costs something. There is no free or cheap forgiveness. When you forgive a debt that someone owes you, it means in effect, you're paying the debt yourself. It doesn't just go away. It still gets paid. The question is by whom. Imagine that you're a parent and your kid is playing baseball in the backyard and hits that perfect line drive that breaks the

upstairs bedroom window. It's going to cost someone to fix it, either him or you. And if you forgive, then you will pay for that new window rather than him. Forgiveness costs."

When you reflect on the cost of forgiveness, what difference does the gospel make to the question of who pays? How should the gospel shape how we handle relational conflict?

5. Hebrews 12:14 tells us to make every effort to be holy. Keith contrasted two approaches to our training in holiness. Which of these more describes your approach to the Christian life?
 - Apollo Creed method: presuming that you'll be fine
 - Rocky Balboa method: being hungry and working hard (pounding the slabs of meat)
6. What are some areas in your life that you want to train more like Rocky in order to get yourself ready to finish the race?
7. No one finishes the race alone. How can you take the next step in genuinely connecting with other Christians to train together for the race?

Hebrews 12:14–17 “Will You Finish Your Race?” Exercise

Take some time this week to pray and reflect on the following questions. Your group can share your reflections with each other at your next meeting.

Read Hebrews 12:1–17

1. How would you describe the stretch of the race that you are in or have just come out of?
2. Do you know what would trip you up personally in your race? If you don't finish your race, would you be able to predict what would be the cause(s)?
3. Is there relational conflict somewhere in life that you need to address? Is there anyone you're not living at peace with that you need to make every effort with?
4. How are you doing in your fight for holiness? How do you need to believe the gospel in order to grow in holiness in specific areas of your life?
5. Keith defined sexual immorality as “any kind of sexual expression, be it thought or action, that is outside of biblical marriage.” We all fall short of that. Where do you need to fight against sexual immorality in your life. Read 1 Corinthians 6:12–20. How might knowing that you have been bought with a price make a difference?
6. How can you take steps forward in community to be better connected so that you have training partners in your race?