

Holding fast in a sea of change



Studies in the book of Hebrews

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

Hebrews 12:1



Studies in the book of Hebrews

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.³ Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. ⁴ After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin. Hebrews 12:2-4



Studies in the book of Hebrews

And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you.⁶ For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he reproveth each one he accepts as his child."⁷ As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children.

Hebrews 12:5-7



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Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? ⁸ If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.⁹ Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

Hebrews 12:7-9



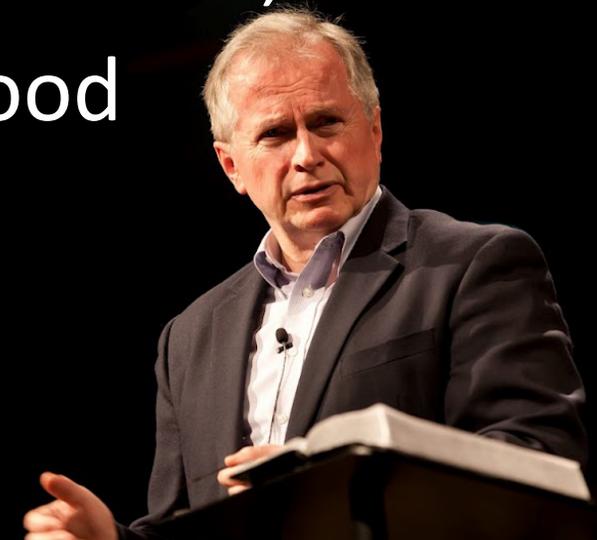
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For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. ¹² So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. ¹³ Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong. Hebrews 12:10-13

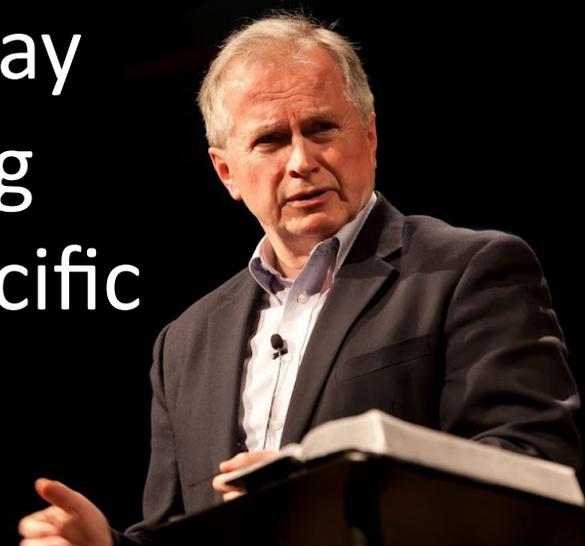


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It follows that when we face suffering of any kind, we should use the occasion for self-examination. God may be speaking to us in the language of a wise heavenly Father who chastens those he loves. Such chastening may be God's response to specific sins in our lives; it may be a more general way of toughening us up in this broken world so we will stop thinking that God owes us good health, or that our clean living and organic food guarantees us long and robust life.



Or it may be that God has a bet going on with Satan himself: think Job. So our self-examination ought to be honest, and any repentance should be forthright — but we should not whip ourselves into thinking that the crippling accident we just endured was a function of our sin. Even if it were, the remedy is always the same: flee to the Cross, and trust our good and gracious and holy God. And it's not inconceivable that we may conclude, with Job, that this suffering cannot be God's punishment for specific sins in our lives.

