

# **THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD SERIES**

**Bible  
Studies  
For Small Groups**

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# THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD SERIES

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Beth Crawford, General Editor  
Small Groups Ministry  
Vineyard Church of Columbus  
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# THE FATHER'S UNIQUE SON

Study 1 — Hebrews 1:1—14  
By Michael Karoly  
The Fatherhood of God Series

## STUDY GOALS

To grasp Jesus' uniqueness and to better understand how His unique character and work enable us to become sons and daughters of the Father.

## BACKGROUND

Some Bible scholars classify Hebrews as a letter; others consider Hebrews a written sermon.

*The New Bible Commentary* puts it this way (Peterson, p. 1321):

Hebrews is an orderly and systematic treatment of the person and work of Christ, based on the exposition of certain key passages from the OT [Old Testament]. ... Each text is used to show how OT ideals and institutions find their fulfillment in Christ.

## OPENING QUESTION

You can use the following question to get discussion started before you begin the study.

*What does the term "family of God" mean to you?*

As we'll see in this study, Jesus is unique—unequaled in all creation. God saw fit to call Him "Son," and made a way for us to become sons and daughters in His family through Jesus.

## PRAYER

Pray that God will use this study to reveal the truly unique characteristics and work of Jesus. Pray that we will see Jesus as the unique Son, who makes it possible for us to be sons and daughters of God the Father.

## STUDY THE PASSAGE: HEBREWS 1:1—14

Ask one or more group members to share in reading the passage. Use the following questions to lead an inductive study of the passage. If you need help understanding or facilitating the discussion, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

1. How did God speak to us in the past (v. 1)?
2. How does God speak to us in these "last days" (v. 2)? What does using the term "Son" imply about Jesus?
3. List five phrases that describe the Son (v. 3)? Take a moment to reflect on each one. In light of verse 3, what can we say about Jesus compared to prophets, angels, and everything else in creation?
4. In verses 5—14, the author quotes Scripture to point out how Jesus is superior to all of creation. In verse 5, in what way is Jesus superior?
5. In verses 6—9, how is Jesus superior to creation? What is He entitled to as a result of this superiority (compare to Exodus 20:2—5 and Matthew 4:10)?
6. In verses 10—13, in what ways is Jesus superior to creation?
7. List the key things from this study that answer the question, "Why should I listen to the Son?"

## APPLICATION

Select one of the following application questions to finish your discussion time.

- How does Jesus' uniqueness validate Scripture's claims that He is the only way to God?

- How does Jesus help us get to know God as our Father?
  
- Have you ever seen someone “radiate” God? How can we receive and reflect more of our Heavenly Father’s nature in our lives?

## **WRAPPING IT UP**

Jesus is unique because He shares God the Father’s deity. He is the exact representation of God the Father and radiates His glory. As God’s representation on earth, Jesus made God known to us. He also became our representative by dying in our place on the cross and paying the penalty for our sin. He then rose from the dead as the first to rise and never die. Jesus’ actions enable us to become children of God when we put our faith in Him. As God’s children, we are co-heirs to God’s kingdom. As adopted sons and daughters, we can experience the love of God our Father, begin transforming into the likeness of His Son, and radiate the glory of God in our lives, impacting those around us for His kingdom.

Have you come to the point of accepting Jesus’ unique role as Savior and Lord? If you’re not sure, or if you want prayer or further discussion, please speak with your group leader.

## **RESOURCES**

The full Leader’s Guide to this study is available online. Refer to the series title at <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/resources/sgresources/index.asp>.

## **SOURCES**

Peterson, David G. “Hebrews.” *New Bible Commentary (21st Century edition)*. Ed. D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer, and G.J. Wenham. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994.



# LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Study 2 — John 14:1–14  
By Elizabeth B. Crawford  
The Fatherhood of God Series

## STUDY GOALS

To grasp how Jesus the Son uniquely reveals God the Father to us, and to better understand how our relationship to God the Father differs from Jesus’.

## BACKGROUND

John’s Gospel is distinct from the other three Gospels in his writing style and content. John depicted Jesus as the fulfillment of the Jewish holy days and ceremonies and gives seven signs and statements, which confirm Jesus’ identity (Fee and Stuart, pp. 305–307). In this passage, Jesus is speaking to His disciples a few hours before His betrayal and arrest.

