

## The Discipline of the Lord 1

### A Forgotten Exhortation

Heb. 12:5-6

#### Introduction:

1. What is the discipline of the Lord referred to in this text?
2. How does God discipline those whom He loves? What can I expect from this Father who loves me?
3. These are just some of the questions to be given consideration as we begin this series entitled "The Discipline of the Lord."
4. In the series we will evaluate Heb. 10:32-12:13 in some detail considering the idea of discipline in the context of this section of material. We will look at the O.T. text in Prov. 3:11-12, quoted in vs. 5-6, and see how it fits here in Heb. 12. We will study the terms used and evaluate their usage in various N.T. contexts.
5. Our interest is not to just study discipline from an academic perspective but to learn of God's objectives and methods that we might respond appropriately and experience the benefits that He has planned for us.
6. In this introductory lesson I want to talk with you about the terms that are used so that we can conform our language and our understanding to the language and understanding of our Father.

#### Discussion:

- I. Generally, when we think of discipline we think of parents disciplining their children.
  - A. Often the form of discipline that we think of is punishment.
    1. Indeed the KJV and NKJV translate the Greek term in our text with the word "chastening." In English this word is defined "to punish to improve."
    2. While punishment may be included in the idea of the Greek term the term is actually much broader than that and punishment may not even be the primary idea. So, in this series we will use the term "discipline" as used in the NASB, the NIV and the ESV.
  - B. In the Greek (paideúō, verb; paideía, noun) primarily denotes the training of children, suggesting the broad idea of education.
    1. Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22).
    2. Paul was educated under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
    3. The grace of God instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires (Titus 2:12).
    4. This idea is evident in Heb. 12:11 in the "training" associated with "discipline."
  - C. But such discipline also involves "reproof" (Heb. 12:5) and "exhortation" (v. 5), correction with words of admonition. Heb. 12:6 says that our Father "scourges every son whom He receives." 1 Tim. 1:20 refers to Paul's having handed over to Satan two men, "so that they will be taught not to blaspheme." Cf. 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:5-7.
  - D. It is evident therefore that our heavenly Father is willing to go to whatever lengths are necessary for our training. Even to the point of letting us experience the consequences

of our sin at Satan's destructive hand so that we might come to our senses. Cf. Lk. 15:11ff and the account of the prodigal son.

- E. While such intense discipline is sometimes necessary, ideally the child will be responsive to the instruction and the more severe forms of discipline will be unnecessary (Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). But love for the child goes to great lengths to accomplish the appropriate training. (Do not misinterpret me here I am no advocate for child abuse. Our Father does not abuse us and we should not abuse our children. But He does take our training seriously and does allow us to experience consequences from which He hopes we learn.)
1. The Greek term is sometimes used of scourging (cf. Lk. 23:16, 22).
  2. This use is made by Pilate, of course, and should not necessarily be interpreted to reflect the kind of discipline that God would use, but God does go to severe lengths to train His children.

## II. Obvious in Heb. 12 we are considered God's children and He is our Father.

- A. This concept, of course, traces back to the O.T.  
Psa. 103:13 describes how God has removed our transgressions and treats us "as a father who has compassion on his children. So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. He knows our frame and is mindful that we are but dust."
- B. God calls us out of the world and into His family and says, "I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me" (2 Cor. 6:18).
- C. Even Gentile believers were said to be "of God's household" (Eph. 2:19).
- D. But Jesus radicalizes the nature of the relationship as he prioritizes it over the parent/child relationships of this life.
1. On one occasion when Jesus was speaking to the crowds, one said, Your mother and your brothers are seeking to speak with you. Jesus asked, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" Pointing out his disciples he said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt. 12:46ff).
  2. When his parents found him at age 12 in the temple he asked, "Did you not know that I had to be about My Father's business?" (Lk. 2:49).
  3. "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26).
  4. "I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. . . He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10:35, 37).
- E. Perhaps the same principle may be seen from Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22).
- F. This family relationship where God is our Father is radical.

## III. Let's not forget the exhortation. The relationship is serious and the discipline is serious.

- A. Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord.
- B. Do not faint when you are reproved by Him.
- C. He disciplines those whom He loves.

D. He scourges every son whom He receives.

Conclusion:

1. As we continue this study I think we are going to learn more about just how much the Father loves us.
2. We are going to learn even more about the great lengths that He is willing to go to to bring us to where He wants us to be.
3. We need to understand that He has our best interest at heart and instead of fainting when we are reproved, develop an endurance that will get us through it that we might experience the "peaceful fruit of righteousness."
4. We may even learn some things about parenting in the process.
5. This relationship with our heavenly Father is both radical and profound. Would you be ready this morning to commit yourself to it? It is not easy. But it does involve His not treating you as you deserve, but treating you with the compassion and forgiveness of a loving Father.