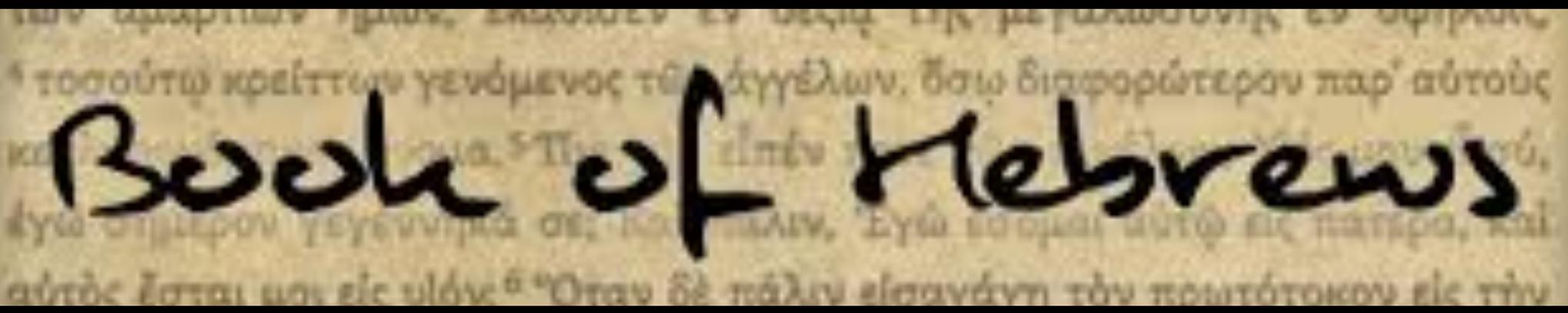


.⁶ For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he reproves each one he accepts as his child."