## OPENING QUESTION

You can use the following question to get discussion started before you begin the study.

*We’ve all heard the expression, “Like father, like son.” Whom in your family do you seem to resemble in features, expressions, or other characteristics?*

Jesus followed in His human father’s footsteps by becoming a carpenter. Yet He left that trade and took on the “work” of His heavenly Father when He was about 30 years old. He spoke and acted in such perfect unity with God the Father that He claimed if you had seen Him, you had seen the Father. In this study, we will examine that claim and see how Jesus promises to connect us to His Father and support us as we follow in His footsteps.

## PRAYER

Pray that group members might “see” God more clearly through His Son, Jesus, during this study and ministry time.

## STUDY THE PASSAGE: JOHN 14:1—14

Ask one or more group members to share in reading the passage. Use the following questions to lead an inductive study of the passage. If you need help understanding or facilitating the discussion, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

1. Jesus has just told His disciples that one of them will betray Him, that Peter will deny knowing Him, and that He, Jesus, will be leaving them (John 13). How does Jesus try to reassure the disciples now (v. 1)?
2. Why should the disciples be able to trust Jesus at this point in their relationship? How is Jesus suggesting that He and the Father are alike?
3. Why is Jesus leaving (v. 2)? What does He promise (v. 3)?
4. What confuses Thomas and the others (vv. 4—5)?
5. What does Jesus reveal (vv. 6—7)? What does He mean by the “Way,” “Truth,” and “Life”? Why is Jesus uniquely able to claim this?
6. What does Philip ask (v. 8)? When have you wanted to see or speak to God face to face?
7. What startling claim does Jesus make about Himself (vv. 9—11)? How have you pictured Jesus and God the Father? How closely do those images match each other? Why?
8. What startling promise does Jesus make (vv. 12—14)? Why?

## APPLICATION

Select one of the following application questions to finish your discussion time.

- How does Jesus uniquely help us know God our Father? What do you now see more clearly about God as our Father?

- How is Jesus' relationship with God the Father similar to ours? How is Jesus' relationship to God the Father different than ours?
- How well do you know your Heavenly Father? How well do you know your Older Brother, Jesus? What might help you enjoy your relationship with the Father and the Son more?

## WRAPPING IT UP

“If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” Jesus fully identified with His Father's life, love, truth, and methods. He only did what the Father gave Him to do, and never failed to do what He was asked. Whenever we wonder what our Heavenly Father is like, we can simply turn to the Gospel stories and read about what Jesus said and did. Jesus perfectly revealed Father God's thoughts and intentions then and He still does today since God never changes. And Jesus' statement that He is the way to spend eternity with the Father reassures us that we, too, will have a place with Him one day.

## RESOURCES

The full Leader's Guide to this study is available online. Refer to the series title at <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/resources/sgresources/index.asp>.

## SOURCES

Fee, Gordon D., and Stuart, Douglas. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.



## OUR CONSISTENT FATHER

Study 3 — Isaiah 63:7–19  
By John Ebert  
The Fatherhood of God Series

### STUDY GOALS

To show that God the Father is a consistent and good Father. His actions may vary depending on how His children behave, but He always loves them and intends the best for them.

### BACKGROUND

The passage is a prayer to God recounting what God has done in the past (Goldingay, p. 356), and complaining or lamenting that God is no longer doing those kinds of things (Oswalt, p. 603). While it begins as the prayer of an individual (“I will tell,” v. 7), the plural pronouns (“us,” “we”) in verses 15–19 show that it is offered on behalf of a community. So this is a communal lament (Oswalt, p. 594; Watts, p. 897) complaining that God is no longer taking care of this group of people, and asking God to take notice and do something (v. 15).

### OPENING QUESTION

You can use the following question to get discussion started before you begin the study.

*Have you known someone who demonstrated the consistency and encouragement of God's love? How did that person affect your life?*

As we study this passage from Isaiah 63, we'll see that God is our consistently loving and good Father.

### PRAYER

Pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal how consistently loving God the Father is and how much He deserves our love, gratitude, and obedience.

