

## Hebrews 12:4-11

**Intro:** The author of Hebrews is writing to Jewish people that are being persecuted for leaving Judaism. Much of that persecution was from friends and family who resented the fact that they had turned their backs on their religious customs and traditions in which they had been raised. Even the unbelieving Jews that were associated with the Church were suffering - Heb 10:32-33. The suffering had been mostly social and economic pressure, but some had been imprisoned - 10:34. Due to the pressure, those that had associated were thinking about returning to Judaism, those that were believers may have been tempted to include some of the rituals of the Old Covenant to relieve the pressure. Why was God letting this happen? In what were they putting their hope?

The last part of chapter 11 prepares the foundation for 12:4-11. Heb 11:36-37 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They had suffered and had not received the promises, but their hope was in the Lord and His promises, their eyes were fixed on the prize. They were pleasing to God b/c of faith - Heb 11:39.

The only way one endures this kind of hardship is to look beyond oneself or any temporary satisfaction one might find in this world - Heb 12:1-3. The author reminds them that they "have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin" - Heb 12:4. The key word in our passage is disciple - *paideia* - tutorage, i.e. education or training; instruction that trains, disciplinary correction:-- chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture, developing someone to reach full maturity. The author changes the figure of speech from a race to a familial relationship. Though the Christian life can be compared to running, working, fighting, and enduring, it is also made up of relationships, especially the one with our Heavenly Father.

## XXXIV. The Discipline of God - vs 4-11

## A. The Purposes of Discipline

## 1. Punishment

## a. A result of our sin

- i. is not punitive, but corrective
- ii. is not to be confused with God's judgment, condemnation

## b. Examples

## i. David with his sin of adultery

- what he did was a king's prerogative in the surrounding nations
- God's people do not have the prerogative of unbelievers and God was correcting this in David's life
- David's sin did not cost him his salvation
  - loss of infant son
  - years of anguish over troubles with Amnon and Absalom
  - would not experience peace in his life
  - didn't get to build the Temple

## ii. The Church at Corinth

- very immature and carnal
- problems with the Lord's table, getting drunk and not caring for others
- 1Co 11:30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

## c. God's Disciplinary Correction

- i. Ps 89:30-32 "If his sons forsake My law And do not walk in My

judgments, If they break My statutes And do not keep My commandments, Then I will punish their transgression with the rod, And their iniquity with stripes.

ii. Ps 89:33-34 Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, Nor allow My faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.

## 2. Prevention

a. As we put limits on our children to keep them safe from harm, fences, don't play in the street, etc. God does the same

b. Paul in 2 Cor 12:7 - And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

i. sent to protect his spiritual well being

ii. Was used to make him better

- pleaded for relief - 2Co 12:8

- God said no - 2Co 12:9

- God provided Grace for strength - 2Co 12:9

- Paul rejoices in weakness - 2Co 12:10

## 3. Education

a. Discipline can help us know God power and sufficiency

b. When we learn best

i. When things are going well, we have the tendency to feel satisfied and self-sufficient or independent

ii. When we suffer, we become more aware of our need for God

- Job knew that his suffering was not due to sin

- accepted the suffering only after learning God is supremely great and marvelous - 42:3, 5-6

- his suffering seems unfair, but he gained a majestic view of God

- he also learn sympathy for others - 42:10 he LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends.

c. James 1

i. Trials produce patients - vs 3

ii. Trials cause us to look to God for wisdom - vs 5

iii. Trials show us the goodness of God - vs 17

iv. Trials show us what is in our hearts - vs 19-21

## B. Forgetting God's Word - vs 5

1. We have good forgetters

a. we usually do not need new revelation from God

b. we need to remember the revelation that we already have

2. Things that NT Jews forgot about the OT

a. Man cannot be righteous on their own merit

i. Job 25:4 How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

ii. Ps 130:3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

b. Faith was the only way to please God

i. De 32:20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, ..... children in whom is no faith.

