

Hebrews 12:5-11

⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“My son, do not despise the ^[a]chastening of the Lord,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

⁶ For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.”

⁷ If ^[b] you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no ^[c] chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Blaming of Others; Accountability

Author **James Hollis** offers a harsh truth of life:

"After a lifetime of blaming others, it is exceedingly difficult for us to finally acknowledge that the only person who has consistently been in all the scenes of that long-running soap opera we call our life is us, and, as a necessary corollary, that we bear some large responsibility for how the drama is turning out."

Source: [*Why Good People Do Bad Things*](#)

Source: James Clear email, July 17, 2025

Psalm 38:1–8, 18–22 Study Questions (NKJV)

1. Why does David ask the Lord not to rebuke him in wrath or chasten him in hot displeasure?

“O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure!” (Psalm 38:1)

David fears not divine correction itself, but correction that comes as an expression of wrath rather than covenant love. He acknowledges that discipline is necessary (cf. Hebrews 12:6), but appeals for mercy consistent with God's character (Exodus 34:6). This verse reflects the tension between God's justice and His mercy—David desires restoration, not retribution.

2. How does the internal burden of sin manifest physically and emotionally according to David?

“There is no soundness in my flesh... For my iniquities have gone over my head...” (Psalm 38:3–4)

David connects sin with psychosomatic (the influence of mental and emotion factors on physical health) distress—his guilt brings about physical weakness, emotional collapse, and spiritual drowning. His words show that sin, though spiritual in origin, can debilitate the whole person (cf. Psalm 32:3–4). The image of sins “over my head” evokes drowning, as in Lamentations 3:54, highlighting despair and helplessness apart from divine intervention.

3. What does David mean when he calls his wounds “foul and festering” because of his foolishness?

“My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness.” (Psalm 38:5)

The language of “foul and festering” is morally evocative—David views his inner corruption as spiritually diseased. His “foolishness” refers not to ignorance but moral rebellion (Proverbs 14:9). Sin left unchecked leads to decay, echoing Isaiah 1:6. This vivid metaphor underlines the seriousness of unrepented sin and the self-inflicted nature of guilt.

4. How does David's bodily posture and speech reflect the depth of his spiritual condition?

“I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly... I groan because of the turmoil of my heart.” (Psalm 38:6-8)

David is not merely sad; he is crushed in spirit. His outward posture mirrors inward conviction, like Job on the ash heap or the tax collector in Luke 18:13. Groaning indicates deep, wordless pain (cf. Romans 8:26), showing his entire being is impacted. This section portrays repentance not as ritual, but as soul-deep grief and longing for redemption.

5. What does true repentance look like based on verse 18, and how is it distinguished from mere remorse?

“For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin.” (Psalm 38:18)

True repentance involves open confession (“declare”) and heartfelt sorrow (“anguish”), not just fear of consequences. David does not excuse or minimize his guilt; he exposes it. This aligns with 2 Corinthians 7:10—godly sorrow leads to repentance and salvation. The focus is relational: David is grieved not just by what he’s done, but by how it has wounded his fellowship with God.

6. Why does David plead for God not to forsake him, even while under judgment?

“Do not forsake me, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me!” (Psalm 38:21)

David knows that divine presence is his only hope, even while enduring discipline. He echoes the cry of the forsaken (cf. Psalm 22:1), but here he clings to the covenant relationship. Theologically, this demonstrates that chastisement is not equivalent to abandonment—God disciplines those He loves (Proverbs 3:12). David’s fear is not pain but separation.

7. What does David’s urgent cry for help in verse 22 teach us about salvation and timing?

“Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!” (Psalm 38:22)

David identifies God not merely as a helper but as his salvation. His plea for haste reflects both urgency and faith. He believes God is willing and able to deliver, and that salvation is personal. This foreshadows the New Testament understanding of Christ as our salvation (Luke 2:30; Titus 2:13), and also models fervent, faith-filled prayer (cf. James 5:16).

8. How does Psalm 38 as a whole challenge modern attitudes toward guilt, repentance, and divine discipline?

In a culture that often denies guilt or suppresses discomfort, David’s psalm invites raw honesty before God. He neither justifies himself nor despairs; he repents and hopes. The psalm teaches that guilt can be a grace—it drives the soul to God. It reveals a God who disciplines, yes, but whose heart remains turned toward the broken and contrite (Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15).

9. How do the themes of Psalm 38 help us understand the teaching on God’s loving discipline in Hebrews 12:5–11?

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him...” (Hebrews 12:5)

Psalm 38 gives us a first-person experience of divine discipline: conviction of sin, physical and emotional burden, confession, and urgent appeal for restored fellowship. Hebrews 12:5–11 provides the doctrinal framework: the Lord’s chastening is proof of our sonship, administered in love, and intended to yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Together they teach that God’s corrective hand is neither rejection nor wrathful destruction but redemptive training.