**STUDY THE PASSAGE: ISAIAH 63:7—19**

Ask one or more group members to share in reading the passage. Use the following questions to lead an inductive study of the passage. If you need help understanding or facilitating the discussion, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

1. This passage is a prayer. What is the first topic of the prayer (v. 7)?
2. What kind of relationship does God want with His people (v. 8)?
3. How did God respond to their distress (vv.8—9)?
4. How did the people act despite God's deliverance (v. 10)? How did that impact the Lord? How did He respond to them?
5. What did the people do when God opposed them (vv. 11—14)?
6. In the second half of the prayer, what does the person ask God to do (vv. 15, 17)? What reasons does the person use to persuade God to do this?
7. The key reason the prayer gives is "you are our Father" (v. 16). What characteristics does this prayer attribute to God as Father? How would these characteristics lead God as Father to respond to this prayer?

**APPLICATION**

Select one of the following application questions to finish your discussion time.

- What have you learned from this passage about God as your Father? What have you learned about God's consistent and good nature towards His children?
- How consistent were the people who raised you? How might that impact your view of God as your parent now?

- Do you feel that God relates to you like a consistent Father? Why or why not? Who would like us to pray that you could see the consistent goodness of God our Father more clearly?
- What “kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which He is to be praised” can you share with others this week so that they may come to know and trust Him, too (v. 7)?

## WRAPPING IT UP

As God’s children, we can be confident that no matter what our situation is, we can always ask God our Father to “look,” “see,” and “return” to save us from our distress and rebellion and to carry us to a place of rest. Our faith is built on God’s consistent character—His consistently good, loving, wise, and powerful nature.

## RESOURCES

The full Leader’s Guide to this study is available online. Refer to the series title at <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/resources/sgresources/index.asp>.

## SOURCES

Goldingay, John. *Isaiah*. New International Biblical Commentary. Ed. Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., and Robert K. Johnston. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001.

Oswalt, John. *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Ed. R. K. Harrison, and Robert L. Hubbard. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Watts, John D.W. *Isaiah 34–66*. Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 25. General Ed. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker. Rev. ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005.



## OUR COMMITTED FATHER

Study 4 — Hosea 11:1—11  
By Mary Youtz  
The Fatherhood of God Series

### STUDY GOALS

To grasp how committed God our Father is to love us, and to encourage us to keep turning back to Him when we sin.

### BACKGROUND

The name of Hosea means “salvation” in Hebrew (Boice, p. 77). Hosea’s life displays the long-suffering love of God for His unfaithful people.

### OPENING QUESTION

You can use the following question to get discussion started before you begin the study.

*Briefly describe a situation when a child, an employee, or another person you were trying to help rejected or rebelled against you. How did you react?*

In the book of Hosea, God sends a message to His people to say that they have ignored His warnings for so long that now they cannot escape judgment for their sin. Yet He will not utterly reject or destroy them due to His compassionate Fatherly love.

### PRAYER

Pray that the group will more fully grasp the immense love of God the Father. And pray that in seeing God’s constant love, those who have turned away from Him will repent and desire to follow Him more closely as obedient children.

**STUDY THE PASSAGE: HOSEA 11:1—11**

Ask one or more group members to share in reading the passage. Use the following questions to lead an inductive study of the passage. If you need help understanding or facilitating the discussion, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

1. How do verses 1—4 describe the relationship between God and His children? How has God helped them?
2. How has Israel responded to God's parental love (vv. 2, 5—7)? What is the present situation between them and God?
3. What will Israel's immediate future be like (vv. 5—6)?
4. How does God react as He contemplates judging Israel's sin (vv. 8—9)?
5. What does God promise for the future (vv. 9—11)?

**APPLICATION**

Select one of the following application questions to finish your discussion time.

- How does sin enslave us? Why is being a slave to righteousness and obeying God our Father different than slavery to sin or someone else?
- List other things/people that we can trust for our provision, deliverance, and for meaning in life. Why won't these things totally solve the problems we have?

- How can people in rebellion against Father God come back into a relationship with Him?

## WRAPPING IT UP

This week, we should thank God for His divine, longsuffering love that will not give up on us. We should show gratitude that God not only wants to be our Father but pursues relationship with us when we rebel. Even when He must judge sin, God does so to remove the sin barrier so He can draw us back to Himself. He provides total forgiveness through the Cross of Jesus so He can restore us to Himself. Through faith in Jesus' sin sacrifice for us, we can truly enjoy God's mercy and blessings that reveal He is the Father Who never gives up on us, even when we are at our worst.

