Our Father's Discipline

("A Spanking From Heaven")

Hebrews 12:5-12

11/10/04

Introduction: V.5 When God disciplines you...
-Don't treat it lightly
-Don't lose heart

*** God has a good purpose in disciplining you!**
He disciplines for good reasons:

I.*The Lord disciplines you...*
TO SHOW HIS LOVE FOR YOU (v.6a)

II.*The Lord disciplines you...*
TO AFFIRM HIS RELATIONSHIP TO YOU (v.6b-8)

III.*The Lord disciplines you...*
TO PROVIDE HIS BENEFITS IN YOU (v.9-11)

A.Benefit # 1 -Abundant Life (v.9)

B.Benefit # 2 - Godly holiness (v.10)

C.Benefit # 3 - Peaceable righteousness (v.11)

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Introduction:

Although I hated it at the time, I am today thankful for the discipline I received from my earthly father.

V.5 When God disciplines you...
-Don't treat it lightly
-Don't lose heart

The connective ***"and"*** continues the thought of adversity and contrasts what we suffer with what Christ suffered. Ours is much less and for different reasons.

"The exhortation" - the writer of Hebrews affirms the Old Testament encouragement -- as written by Solomon hundreds of years prior in Proverbs 3:11-12 -- as still valid today. God has always disciplined His erring children.

We are prone to either discredit the discipline as not being from God or we question it ("Why me?" or "Why this way?").

People are prone to two extremes when God strictly deals with their lives:

1)They often either don't take seriously the hardships they face as possible lessons from above;

or2)They often grow weary and exasperated (depressed) by His dealings with them
(Both extremes are wrong)

"Despise not" - Don't think little of; don't think lightly about; beware of ignoring the lessons God may be trying to teach you.

"Chastening" - child training; the physical instructive discipline a father would give to an immature child.

"Faint" - to give up; rather than learning the lessons God is trying to teach, you become discouraged or depressed by God's rebuke. (EX: a child after being scolded may have an earnest desire to amend his/her ways, or they may go away with a frown and a sullen appearance -- this is wrong).

"Rebuked" - To reprove; as when one is sternly reprimanded for rebellious action and attitudes.

Note the balance in the terms used:

"Chastening" = physical discipline

***"Rebuke"* =** verbal discipline

(EX: *"The rod and reproof give wisdom. . ."*)

God disciplines His children ultimately for His glory and specifically for our good.

The word "discipline" is related to the word "disciple" -- a disciple is one who is taught the disciplines of His authority. God wants to teach His children, so He disciplines us.

Psalm 119:67, 71, 75 - *"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."*

In Job 5:17-18, the Bible says: *"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole."*

Spurgeon said, "I have never learned anything from God except by the rod."

A.W. Tozer added, "It is doubtful if God can bless a man greatly without hurting him deeply."

Why does God chastise (discipline) His children?

Basically to teach.

--To teach us what sin to avoid (prevention - II Cor. 12:7)

--To teach us humility or dependence (EX: Job)

God allows physical affliction in our lives to prove and improve our dependence upon Him.

--To teach us sympathy toward others

--To teach us the consequences of our sin

--To teach us the character of God

--To teach us which road to take and which to avoid

How does God chastise (discipline) His children?

--Through physical affliction (I Cor. 11:30)

--Through problematic people (even the heathen)

--Through emotional distress

--Through circumstantial troubles
(loss of job; financial hardship; trouble with spouse or kids)

--Through loss of joy

*** God has a good purpose in disciplining you!**
He disciplines for good reasons:

I.*The Lord disciplines you...*
TO SHOW HIS LOVE FOR YOU (v.6a)

When very adverse times come into our lives, we may be tempted to question God's love. "Maybe He is getting back at me," one might think.

But remember, "*Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ..."* (Rom. 8).

Love may confront, and love may rebuke, but love never ignores.

I'm glad God loves us enough to not allow us to ruin our lives by unrepentant sin. I'm thankful when He in love redirects our wayward steps, closes undesirable doors, grabs our attention, softens our hard hearts, slows our running in the wrong direction down to a stop, etc.

Someone who undeservedly is the beneficiary of time, effort, and attention for his own benefit, is someone who is loved.

In parenting, love disciplines. Hate ignores. (Prov. 13:24)

Rev. 3:19 - *"As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline"*

By faith, we believe that love is God's motive for chastening us.

II.*The Lord disciplines you...*
TO AFFIRM HIS <u>RELATIONSHIP</u> TO YOU (v.6b-8)

V. 6b

"Scourgeth" - to beat with a whip. God gives each of His wayward sons an old-fashioned "whipping."

The fact that ***"<u>sons</u>"*** of God need such correction proves that no Christian is perfect.

Discipline is <u>not</u> "punishment" (NOTE: poor translation in the NIV v. 6b).

Punishment involves retribution (pay back). Discipline is teaching. God punishes the wicked; He disciplines His children.

Spurgeon said, "The sword of justice no longer threatens us [because Christ was punished for our sins on the cross], but the rod of parental correction is still in use."