Hebrews 12:6

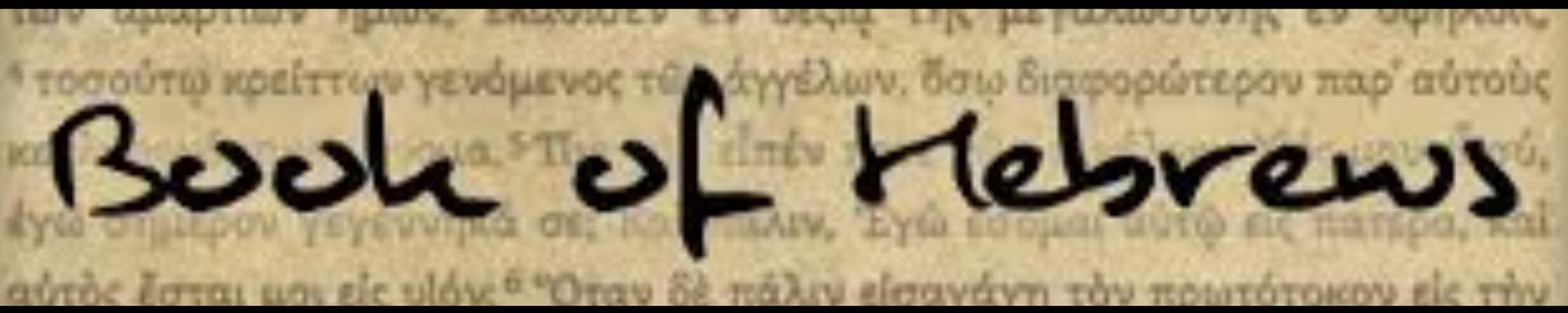


Studies in the book of Hebrews



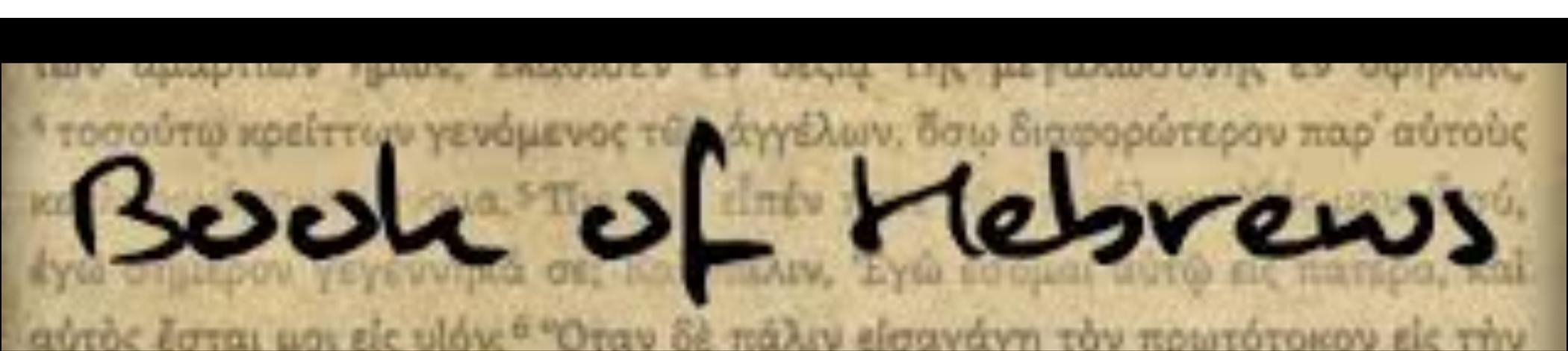
1. Life is a Race

"... let us run ... the race God has set before us."



1. Life is a Race

After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin. Vs.4



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1. Life is a Race

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

Vs.11



1. Sufferings are in some way, *necessary*.



2. Sufferings are paradoxical.

And we know that in all things
God works for the good of those
who love him, who have been
called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28





Joni Eareckson Tada

I reasoned that once God granted permission to Satan, he then nervously had to run behind him with a repair kit, patching up what Satan had ruined, mumbling to himself, “Oh great, now how am I going to work this for good?”



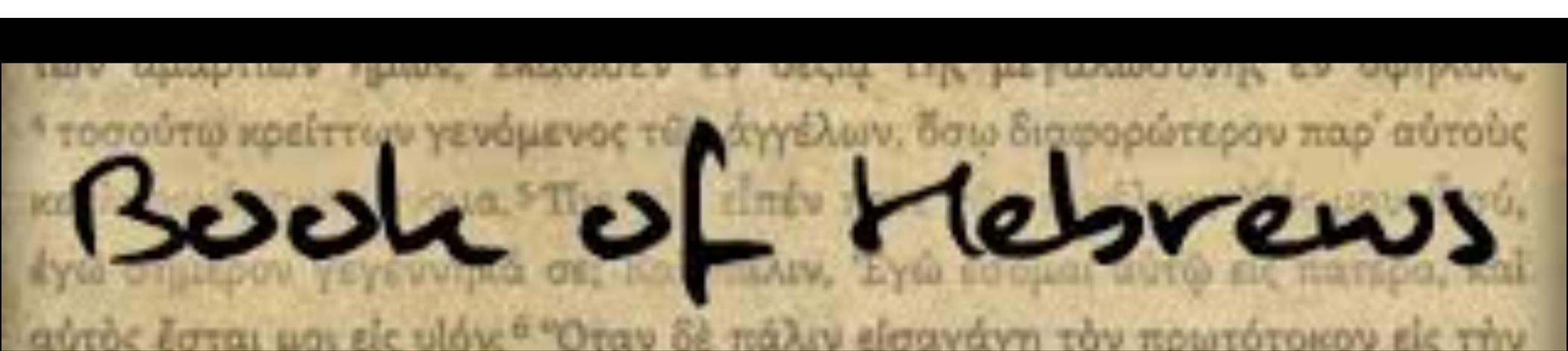
Joni Eareckson Tada

But the truth is God is infinitely more powerful than Satan... While the devil's motive in my disability was to shipwreck my faith by throwing a wheelchair in my way, I'm convinced that God's motive was to thwart the devil and use the wheelchair to change me and make me more like Christ through it all...