## RESOURCES

The full Leader's Guide to this study is available online. Refer to the series title at <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/resources/sgresources/index.asp>.

## SOURCES

Boice, James Montgomery. *The Minor Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996.



## OUR ADOPTIVE FATHER

Study 5 — Galatians 3:26—4:7

By Anna M. Weaver

The Fatherhood of God Series

### STUDY GOALS

To understand that the gospel is more than salvation from eternal judgment; through faith in His Son Jesus, God generously offers us the privilege of being adopted into His family and experiencing His eternal love.

### BACKGROUND

Galatians examines the relationship between God's law and God's grace in the context of a Jewish/ Gentile conflict. Gentiles were coming to Christ, but were not living according to the Law. Galatians explains the resolution in terms of the purpose of the Law and the outpouring of God's grace in adopting all who are in Christ into His family (Cook, "Introduction to Galatians," pp. 1—5). For more background information, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

### OPENING QUESTION

You can use the following question to get discussion started before you begin the study.

*How familiar are you with the process of adoption? Would anyone like to share a brief story about going through this with a family member or close friend?*

In this study you will learn more about how God defines His family, how we become part of it through adoption, and what that means to us now, and for eternity.

### PRAYER

Pray that group members recognize they are chosen by and belong to God. Pray also that they hear and follow the voice of His Holy Spirit.

**STUDY THE PASSAGE: GALATIANS 3:26—4:7**

Ask one or more group members to share in reading the passage. Use the following questions to lead an inductive study of the passage. If you need help understanding or facilitating the discussion, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

1. What new identity is described in verses 26-29? Does this new identity unify or divide God's family?
2. According to Galatians 4:1—7, by what method is God building His family?
3. What key points about how God adopts us do you see in the passage?
4. What are the benefits of being adopted into God's family? What do His heirs receive (vv. 6—7)?
5. Looking at Galatians 4:6—7, summarize the kind of relationship God desires to have with His children.

**APPLICATION**

Select one of the following application questions to finish your discussion time.

- How is our heavenly Father different from your earthly father? What might we need to pray for you so that nothing hinders your sense of complete acceptance by God?
  
- How does it impact your life to know that God loves you, that He provided the way for you to become His son or daughter, and that He provided His Word, the Holy Spirit, and His family to enable you to live as He desires?

- How could you draw on the common identity and supernatural power described in these verses in order to better relate to God's son's and daughters at home, at work, church, and in service to the world?

## **WRAPPING IT UP**

Adoption into God's family is the immediate result of faith in Jesus Christ. Our everlasting relationship with God begins with our adoption. Adoption softens our prideful hearts, and comforts our weary souls. Without repentance and faith in Jesus, we are prideful, deceived into thinking we are self-sufficient. This can result in our turning away from God's leading, power, and forgiveness. Our weary souls try to be good people—trying to earn acceptance and love instead of receiving God's love and giving out of that love in response. Relationship with God must come first, followed by the good works of walking in the Spirit. God, in his Fatherly love, has relieved our spiritual burdens and answered our relational neediness by bringing us into His family. As we keep our focus on Him we will be blessed and be a blessing to others.

## **RESOURCES**

The full Leader's Guide to this study is available online. Refer to the series title at <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/resources/sgresources/index.asp>.

## **SOURCES**

Cook, John. "Introduction to Galatians." Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Columbus, Ohio. May 11, 2000.



# OUR FORGIVING FATHER

Study 6 — Luke 15:11—32  
By Susan Pavilkey  
The Fatherhood of God Series

## STUDY GOALS

To grasp the immense depth of the Father's unconditional love and forgiveness for His children.

## BACKGROUND

Luke is the third of the four New Testament gospels. Luke's gospel differs from Matthew's and Mark's by mentioning prayer—particularly Jesus' prayers—more than they do (Cook, "Introduction," p. 17). Luke's gospel also differs by emphasizing God's blessing for women and the poor. Luke 15 contains three parables: the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, and the Prodigal Son. Each emphasizes God's heart for the lost and His desire to include the lowly and outcast in His Kingdom (Evans, p. 231). Remember that a parable is a story with one main point; it is not an allegory in which every character represents someone else (Cook, "Luke 15," p. 5).