ii. Hab 2:4 Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith

- c. Suffering for God's sake was not new,
  - i. they forgot the teaching of Pr 3:11-12
  - ii. you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:
  - iii. "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,

#### C. Dangers in Discipline - vs 5b-c

##### 1. Taking it Lightly

- a. We cannot learn if we do not understand
  - i. our problems are what is bringing discipline
  - ii. And how God uses discipline to show us those problems - Jas 1:19-21
- b. the verse is not talking about the problem being taken lightly, but the discipline
  - i. our focus is mostly on the problem
  - ii. our focus should be on what God is trying to show us through the discipline
- c. How do we take it lightly
  - i. become callous to God and His word, don't recognize His working in things
  - ii. Complaining,
    - remember all complaining is against God
    - it is the result of unbelief, a lack of trust in God
  - iii. Questioning
    - like complaining, it shows a lack of trust
    - usually not looking for an answer as much as challenging His goodness in what He is doing
  - iv. When we recognize His discipline as discipline
    - we can still question the severity or timing of that discipline
    - again makes our understanding of the situation as better than God's
  - v. Carelessness, we don't care about
    - what purpose God has in the discipline
    - how we may profit from it

##### 2. Fainting

- a. some get so caught up with the problem that they
  - i. want to give up, get despondent, get depressed
  - ii. become spiritually unresponsive to what God is doing
- b. Ps 42:11 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

#### D. Proofs in Discipline - vs 6-8

##### 1. Discipline Proves God's Love - vs 6a

- a. For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
- b. God's attributes of being good and love, He is bound to do good to His children
  - i. by His own nature
  - ii. by His covenant
- c. God does not discipline willy-nilly
  - i. La 3:31-33 For the Lord will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, Yet He will show compassion According to the multitude of His mercies. For He does not afflict willingly, Nor grieve the children of men.
  - ii. Isa 63:9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old.

## 2. Discipline Proves Our Sonship - vs 6b-8

- a. all men are subject to God's punishment - Ro 3:23; 6:23; only His children receive discipline b/c of love -
- b. God is motivated by love, but is also obligated to discipline
  - i. being His children, it is His responsibility
  - ii. Being in a covenant relationship with Him also puts the responsibility on Him - Isa 54:10
- c. we know we are sons by
  - i. His leading - Ro 8:14
  - ii. His witness to us - Ro 8:15-16
  - iii. b/c He says so - Jo 1:12
  - iv. His discipline, He scourges every son whom He receives."
    - it is inclusive - He scourges every son
    - it is exclusive - whom He receives - Jo 2:23-25
- d. *mastigoo* - to flog or whip:--scourge.
  - i. common Jewish practice - Mt 10:17; 23:34
  - ii. God's discipline can be painful and severe at times
- e. for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?
- f. if you are without chastening, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

## E. The Results of Discipline - vs 9-11

1. the two products of discipline are closely related to the threefold purpose of discipline

### 2. Life - vs 9

- a. respect for human fathers
  - i. may come about by fear of the person or the consequences
  - ii. Ultimately, the child learns that discipline was good for them
  - iii. The parent that always gives the child what they want does not get respect
- b. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?
  - i. should not be resentful resignation
    - Paul speaks of some sleeping - 1 Co 11:30
    - John speaks of a sin unto death-1 Jo 5:16
    - James indicates death as a result of not learning - Jas 1:21
  - ii. Being in willing subjection to the Father of Spirits indicates
    - understanding of one's place in the relationship
    - the desire for the good that God wants for them - Jo 10:10
    - protection from falling - Ps 119:165

### 2. Holiness - vs 10-11

- a. God calls us to holiness (1 Pe 1:16), being perfect, His discipline is perfect
  - i. human fathers discipline for a few days as seemed best to them
  - ii. parents make mistakes in discipline
- b. God disciplines
  - i. for our profit
  - ii. that we may be partakers of His holiness
- c. Discipline is not meant to be pleasant
  - i. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful;
  - ii. It is worth it when you see what you gain from it- afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness
  - iii. If you will learn from it - to those who have been trained by it.