George MacDonald



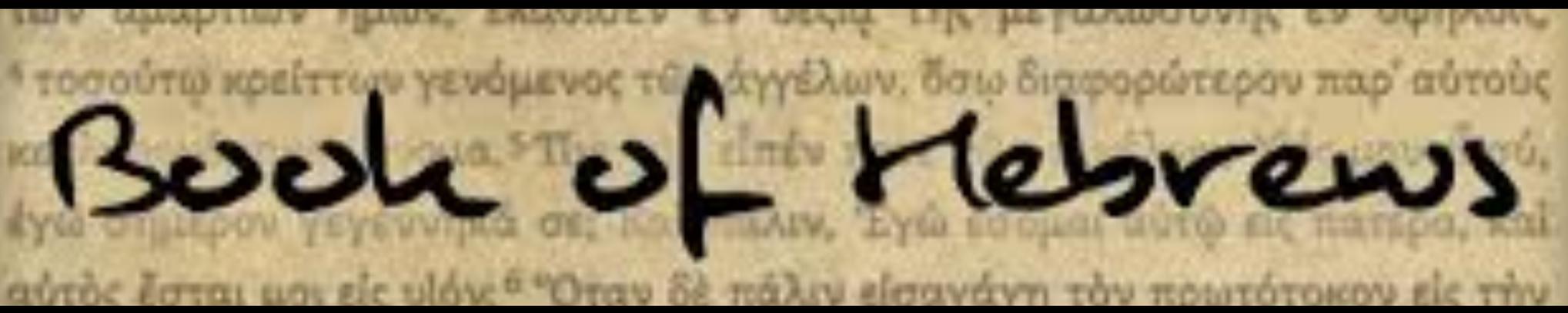
“Everything difficult indicates something more than our theory of life yet embraces.”



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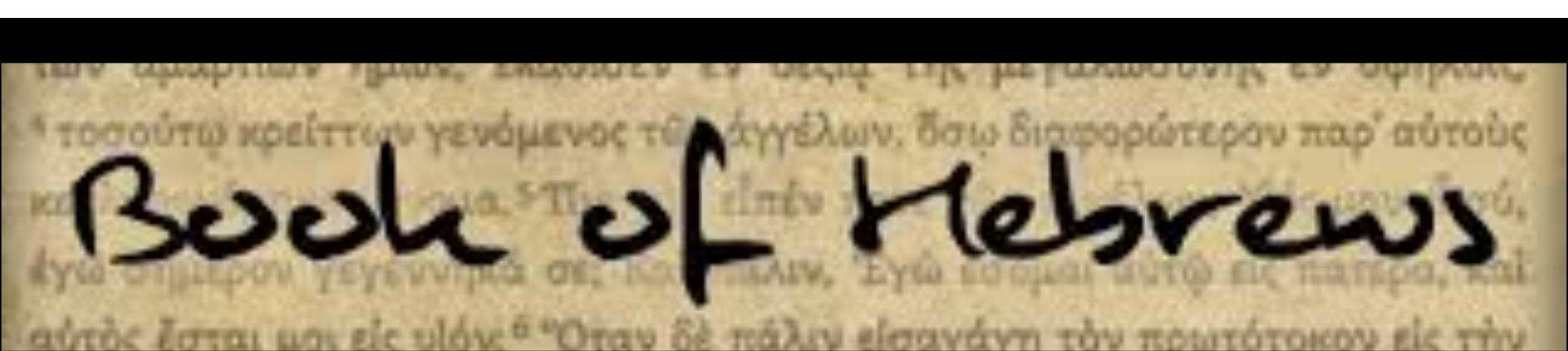
2. Why Run This Race

And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you.⁶ For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he reproveth each one he accepts as his child."



2. Why Run This Race

For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. Vs.10



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2. Why Run This Race

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that
God is treating you as his own children. Vs.7

GENESIS 50:20, to his brothers:

**“YOU MEANT IT FOR EVIL;
GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD.”**



And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you.

Hebrews 12:5



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“My child, don't make light of the Lord's
discipline, Vs. 5



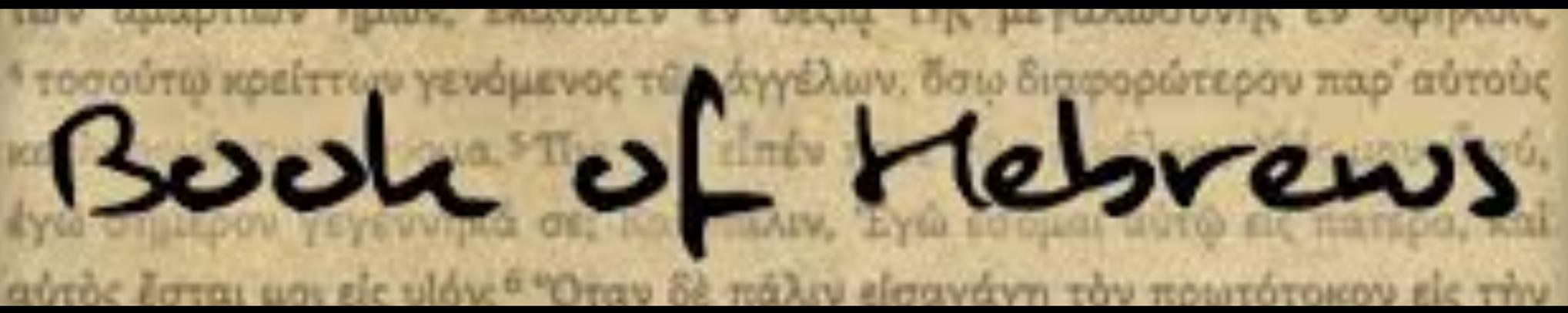
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and don't give up when he corrects you.