## OPENING QUESTION

You can use the following question to get discussion started before you begin the study. But set some healthy boundaries about what is appropriate to share in the group and what isn't.

*Have you ever done something that you thought God could not forgive?*

This study covers the good news: God not only can forgive—He longs to do so!

## PRAYER

Pray and invite the Holy Spirit to come and teach you God's heart for forgiveness through this study. Pray that group members will recognize any areas where they struggle with feeling forgiven by God, or any problems with their human fathers that may distort their attitude towards their Heavenly Father.

## STUDY THE PASSAGE: LUKE 15:11—32

Ask one or more group members to share in reading the passage. Use the following questions to lead an inductive study of the passage. If you need help understanding or facilitating the discussion, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

1. What did the young man ask of his father? What was the father's reaction to his son's request and behavior (v. 12)?
2. What did the son do with his share of the inheritance once he received it (v. 13a)?
3. How does Jesus portray the degradation this young man suffered because of his rebellion (vv. 13b—16)?
4. What does the young man do in his total humiliation (vv. 17—20a)?
5. How does the father react to his wayward son's return (vv. 20b—24)?
6. What is the older brother's reaction to the celebration (vv. 26—30)?
7. How does the father respond to the older son (vv. 31—32)?

## APPLICATION

Select one of the following application questions to finish your discussion time.

- Which role in this parable do you identify with the most: the prodigal younger son? The resentful older brother? The forgiving father? Why? Which role is God calling our small group to play? How can we live that out on a daily basis?

- In this passage, what does Jesus teach about Father God's forgiveness of us? What does that imply for our willingness to forgive others?
  
- How can we welcome and celebrate the return of younger-brother types, who have been deep in sin, and older-brother types, who thought they did not need to repent of hard hearts?

## WRAPPING IT UP

In this passage, Jesus shows us the heart of our Heavenly Father. He is the shepherd seeking, rescuing, and carrying the lost sheep. He is the woman diligently searching and happily celebrating when she finds the lost coin. He is the benevolent father quick to forgive both his younger and older sons. This week as we live in the presence of such a loving Father, take time to reflect and rejoice. And look for ways to extend His unconditional forgiveness to others that they might come to know Him as well.

## RESOURCES

The full Leader's Guide to this study is available online. Refer to the series title at <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/resources/sgresources/index.asp>.

## SOURCES

- Cook, John. "Introduction to the Gospel of Luke." Columbus, OH: Vineyard Church of Columbus, 2005.
- . "Luke 15." The Parable of the Prodigal Son—Luke 15:11—32. Columbus, OH: Vineyard Church of Columbus, 2005.



# OUR LOVING PROVIDER

Study 7 — Matthew 6:25—34  
By Karen Prentiss  
The Fatherhood of God Series

## STUDY GOALS

To help us trust God who is our loving, caring, generous, faithful Father.

## BACKGROUND

“Jesus preached hard to the religiously and socially arrogant, but his words come as comfort to the meek and brokenhearted” (Keener, p. 104). With that in mind, Jesus’ ministry begins with the words, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 4:17).

## OPENING QUESTION

You can use the following question to get discussion started before you begin the study.

*Can you think of a time when you worried about a situation in your life? Where did you think your help would come from?*

In this study, we will consider the faithfulness of God to provide for our daily needs, as any good parent would. Instead of worrying about necessities, Jesus instructs us to make the expression of His kingdom on earth our top priority.

## PRAYER

Pray that the Holy Spirit will open hearts to believe and trust the Father when He says that He will provide for every need; that the Holy Spirit will heal barriers that keep us from trusting; and that the Holy Spirit will inspire all to glorify and serve Him regardless of circumstances.

## STUDY THE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 6:25—34

Ask one or more group members to share in reading the passage. Use the following questions to lead an inductive study of the passage. If you need help understanding or facilitating the discussion, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

1. What single word is repeated most often in the passage? Based upon that one word, what is Jesus warning against?
2. Re-read verses 25—32. Discuss the reasons why we are not to worry.
3. How does God care for birds and flowers? How do birds and flowers react to God's care? What should humans learn from this?
4. Why should we trust God?
5. According to verse 33, what should we do instead of worrying? Why?
6. What "things" will be added when we seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first?

