

Study Guide: 9-7-25 Adjustments - The Path

Overview

This message introduces a series on "Adjustments," emphasizing how small, consistent changes lead to big results in personal growth, relationships, and faith. The focus is on the "path" God has for each person (Psalm 119:105), which requires steps forward despite challenges. Big changes come from little adjustments, not overwhelming leaps. The sermon uses a hiking analogy (Lighthouse Trail) and biblical examples to illustrate that growth is a process involving discomfort, endurance, and ultimate reward.

Key Themes

The path God sets is a journey of transformation from stagnation to Kingdom-building power. Jesus refuses to leave us unchanged (contrast with Satan's destructive plan). Growth happens through relationships (e.g., meetups, godly people) where the Holy Spirit speaks through others. Everyone is on a path, navigated by steps, and adjustments help overcome paralysis, discouragement, or impatience.

1. It's a Process

- **Description:** The path includes easy and tough sections (flat vs. rocky/hot). Discomfort is normal and purposeful, forcing us to address derailing issues and reach the other side.
- **Example:** Family hike on Lighthouse Trail (5.75 miles, 940 ft elevation; child's complaints mirror our spiritual whining).
- **Biblical Examples:** Abraham (unknown), Joseph (slavery/prison), Moses (past), Esther (threat), Daniel (lion's den), Mary (pregnancy), Peter (courtyard).
- **Challenge:** We focus on pain instead of destination, leading to quitting (e.g., wilderness, Potiphar's house).
- **Adjustment:** See purpose in every step (1 Cor. 9:26). Run with purpose; trace Joseph's story backward to see God's orchestration. Shift vision from current problem to God's destination (Heb. 12:2-3).
- **Question for Reflection:** Are you purposefully stepping or complaining? Are you expending energy on the problem or the destination?

2. It Takes Endurance

- **Description:** Endurance is painful persistence ("remaining under" pressure - hypomonē), not instant gratification. We start strong but falter in discomfort.
- **Challenge:** Instant expectations (e.g., full change in one week) vs. reality of delayed results. Weights like sin, bad attitudes, past pain, doubt, or fear slow us down (Heb. 12:1).
- **What Helps:** God, Holy Spirit, promises, Word, church community.
- **What Hurts:** Carrying weights; focus on self/problems instead of Jesus/joy.
- **Adjustment:** Strip off weights (Heb. 12:1). Shift focus to Jesus, the initiator/perfector of faith (Heb. 12:2). Pray before reacting (5-min rule). Adjust expectations: Path isn't easy (Heb. 11:32-40 shows faith heroes' sufferings).
- **Question for Reflection:** What weights need stripping today? Does your first reaction to problems reveal trust in Jesus? If expecting ease, reread Heb. 12:1's "therefore" context.

3. It Is Worth It

- **Description:** Trials reveal and refine us, producing endurance, character, hope (Rom. 5:3-5). God uses them to help, not hurt (John Owen: Trials come from what's inside that needs drawn out.).
- **Challenge:** Surprise at trials (1 Pet. 4:12-13); questioning if prayer/Bible/obedience matters. Actions reveal belief.
- **Biblical Assurance:** Goodness/mercy follow even in valleys (Ps. 23:6); path brightens (Prov. 4:18); grow into salvation (1 Cor. 15:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:2). Suffering pleases God if it leads to partnership with Christ.
- **Adjustment:** Don't blame God; embrace trials as opportunities for joy/growth (James 1:2-4). Trust God's faithfulness; rejoice in sufferings.
- **Question for Reflection:** Do you believe the path's ups/downs are worth it? Are you surprised by trials? Consider: Trials aren't God's unfaithfulness but tools to change you.

Key Bible Verses

- **Path/Guidance:** Ps. 119:105; Ps. 16:11; Prov. 4:26; Prov. 3:6; Ps. 25:4; Prov. 4:18; Ps. 23:6.
- **Process/Endurance:** Heb. 12:1-3; 1 Cor. 9:26; Heb. 11:32-40; Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4.
- **Worth It:** 1 Pet. 4:12-13,19; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:2.

Reflection & Application

- **Self-Assessment:** Has growth been inhibited by big steps, discouragement, instant expectations, process annoyance, or unknown steps? Have you enjoyed the journey or just complained/questioned?
- **Adjustments to Make:**
 - See purpose in every step.
 - Shift focus to Jesus and awaiting joy.
 - Stop blaming God; embrace His plan.
- **Action Steps:** Repent for judging God; pray for courage/faith; connect in relationships for discipleship. Remember: You're not far—small adjustments yield big changes. He who began the work will complete it (Phil. 1:6).