Vs. 5

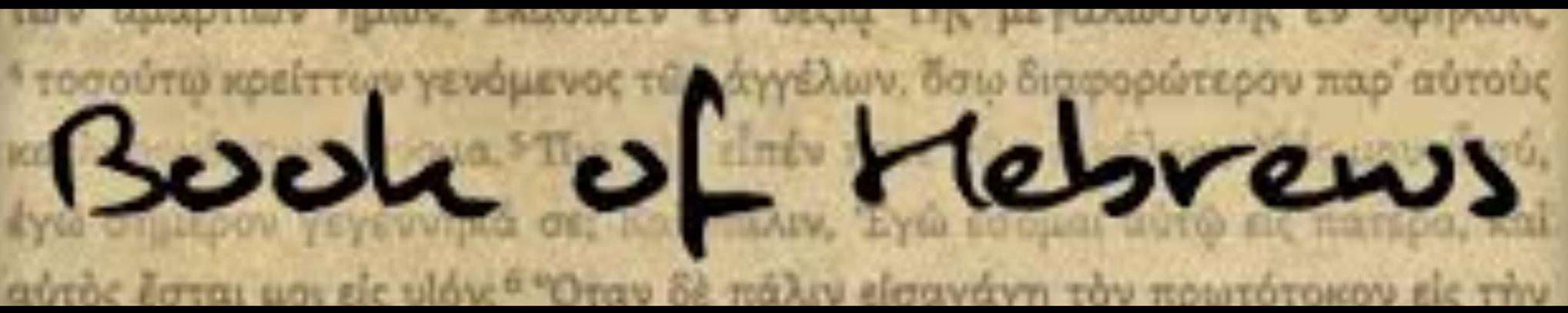


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3. How To Run This Race

- **Practical Humility**

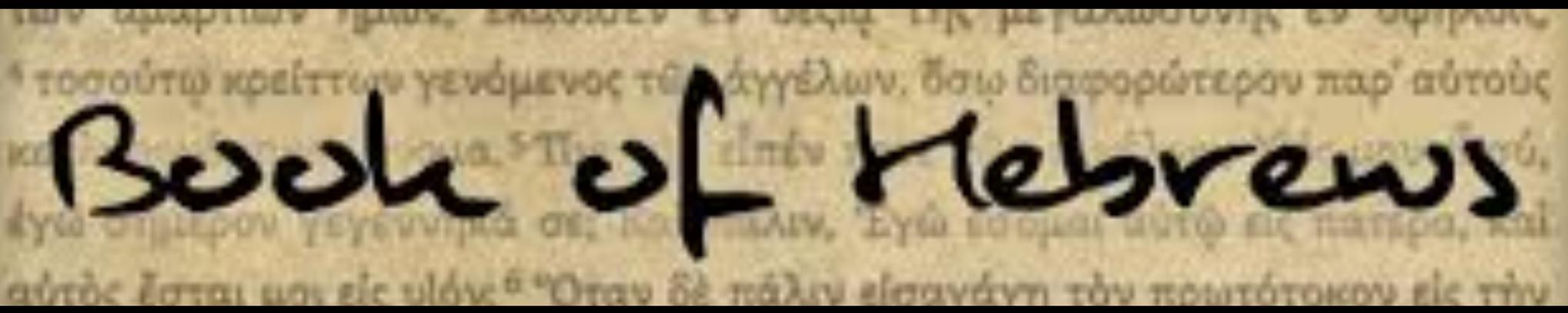


3. How To Run This Race

- **Practical Humility**

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children.