"Whom He receiveth" - the fact that God had to "receive" us as sons, proves that no one is a natural-born son of God. Rather, we must be received by Him as an <u>adopted</u> child.

V. 7

"Endure" - to patiently remain under the pressures and discomforts of the disciplinary process without squirming or running away.

"What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" - the writer says, show me a son who never gets chastened by his earthly father. In his day such was unheard of.

In our day, the question could be reversed: Show me a son who does get chastened. This failure to discipline our children is a prime cause for children failing to learn the consequences for their sin and for child rebellion to parents (II Tim. 3:2). God looked down the corridor of time and saw what the results would be of such neglect.

Take note: God's treatment of His children is an example of how we as fathers ought to manage and care for our children.

V. 8

If you are harboring a rebellious attitude or action and find you feel no guilt, if you find you can "get away with murder" and never get caught, etc. This is the worst predicament to be in -- to be able to live a lifestyle of disobedience and never get

reprimanded. Such means you are not a child of God. Our Father does not allow us to indefinitely drift to our own destruction.

I know of certain times when God dealt very personally and specifically, yet lovingly, with me.

ILLUS: the time God chastised me for pride and disrespect for parental authority (the bike injury July 4, 1978).

ILLUS: the time I wrecked my boss's van on Highway 90 in Wisconsin.

"Bastards" - illegitimate; to be the child of <u>another father</u> (Jn. 8:44).

You may feel like it, but you do not spank your neighbor's children.

It has been said, "God does not spank the devil's kids."

III.*The Lord disciplines you...*
TO PROVIDE HIS <u>BENEFITS</u> IN YOU (v.9-11)

A.Benefit # 1 -Abundant <u>Life</u> (v.9)

"Reverence" - respect.

Many children have no respect for their parents because their parents never taught them right from wrong and the consequences for deviant behavior.

Does your word carry weight? Do they know you will never bend on principle or waver on truth? Do they know that your warnings are not mere scarecrows? (follow through, if you say, Don't do that again or you'll get a spanking).

"Subjection" - submission; the reason god spanks us is when we refuse to submit. He, like any good parent, will discipline rebellion.

It does not mean God zaps us for every slip-up or mistake, but He does deal with us when He gives the word and we refuse to yield.

The result of learned discipline from ***"the fathers of our flesh"*** is reverence; but the result of learned discipline from ***"the Father of spirits"*** is life! Real life! Joyful life! Abundant life! Successful life! A prolonged life!

There is a "*sin unto death"* for those who don't yield to our Father's will.

B.Benefit # 2 - Godly holiness (v.10)

"A few days" - most parental spankings are completed by the ages of 5-7 years old.

"Their own pleasure" - Often a parent will chastise with inappropriate motives; i.e. to satisfy their own peace of mind and pride, but God does it for our ***"profit"*** (our advantage).

The goal is not ruin, but restoration; not bombardment, but betterment, not to massacre us but to mature us.

Earthly parents make mistakes; God, however, never makes mistakes. He knows exactly what type and how long to discipline.

God will not discipline us with more than we can handle (just as you don't swat a one-year-old with the same force as with a ten-year-old).

God's goal in chastising us is that we might share in His characteristic of holiness.

"Like Father/like son" is the goal. *"Be ye holy for I am holy."* He is sanctified and set apart from sin and profane things and He wants the same unique purity to shine forth out of his children's lives.

ILLUS: the crucible and the refining of gold (the heat stays on until the goldsmith sees his own reflection in the pure gold).

We are positionally holy; but we need practical sanctification, which is a continual process.

C.Benefit # 3 - Peaceable righteousness (v.11)

Never did a child says: "Dad, that spanking felt good." The disciplinary process is not joyous in itself.

Rather, it is ***"grievous"*** (painful and irritating).

"Discipline is not pleasant in the present."

"Afterward" - the outcome or finished product is what matters most.

Patience is needed; faith to anticipate a glorious outcome.

"Yieldeth" - pay back

The process is misery, but the product is marvelous.

God does not discipline us to ultimately hurt us but to heal us (an attacker and a surgeon both use knives. The difference is motive (intent) and manner. One to hurt, one to heal).

(ILLUS: Stephen's surgery and stitches)

Righteousness is noted as: ***"Peaceable"*** - in contrast to stubborn rebellion.

"Fruit" - in contrast to death.

When you do right, your life will demonstrate a peace the world does not know.

The key to a peaceful life is righteousness.

God wants to produce a life which conforms to His standards. A lifestyle which matches His truth.

God wants His kids to "turn out right."

"Exercised" - we derive "gymnasium" from this word; it refers to training through exercise; this is exactly what God's discipline is designed to do.

CONCLUSION:

1.What lessons has God been trying to teach you?

2.Have you learned yet, or do you have to go through the vicious cycle over and over?

3.Is there an area of submission you need to yield to Him today?

4.Is there a rebellious attitude or activity you need to repent of today?