

Discipline That's Good

Hebrews 12:5-13

2/25/07

Intro

No one actually likes to receive discipline. No one raises their hand and says, "Choose me, I really need it." But if we're sons or daughters of the Lord, then we will receive discipline at one time or another.

The Hebrew Christians to whom this was written were experiencing trials and troubles in their lives and they were not responding well to it. They were tempted to shrink back and return to the life they came from, but the writer is encouraging them to stay the course. If they were experiencing the discipline of the Lord, then they were to learn that what God wanted in their lives was good.

What they needed to do was to learn what God's discipline was for and how they should respond to it.

The same is true for us, we need to learn how to respond to the Lord's discipline and understand what He wants to do in our lives because of it.

**These are principles and insights
of the discipline of the Lord.**

I. Be Willing to Accept Correction

- Do not lightly regard the discipline of the Lord, means to take it seriously. To listen because you know they are the words of godly wisdom.
- This is what God wants from us in correction...

A. Stay sensitive to the Lord

- If we can stay sensitive to the Lord, then we are aware that He is trying to guide our steps with His Word and the Holy Spirit.
- The Lord wants us to respond quickly to His correction...

App – "That's the Lord convicting me; I need to listen and stop this immediately.

- But some people will not listen and begin to turn a deaf ear. At some point the heart becomes calloused.

Illus – Calloused skin becomes thick and insensitive. Guitar fingers become thick to avoid pain, but hearts become calloused to avoid God.

II Chronicles 36:11, 13, Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem... he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel.

- If only we could stay sensitive to the Lord our hearts would welcome correction and grow spiritually because of it.

App – This is why we need to teach our kids to listen with a soft heart. Don't exasperate them make them hard.

Colossians 3:21, Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

B. Don't faint when He disciplines

- Vs 5 – don't faint means to react with maturity and accept God's training with a good heart.
- Some people react poorly and say in they hearts that God doesn't love them...

Illus – One of our girls needed correction which was strong enough to get a surprising reaction. “I don't love you anymore,” she said. “Love is not required,” I said, “but obedience is.”

- She was over-reacting in the hopes of getting mercy based on my feeling guilty – it doesn't work with God either.

APP – Another reaction is to mope or out or become withdrawn. How much better to step up and say, “God's right, and He will bring good out of this.”

II Corinthians 12:8-9, Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

II. Discipline is a Question of Faith

- From these verses we can see that there are several steps that God takes in the process of correcting.
- By faith, we know that the consequences in our lives are God's hand bringing good to our lives.

A. First, God gives a reprimand

- By faith, we understand that God reproves us.
- “Don't faint when you are “reproved” by Him. That word means to reprimand, or correct.
- Most Christians will tell you that they knew God was warning them before they made that really bad decision.

Illus – The Lord reprimanded the disciples several times for their lack of faith. Sometimes it was even strong.

- The same word is used to describe the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:7-8, “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

- The key is to learn to listen to the Spirit rather than invite greater discipline.

Illus – Some people are stubborn and God has to use stronger methods to get through to them.

Psalm 32:8-9, I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you.

B. Then God brings hardship

- Sometimes the only way we learn, (at least we hope we learn) is from a hardship. For some, that is the only way.
- How long? ...as long as it takes.
- The Lord knows what it takes and there is no manipulation of the Lord.

Illus – When I was a boy and would, on those rare occasions when I was in trouble, try to get Mom to laugh in the hope that my discipline would be a lot less.

Illus – But God is not manipulated and God is not mocked.

Galatians 6:7-9, Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

- God will bring hardship to our lives in the same way we will bring hardship to our children.

Illus – The next step beyond warning is consequence with our children; doing an extra chore was always good.

C. Finally, God allows strong consequences

- By faith we understand that God may need to allow some loss or trial in our lives.

- If we could receive it as instruction from the Lord, then we could look forward to the fact that God is for us.

Illus – Israel had hardened their heart for so long that they finally found themselves as exiles in Babylon, but even there, God was calling them back.

Jeremiah 29:10-14 - God plan for good, even in discipline.

III. God Has Purpose in the Process

- No disciplines seems good at the moment, but there is a purpose in it.

A. It proves you are a son

- You don't discipline children you see misbehaving at the mall. (Though I have wanted to several times.)

Illus – In Russia, the mothers have no problem correcting anyone's child or anyone younger, for that matter, but there is a limit, fathers need to discipline the children.

- When God disciplines us it proves we are sons and He is our Father.
- It proves that He loves us.

Illus – When I discipline my kids, I want to convince them of my love in it. (That’s why we should not discipline out of anger.)

Proverbs 3:12, For whom the Lord loves He reproveth, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.

B. To share His holiness

- Vs 10-11 – He disciplines us for our good that we may share in His holiness.
- There are **two parts to that verse**: that this is for our good.

App – He teaches us and disciplines us about money, or forgiveness, or anger because it’s good for us. He wants to keep us out of trouble and He wants us to be able to be stronger and help others.

There is a reason God doesn’t want us to spend our lives partying... it will destroy our lives and others as well.

- The second is about holiness: What is the holiness of God? The character of God. When we share in His holiness, we are sharing in His character.

App – God wants us to increase in patience, in love, in forgiveness, in mercy, in kindness, etc because when we lack these things we fall short of what He desires in our lives.

II Peter 1:7-8, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these

qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C. To prepare us for greater things

- In the word discipline is ‘disciple’ which refers to someone who is learning and growing.
- In other words, He is instructing us for the purpose of preparing us for the future.
- God wants us to make spiritual progress so that we will be able to manage larger tasks, larger problems and greater responsibility.

Jeremiah 12:5, “If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out, then how can you compete with horses? If you fall down in a land of peace, how will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?”