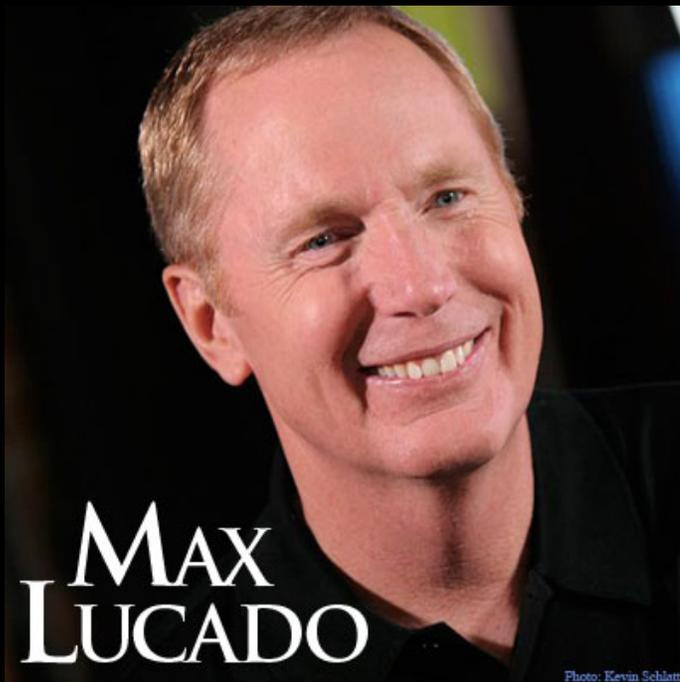
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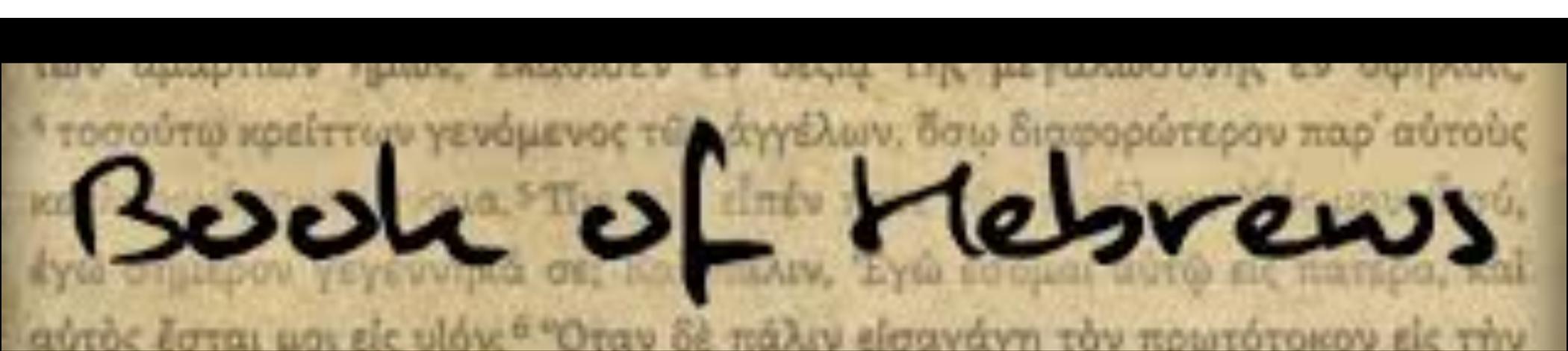


3. How To Run This Race

- **Practical Obedience**

You'll get through this. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. In the meantime don't be foolish, or naïve. But don't despair either. With God's help you'll get through this."





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3. How To Run This Race

- **Practical Evaluation**

Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. Vs. 1

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.³ Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. ⁴ After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin. Hebrews 12:2-4



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For our light and momentary
troubles are achieving for us an
eternal glory that far outweighs
them all. 2 Corinthians 4:17



