

DISCIPLINE – BELIEVERS’ RESPONSE

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Scripture: Hebrews 12:5-17

Context: Christian Jewish believers faced persecution because of their faith in Christ. The author’s chief purpose in writing this letter was to exhort Christians to be steadfast under trial and to hold fast to the faith.

Discipline: The Lord’s Work

- The Lord disciplines His beloved children through pain and suffering with the goal of having them share in His holiness.

Discipline: Our Response

John Piper: The engagement of God’s power never takes the place of the engagement of our will! The power of God in sanctification never makes us passive... The evidence of God’s power in our lives is not the absence of our willing, but the strength of our willing, the joy of our willing.

God’s work of sanctification:

- Is not making us passive to trials and temptations.
- It is training us how to respond to trials and temptations.
 - Our **responses/reactions to afflictions speak** about our growth and maturity, not our knowledge, skills, age, position, and experiences.
 - God utilizes afflictions to refine and fortify our faith, build resilience in the face of frustrations, master moods amid discouraging situations, gain control over impulses, cultivate contentment, and develop empathy for the afflicted.

1. ENDURE

Hebrews 12:5, And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, **do not regard lightly** the discipline of the Lord, **nor be weary** when reproved by him. **6** For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Citation from Proverbs 3:11-12, “My son, **do not despise** the LORD’S discipline **or be weary** of his reproof, for the LORD reproofs him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”

Two negative responses:

- i. Taking it lightly or casually or ignoring it. (a sign of arrogance and rebellion)
- ii. Weary or discouraged or feel insecure. (a sign of unbelief)

Biblical response:

[7] It is for discipline [training in holiness] that **you have to endure**.

[9] Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them. Shall we not **much more be subject [submit]** to the Father of spirits and live?

Believe that...

- God is in control.
- God is loving.
- God is wise.

Biblical reasons:

Note: Pain has the power to make us more emotional and less rational.

- **It's like when a child feels only the sting and pain of the needle during a doctor's injection, without grasping the following healing process.**

Quote: Difficulties are a remedy for those who **think** and a tragedy for those who **feel**.

- i. God is treating you as sons.
- ii. You may share in God’s holiness.

If you take God’s discipline lightly or become weary:

- i. You won’t enjoy God’s fatherly love (he is treating them as sons)
- ii. You won’t share in God’s holiness and grow in spiritual maturity.

Romans 5:3, Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, **knowing that suffering produces endurance**, 4 and **endurance produces character**, and character produces hope...

Note: Suffering does not produce character. **It is endurance under suffering that produces character.**

- Many who suffer do not grow in godly character because of a lack of biblical response. ALL PRAYERS WILL BE IN VAIN WITHOUT ENDURANCE.

2. STRENGTHEN

Hebrews 12:12, Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, [13] and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

Therefore: Based on previous discussion...

Condition: They seem to be battered by afflictions.

Command: “Lift your drooping hands” and “Strengthen your weak knees”

Isaiah 35:3, “Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.”

Observe: God gives us strength, but we must also strengthen ourselves with the strength God provides. We cannot be passive.

Imagery: Physiological imagery is connected to athletic imagery.

What happens when you run the race? Drooping hands (hanging down in a loose or downward position) and weak knees (hurting knees).

Command: “Lift your drooping hands” and “Strengthen your weak knees”

In modern coaching terms, “Straighten up! Get those hands and feet up!

[13] and make straight paths for your feet—order your ways aright.

13b, “so that what is lame may not be put out of joint...”

What happens if your joints are dislocated? You will be out of the race.

F. F. Bruce: Deal with spiritual weariness and injuries so that they don't put you out of the race!

Note: It's hard to deal with emotional weariness.

12b, “so that what is lame may not be put out of joint **but rather be healed.**” When you go through pain and suffering, strengthen yourself in the Lord and cultivate endurance. Don't give up. Don't turn back. Press on to the finishing line.

Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones: Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are **listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?**... The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: ‘Why art thou cast down’– what business have you to be disquieted?... ‘Hope thou in God’.

1 Samuel 30:6, And **David was greatly distressed**, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. **BUT David strengthened himself** in the LORD his God. **[Is there BUT in your distress?]**