

Zion 2026 – Training for a Harvest

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Joshua 1:6–7 NLT

Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you.

Hebrews 12:2–13 NLT

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. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.

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

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? 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. 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?

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. 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.

So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

Choosing God's discipline is choosing to be strengthened and being prepared to receive the harvest God has for us.

Matthew 6:7–8 NLT

When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

The primary purpose of prayer is connection and relationship with God!

Matthew 6:9 NLT

Pray like this: "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy."

John 14:6–11 NLT

Jesus told [Thomas], "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

Jesus reveals the true nature of the Heavenly Father to us.

Matthew 6:10 NLT

May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

It's not about me. I am not the center of the universe. God is!

Matthew 6:33 NLT

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

When we pray God's will, we partner with God, releasing His authority on the earth in a new way.

Matthew 6:11 NLT

Give us today the food we need...

We pray for daily bread to connect with our Heavenly Father each day and be reminded that He has us covered.

Matthew 6:12 NLT

and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

Matthew 6:14–15 NLT

If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Jesus is so serious about forgiveness that He tells us to ask God to limit His forgiveness of us to the measure we forgive others!

Matthew 6:13 NLT

And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

Praying for strength is recognizing that we are not alone. God is always with us.

Small Group Guide: Training for a Harvest

Opening Question:

What area of your life or faith do you feel God is calling you to grow stronger in this year?

Getting Ready – Strength and Courage

God has a great harvest in store for His people, but to receive it, we need to undergo spiritual training, in the same way that growing in physical strength requires effort, discipline, and consistency. We can choose to remain in our comfort zones and miss the fullness of God's harvest in our lives, or we can choose strength and courage to engage with God and be prepared to receive His blessings.

In Joshua 1, God told Joshua to be "strong and courageous," because the land they were to possess was filled with enemies. Similarly, our spiritual purpose and the blessings God has for us are "out there," on the other side of the battlefield. God is training us to be mature, spiritually strong, and ready to face battles with His help.

To grow spiritually in 2026, we must engage in activities and disciplines we may find uncomfortable. This includes prioritizing reading the Bible every day, and leaning into the importance of prayer. Prayer is rooted in relationship. It is connecting with our Heavenly Father, seeking His perspective over our own, and praying for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. As Jesus taught in Matthew 6, prayer is about dependence on God for daily provision, spiritual forgiveness, and spiritual protection. It means aligning our hearts with God's kingdom and trusting His plan. This year is a year of spiritual development and training as God prepares us for the harvest He has in store. But, we must choose to grow and develop the discipline of prayer.

In this year of discipline and growth, remember that the Holy Spirit is our personal trainer. He is here to empower us in every dimension!

For Discussion:

1. What new rhythms or routines can you establish this year to create space for spiritual discipline and growth?
2. Reflecting on your current spiritual life, in which areas are you operating primarily in your comfort zone?
3. What might it look like for you to step out “out there” with God and take new risks?