

Sample Response for Hebrews 12 | Mary Hannah

STRUCTURE

Immediately preceding context, Heb 11:39–40:

“And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”

What?

12:1–2 So, let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, laying aside what hinders *(negatively)* and fixing our eyes on Jesus *(positively)*, pioneer and perfecter of our faith

How?

12:3–17 Consider Jesus so you won’t grow weary in suffering, but rather will submit to God’s discipline by continuing to persevere in holy living for the goal and seeing that others in your congregation do too

12:3–4 Consider Jesus; he endured hostility from sinners unto the cross, so likewise, you must endure (including by struggling against sin) amid your suffering

12:5–11 You must endure for the sake of discipline, which (a) proves you’re God’s sons, (b) enables us to share God’s holiness, and (c) produces fruit here & now

12:12–17 Because God disciplines us so we may share his holiness, we must be holy

12:12–13 Do what is necessary to keep running the race to reach goal

12:14 *Positively*, strive for peace among the church and for holy living (enabled and fueled by holiness received at conversion), without which no one will see the Lord

12:15–17 *Negatively*, see to it that no one among you apostatizes and thus forfeits the prize that can only be received by those who finish the race marked out for believers

Why?

12:18–24 Because you haven’t come to earthly Mount Sinai but to heavenly Mount Zion

12:18–21 Lesser: you *have not come* to the tangible mountain where God spoke and the people (including Moses, the mediator) were terrified

12:22–24 Greater: You *have come* to Mount Zion, to innumerable angels in festal assembly and righteous saints (whole church, as well as those who already are with the Lord), to the Judge (God), to Jesus (*new-covenant mediator who sprinkles his own blood that speaks better than Abel*)

So what?

12:25–29 So, don’t refuse God who is speaking from heaven to avoid judgment, but give thanks & worship

12:25a See that you do not refuse him who is speaking *by his Son* (apostasy)

12:25b Consequence of rejecting God’s warnings in old-covenant days vs. new-covenant days

12:26–27 Coming judgment: God once more will shake earth and heavens; what will be removed (topple), what will remain/endure? [*1:10–12*]

12:28–29 Let us be grateful for receiving kingdom that can’t be shaken and offer acceptable worship to God, for our God is a consuming fire

UNIFYING THEME

Amid your suffering, keep running with perseverance the race marked out for you (*pl.*)

by *laying aside* all encumbrances and *looking to* Jesus, your Savior and Exemplar (12:1–2), which means submitting to God’s discipline for your good in personal and corporate holiness (12:3–17), enjoying the new-covenant privileges Jesus has secured for you (12:18–24), and not refusing his voice but instead thanking and worshipping him (12:25–29).

PASTOR’S AIM

The pastor aims to **exhort** the suffering congregation to keep persevering in the race of faith by keeping their eyes on the prize rather than becoming weakened spiritually and again to **warn** them of the ultimate perils of apostasy.

Teaching Outline

(12:1–2) **Amid our suffering, we must run the race of faith with endurance.**

A focus on what it looks like concretely

(12:3–17) Running this race with endurance amid suffering means **submitting to God’s discipline for our good by leading holy lives.**

A focus on the prize

(12:18–24) Running this race with endurance amid suffering can only happen “**for the joy set before us.**”

A focus on what’s at stake

(12:25–29) Running this race with endurance amid suffering **is the most consequential thing you will ever do, a matter of ultimate destruction or stability, so get after it.**