

Faith in Future Grace vs Despondency

1. Read Matthew 26:36-39 and John 12:27.

a) Describe Jesus' mental state in the garden on the night He was betrayed. How is He feeling? Why?

b) How does Jesus deal with his troubled state in the Matthew passage? Consider the steps Jesus takes – there are at least five mentioned in verses 37-39. Hebrews 12:2 provides another.

c) Earlier on this very night, Jesus commands His disciples, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God.” (John 14:1) To disobey Jesus' command surely is to sin. Is Jesus sinning by becoming “troubled” and “deeply grieved”? If not, identify the difference between the sin of being troubled and being troubled yet not sinning.

d) When are you tempted to despair? Given this study, how can you fight the temptation to despair in your own life? What steps can you take not to sin in this area?

2. Identify some of the causes of despair in the lives of great Christians (299-302).

Look at the explanations regarding what John Piper is interpreting from Matthew 26:36-38: What is the cause of Jesus's despair? What is the temptation of Jesus's despair? What is the hope for us concerning these events? Does this expand your understanding why Jesus did what He did? Does this effect your hope?

3. What is the ultimate cause of such despair, according to Piper and Martyn Lloyd-Jones?

4. What are some verses we can use to fight the temptation to despair (302-304)? Memorize two that you think will be particularly helpful in your personal battle.

4. Explain the distinction Lloyd-Jones makes between “talking to ourselves” and “allowing ‘ourselves’ to talk to us.” Why must we do the first and not the second (304)?

5. How does Piper answer question 1b and 1c above (125-126)?

6. After reading this book revisit/revise your answer to 1d. Discuss with each other how you can help each other in this fight.