The Discipline of the Lord 4

**Weak Hands, Feeble Knees**

Heb. 12:12

Introduction:

1. “I am never going to say that to my kids.” “I’m never going to discipline my kids the way I was disciplined.”

 a. Many of us have said things like this only to catch ourselves saying the same things that

 were said to us.

 b. Some of you may have experienced abuse at the hands of your parents and certainly

 you are committed to never perpetuating that on your children.

 c. But many of us were like I was when I returned home from college. I was absolutely

 amazed at just how much my parents had learned while I was gone.

2. There is always a certain level of mystery for children when they are disciplined.

 a. They do not understand the reason for the rules.

 b. If they violate the rules they often resent the consequences. Instead of appreciating

 reproof, correction or even punishment they become angry and sometimes rebellious.

3. Heb. 12 takes this under consideration. Verse 9 says, “We had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them.” Maybe we did not respect them so much at the time of the discipline, but we came to understand and then respected them.

4. The writer of Hebrews wants us to come to a similar understanding about God’s discipline of us. And so he admonishes us, “Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and scourges every son whom He receives.”

5. And then he adds in verse 12, “Strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.”

6. I want to talk with you for a few minutes about the fact that we must endure the discipline in order to find the healing that God wants us to have.

Discussion:

I. There is a need for healing.

 A. This may be the most important realization that we need to come to.

 1. Jer. 10:23 says, “A man’s way is not in himself. It is not in man who walks to direct

 his own steps.” Then there is an appeal to God, “Correct me, O Lord.”

 2. Often children do not recognize their need for correction and when it comes it is

 rejected. The Hebrew’s writer does not want his readers to be like that. He wants

 them to recognize their Father loves them and disciplines them for their good.

 B. I suppose there is always some mystery associated with discipline.

 1. It stems from our immaturity, our lack of understanding.

 2. We do not see the big picture.

 a. Parents see the consequences of misbehavior. Children cannot.

 b. The other night Cohen and Ella had be rough-housing on the living room floor.

 Cohen had crawled up on a chair and was standing on the seat when Ella

 promptly went over grabbed the back of his shirt and pulled him backward out of

 the chair. He rolled out on the floor. He could been hurt. She had little

 awareness.

II. We are struggling against sin (Heb. 12:1,4). It’s consequence is death.

 A. Our Father knows more about the seriousness of the situation than we do.

 1. He obviously considers it as **the** most serious matter. He sacrificed His son to save

 us from its consequence.

 2. He is serious about saving us and will do radical things that we might avoid the

 severity the situation.

 3. He not only sacrificed His son, but He scourges every son whom He receives.

 He will discipline us severely in order to save us.

 B. There are many warnings in Scripture about the consequences of sin.

 1. John the Baptist used powerful images to describe the consequences (Matt. 3:10ff).

 a. “The axe is laid at the root of the trees.”

 b. Referring to the coming Messiah he said, “He will baptize you with fire.”

 “He will clear His threshing floor, gather the wheat into the barn, but He will burn

 up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

 2. Jesus did the same.

 a. To the hypocrites among the scribes and Pharisees he said, “You brood of

 vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?” (Matt. 23:33).

 b. He described a rich man in torment, in agony in the flame, longing for Lazarus

 to dip his finger in water and cool off his tongue (Lk. 16:19ff).

 c. He described a place where “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Lk.

 13:28), “a place where the worm does not die.” He said it would be better to

 enter life crippled than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire.

 If your foot causes you to stumble cut it off, if your eye causes you to stumble

 throw it out” (Mk. 9:42ff).

 3. Paul is just as severe.

 a. “The wages of sin is death,” he says (Rom. 6:23).

 b. In 2 Thess. 1 he refers to the Lord’s return saying, “He will be revealed with

 His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not

 know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These

 will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord

 and from the glory of His power.”

 C. I suppose there is always some level of mystery about our being disciplined. Like

 children, we just cannot comprehend the severity of the circumstance.

 1. It demands that we trust our Father who does see and know. It is a matter of faith.

 2. Like children, we are prone to pass judgments on the one disciplining us.

 Heb. 12 says, “Don’t do it!” He is disciplining you for your good. He loves you!

III. The Hebrews writer would have us come to the same realization that the Psalmist came to in Psa. 119:67, 71.

 A. “Before I was afflicted (disciplined) I went astray, but now I keep Your word” (67).

 B. “It is good for me that I was afflicted (disciplined), that I may learn Your statutes” (71).

 C. Yes, all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those

 trained by it, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. (Heb. 12:11).

 D. I think Elihu (in the Book of Job) may have been more insightful than we give him

 credit.

 1. Job’s suffering was beyond comprehension.

 2. His three friends found no answer. Elihu was younger than they and waited to

 hear from those who were older. He confesses to being shy and afraid to speak,

 but he was angry with Job and angry with Job’s three friends.

 3. He was angry with Job for complaining against God and calling on God to give an

 account of Himself.

 4. Read Job 33:14-18.

 a. He says God speaks and no one notices it.

 b. He sees God as keeping man from pride, keeping him back from the pit and

 his life from passing over into Sheol (death).

 5. Read Job 33:19ff.

 a. He recognizes God chastening is severe.

 b. But he recognizes that God is saving men from the pit.

 c. For 6 chapters Elihu speaks. He rebukes any that would say, I have borne

 chastisement. I will not offend anymore. I will not do it again. Shall God

 recompense you on your terms? (34:31-33).

 6. It is out of this context that God comes to question Job and then Job realizes

 that he has said too much. He doesn’t understand everything, but he resigns

 himself to God’s care.

 7. God rebukes Job’s three friends (42:7ff), but not Elihu.

Conclusion:

1. We do not understand everything about God’s discipline.

2. It takes us to difficult places and challenges us in severe ways.

3. But the message is endure it. He loves you and is keeping you out of the pit. Weak hands, feeble knees and limbs that are lame must be strengthened lest they experience a worse fate.

4. Healing is found on the other side of the discipline of the Lord.