

## The Discipline of the Lord 3

### **Wisdom and Its Benefits**

Heb. 12:5b-6; Prov. 3:11-12

#### Introduction:

1. In two previous lessons we have considered Heb. 12 and the discipline of the Lord. Heb. 12 presents God as our loving Father who disciplines us for our good.
  - a. In our first study we learned that the discipline of Scripture is a broad concept—not just punitive, but instructive and also experiential. It involves reproof, correction, training and various experiences. We also learned that sometimes the discipline is severe. Our Father loves us so that He will go to radical efforts in order to bring us to the peace He wants us to have.
  - b. As noted last week discipline involves momentary sorrow and thus we must faithfully endure the hardship of discipline. We cannot grow weary and lose heart. In order to do this we must look past the momentary difficulty and see the reward that the discipline brings.
2. Heb. 12:5-6 quotes Prov. 3:11-12. In this study I want to go back to Proverbs, look at it in its context and then observe how the writer of Hebrews applies it to exhort us to receive discipline in a constructive way.

#### Discussion:

- I. This passage focuses on discipline as teaching, instruction in the Father's commandments (3:1-10).
  - A. "My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments."
    1. 1:1 identifies the book as "Proverbs of Solomon." Solomon is the father, but there is a subtle shift. By verse 11 the father's discipline is identified with the discipline of God.
    2. Solomon is teaching his son to accept the discipline of the Lord. The teaching originates with God, not Solomon.
  - B. Often we study Proverbs as parents teaching our children.
    1. I remember some valuable moments in a teenage class here when I read through the Book of Proverbs with the class.
    2. Some of my fondest experiences were when my son, Dan, and I were the only ones in the class.
    3. I highly recommend reading Proverbs with your children.
  - C. But we also need to read it not as parents, but as children.
    1. This is the application made in Heb. 12:5-6.
    2. Instead of looking through the lens of parenting look through the lens of being a child with God as your Father.
- II. There are benefits from the discipline of the Lord (Prov. 3).

- A. "Length of days and years of life" (2a, 16a).
- B. "Peace" (2b, 17b).
- C. "Favor and good repute" (understanding) (4).
- D. "Straight paths" (smooth road) (6).
- E. "Healing and refreshment" (8).
- F. "Barns filled" (10).
- G. "Profit more than silver and gold" (14).
- H. "Riches and honor" (16).
- I. "Pleasant ways" (17a).
- J. "Happiness" (18).
- K. "Life" (22). Cf. 1 Tim. 4:7-8.
- L. "Security" (23).
- M. "Not fearful" (24).
- N. "Sleep will be sweet" (24b).
- O. Freedom (26).
- P. "Intimacy with God" (32).
- Q. "Blessing" (33).
- R. "Grace" (34).
- S. "Honor" (35).
- T. Given these benefits why would one not want to follow this discipline?
  1. One might opt for the pleasure of sin instead of the benefits of discipline (cf. Heb. 11:25).
  2. One might be deceived by Satan, and/or ignorant of the benefits of the discipline and thus naively be taken in.
  3. One might just opt for the easy course rather than the unpleasant course of discipline.
  4. Whatever the reason, it is unreasonable to give up the benefits of the discipline of the Lord in exchange for the alternatives. Cf. 3:11-12.

### III. Prov. 3 associates discipline with the wisdom of God (the Father) (13ff).

- A. It begins with trusting in the Lord and not leaning on your own understanding (3:5-6).
  1. Jer. 10:23: "I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. Correct me, O Lord, but with justice; not with Your anger or You will bring me to nothing."
  2. God is not an ogre who is out to get us, but a Father who loves us. Not willing that we should perish, but that we should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). His discipline is for our good (Heb. 12:6-10).
  3. This is matter of grave significance. Are we trusting in the Lord or are we trusting in ourselves? If God says, "Tell the truth," and we reason, "It will be alright to lie under some circumstances," who are we trusting??? We are not disciplining ourselves by the wisdom of God.
- B. Prov. 3:3: "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them, on the tablet of your heart."
  1. That means if you find yourself in a tight spot tell the truth and allow the Lord work it out.

2. That's what I would tell Abraham who lied about Sarah being his sister. This is what I would tell Rahab who hid the spies.
  3. Is this not taught in Matt. 5:33-37.
- C. Prov. 3:9: "Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce."
1. This involves giving Him control.
  2. Covetousness is not part of the discipline (wisdom) of God (2 Cor. 9:5-11).
  3. It is hard for us to let go of the control and give our loving Father control, but is this not what faith is?
    - a. Those of Heb. 10:34 accepted joyfully the seizure of their property.
    - b. Moses in Heb. 11:26 considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.
    - c. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen, but promised by God.
- D. Prov. 3:27-28: "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,' when you have it with you."
- E. God's discipline says: "Do not devise harm (29). Do not contend (30). Do not envy the man of violence (31).
1. These prohibitions have to do with our relationships to others.
  2. Do not devise harm against (cut into) another. Do not contend in rivalry against another. "Do not envy the man of violence." All of these may have to do with our insecurity. Suspicion and distrust of others result in such actions. Cf. 1 Pet. 3:8-15.
  3. But the Lord provides security (23-26). Question is do we trust in His discipline????

Conclusion:

1. What have we learned?
2. Prov. 3 focuses on wise instruction given by a father (God) to his son (you and me). The benefits are enumerated in an attempt to persuade us to opt for these benefits rather than the consequences associated with foolishness.
3. The passage defines discipline as a faith issue. Do you really trust what your Father is telling you? I do not mean do you *assent* to the truth of what He says, but do you *trust* what He has said enough to place your confidence in it and do it?
4. Interesting thing about discipline—for the moment it seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, not pleasant, but painful. Faith demands that we endure the pain on the basis of what our Father has said and not our own assessments.
5. Sin is pleasurable but destroys. Righteousness is painful but results in joy.