

## LIFE Bible Study: Hebrews 12:18-29

**For Discussion:** What are some of your long-term goals? How difficult is it to plan and live for a goal that won't be realized for many years? What helps you to focus and stay on track in pursuing those goals, even when you are presented with competing interests?

### Read Hebrews 12:18-29

**For review:** In Hebrews 12:1-17, the author continued to urge his readers to live out their faith with endurance, pointing them to those who, like Jesus, not only withstood great trials for their faith, but deliberately chose them over worldly comfort. To help his readers view their trials correctly, the author used the image of earthly fathers, highlighting both the necessity of discipline and the edification that it can bring about. Hardships and difficulties, rather than being a sign of God's rejection, are a validation of a person's sonship and a sanctifying act of His love. After concluding the section with examples of people who miss out on God's blessings, the author gives a final description of what that blessing is and a last warning to not despise it for worldly things as Esau had done (v.16-17).

**In writing about his readers' experience of their faith, the author makes a comparison between two mountains. What are the two mountains that the author references (Ex. 19:10-20)? How is the scene around each mountain described, and what mood do those descriptions evoke?**

**Based on the descriptions and imagery of each scene and the reactions of those present, what do each of the mountains represent (v.24, Deut. 4:13-14)? What is the significance of being called to Mount Zion rather than to Mount Sinai for a person's relationship with God?**

**When Christ returns there will be a shaking (i.e., judgment) not just of the earth but of the heavens as well (Heb. 1:10-12, 2 Pet. 3:10-13). What are the characteristics of the kingdom that will remain after this happens (v.26-28, Dan. 2:44)? Given that the world as we know it is on its way out, what should you be living for now (1 Cor. 3:10-15)? In what areas have you chosen what is perishable over what will endure, and how can you realign your priorities to invest in things of lasting value?**

**On account of the eternal kingdom that the followers of Jesus are receiving, the author calls for a response of faithful worship. What makes worship acceptable to God? What impact should the fact that God is a consuming fire have on us (Deut. 4:24)? How does your life show that your citizenship is in the heavenly Jerusalem rather than in the world (Phil. 3:20)?**

### **Reflection and application**

With vivid depictions of Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, the author contrasts the old and new covenants a final time, showing once again how much greater are the blessings that are promised to members of the new covenant. Whereas the old covenant was marked by separation from God and fear in His presence because of the lack of peace between a sinful people and their holy judge, the new covenant provides direct access to God, which is only possible because of the holiness that has been effected in its members by the work of Christ (Heb. 12:10).

The dichotomies of the two covenants and of the mountains of law and of grace are further paralleled in the contrast between the present kingdom, which is liable to being shaken, and the coming pure, unshakable kingdom, which is the inheritance of all who are in Christ by faith. Let us respond with an offering of grateful worship that recognizes God's burning holiness and the weight of judgment that we have been spared so that we can, in turn, love Him much for all that we have been forgiven to make us fit for such a kingdom (Luke 7:47).