## APPLICATION

Select one of the following application questions to finish your discussion time.

- What do you need to believe about God's heart towards you in order to fully trust Him for your earthly needs?
- What insecurities or fears do you struggle with that might block your ability to trust God?

- How can you apply Jesus' teachings to the things you need or the things that cause you to worry? (Consider not just food and clothes but also safety, health, relationships, the future, etc.)
  
- How can we express dependence on God as we use our faith to trust Him for our daily needs?

## WRAPPING IT UP

If we are filled with care about our own circumstances, we may never do what God has called us to do. Therefore, we must heed Jesus' warning not to be overly concerned about having our daily needs met. Instead, Jesus encourages us to trust our Heavenly Father to take care of whatever else concerns us. Jesus also encourages us to make the expression of God's kingdom on earth our first priority. When we do this, Jesus assures us that the Father will handle everything else that concerns us.

## RESOURCES

The full Leader's Guide to this study is available online. Refer to the series title at <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/resources/sgresources/index.asp>.

## SOURCES

Keener, Craig S. *Matthew*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Grant R. Osborne, ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.



## OUR FATHER'S LOVING DISCIPLINE

Study 8 — Hebrews 12:1–13  
By Jane Flewellen  
The Fatherhood of God Series

### STUDY GOALS

To embrace our Father's loving discipline as training to mature us in righteousness and faith.

### BACKGROUND

Hebrews is a letter written by an unknown author to encourage Jewish Christians who are suffering. They are exhorted to not abandon faith in Jesus Christ, God's ultimate revelation and solution for sin. Instead, they are urged to see Jesus as the fulfillment of the priesthood and sacrificial system, and challenged to continue to live for Him (Fee, p. 390).

### OPENING QUESTION

You can use the following question to get discussion started before you begin the study.

*Have you ever engaged in a strenuous training program or serious discipline? How did you stay motivated when you wanted to give up? How rewarding was it to reach your goal?*

Most of us don't enjoy facing discipline or serious training until we have reached our goal. Scripture tells us that no discipline is pleasant but rather painful. But God does promise that cooperating with His discipline will produce righteousness and peace—qualities that we see in His Son. This study will help us consider the loving motives behind our Heavenly Father's discipline.

### PRAYER

Pray for open hearts and minds to embrace the Father's loving discipline as good training for our maturing in righteousness and faith.

## STUDY THE PASSAGE: HEBREWS 12:1—13

Ask one or more group members to share in reading the passage. Use the following questions to lead an inductive study of the passage. If you need help understanding or facilitating the discussion, see the Leader's Guide to the study.

1. In verses 1—4, the author vividly compares persevering in a foot race with following Jesus. What clues in these verses indicate why the author might be writing about this?
2. What comes to mind when you think of discipline? How might we misinterpret the Father's discipline?
3. What does God's discipline prove to us (vv. 5—8)?
4. How should we respond to hardships or discipline (vv. 7—9)?
5. Why does our Heavenly Father discipline us (vv. 10—11)?
6. What do we gain by responding well to the Father's discipline (v. 11)?
7. How do we overcome weakness and exhaustion (vv. 12—13)?

## APPLICATION

Select one of the following application questions to finish your discussion time.

- Do you have a negative or defensive reaction to discipline? What can you apply from this study to help you embrace the Father's discipline?

- How can you respond better to discipline and hardships in your life? Do you need to change how you pray about them?
  
- To be more holy and set apart to God, is there a lifestyle change you need to make? Is there anything distracting you from pursuing God that you need to turn from?

## WRAPPING IT UP

The journey through life with God is like running a marathon. Continually re-focusing our attention on Jesus helps us persevere. We all experience hardships and the Father's loving discipline. How we respond and pray reveal our attitude toward sin and our desire for holiness; our expectations of God and life; our faith and trust in God; and our willingness to submit and endure. Be encouraged! In the Father's wise and loving hands, hardship and discipline are His training. His goal is to mature us in righteousness, peace, and faith. He is always ready to give us grace and power to run well. As believers, we are to help and encourage each other as we run together!

## RESOURCES

The full Leader's Guide to this study is available online. Refer to the series title at <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/resources/sgresources/index.asp>.

## SOURCES

Fee, Gordon D. and Stuart, Douglas. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

