

Hebrews 5:14

Painful Preparation

We train our senses by the practice of use. We learn to see by seeing, learn to hear by hearing, learn to feel by feeling... you get the idea.

Spiritually, it is the same thing. We are constantly growing according to the grace that is in us and by using what has been given, it is strengthened, trained and sharpened. But there are some things that we need to understand about the process.

Much of the work can be painful, for we are deeply and intimately attached to our old natures, our flesh and our old habits. The replacement of them with new understanding requires the excising of the old that is harmful to us. This process is never easy and seldom without pain. But it IS worth the cost, for a life of righteousness is always to be preferred over a life of foolish and selfish emptiness. Abiding in Christ is the height of joy and peace, but the death of the flesh, which is a required corollary, is perhaps the most difficult thing we face in this life... it is more important than anything it costs and yet we often shrink back from

its needed work out of fear and doubt. This is why it is so wonderful and important that we realize that God is the One who is always at work sanctifying us for His glory.

I. SANCTIFICATION BY GRACE –

Titus 2.11-15

We are sanctified by grace. That is the bottom line of it all, nothing that we do apart from the grace of God can change us in any way that helps. The only thing that teaches us through any of our lives or actions is the grace of God that shows us truth and lets us see...

II. INTERNAL EXAMINATION –

Our part begins here. Having a clear and undistorted view of who you really are is where salvation began, (begins) and also where our ongoing sanctification and growth begins. We are very good at self-deception...

a. Self inspection –

Luke 6.39-45

remove the plank

b. Self evaluation - for the value of your works –

Galatians 6.1-5

c. Self examination - am I saved?

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV)

5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

III. CAREFUL AIM –

Be Warned that we can train ourselves for evil
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2 Peter 2.12-17

we need to be on our guard for many of the wrong practices that strengthen us in wicked ways are either natural to us, enjoyable in the flesh or both. It is important that while we are examining ourselves, we are keeping our mind and heart stayed on the true target

- a. Avoid undue attention to and imitation of evil practices –

Deuteronomy 18.9-14

- b. Avoid those who walk in a manner unworthy of Christ –

Romans 16.17-20

- c. Avoid those who walk in anger

Proverbs 22:24–25 (NKJV)

24 Make no friendship with an angry man,
And with a furious man do not go, 25 Lest
you learn his ways And set a snare for your
soul.

d. Guard the tongue - it defiles much!

James 3.1-12

i. Keep watch over your tongue, it guides and steers your life.

1Peter 3.8-12

ii. Be careful how you speak to and about one another

Proverbs 12:18 (NKJV)

18 There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health.

iii. It is a weapon of great damage –

Psalm 64.1-4

iv. God will judge those who use it harmfully –

Psalm 52.1-5

IV. CHASTENING

This is the active discipline of the Lord for sin and correction. Chastening is almost always connected directly to our actions and when it comes it is no mystery to us why God has brought it into our lives. We know our sin, we know the depths of our own failures and we know the needed correction. But sometimes the chastening of the Lord takes time to sink into our heads and hearts. So there are times when the chastening takes time to bring its full fruit to bear...

Hebrews 12:11 (NKJV)

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Chastening of the Lord, Peaceable fruit of righteousness

1 Timothy 1:19–20 (NKJV)

19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Torment by Satan, trains us to cease active rebellion. God does not take rebellion from His children lightly, and we can be delivered into the hands of the enemy if we stubbornly refuse to repent.

V. AFFLICTION –

Unlike chastening, affliction is less connected to our actions and more connected to needed surgery of our souls.

Psalm 119.67-71

God uses circumstances, difficulties, loss and sorrows to:

- a. shape our character,
- b. to hone our hungers
- c. to realign our affections
- d. to generate and ignite passions