

Lesson 3: *The Discipline of God: What It Is and What It Is NOT*

I. What is the Discipline of God? Hebrews 12:5-11

A. *Considering Context*

1. Throughout Hebrews, the author corrected them for their unbelief.
2. In Hebrews 11 the author gave positive examples for them to follow of those who did believe in God.
3. Now, he is telling them to receive the correction from God that he, the author, has been giving them.

**Hebrews 12:5-11**

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; <sup>6</sup> For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” <sup>7</sup> It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup> But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? <sup>10</sup> For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share (partake of) His (own) holiness. <sup>11</sup> All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

B. *Word Studies*

1. **Discipline/chasten(paideia)**

tutorage, that is, education or training; by implication disciplinary correction: - chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture.

It comes from the word paideuō which means to train up a child, that is, educate, chasten, instruct, learn, teach, nurture.

2. **Reprove (elegcho)**

To confute (to prove a person to be wrong by argument), admonish: - convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, reprove.

a. God corrects our beliefs (Galatians)

b. And our behavior (1 Corinthians)

3. **Scourge (mastigoo)**

To flog, to strike repeatedly

**John 19:1**

**Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him.**

C. *Examining the Word “Scourge”*

1. The author of Hebrews is quoting Proverbs 3:12.

Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, Even as a father <u>corrects</u> the son in whom he delights.”	Hebrews 12:6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He <u>scourges</u> every son whom He receives.”
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2. The early Christian fathers, such as Clement, believed that book of Hebrews was originally written in Hebrew and then later translated into Greek.
  - a. *The Hebrew word for “scourge” is bicar.*
  - b. *Andrew Farley believes that the Hebrew version of the book of Hebrews used the word bicarret .*
  - c. *Bicarret means to “deeply inquire into”.*
  - d. *This would make more sense in context of a parent correcting a child.*
3. Farley reasons that there is no record of parents whipping their children to the point of death as being a practice of parents at that time. It would be illegal to scourge a child then, as it is in all civilized cultures today.
4. Thus, the more likely translation would be closer to the Proverbs reference; that is, that God disciplines us, but this is in the form of correction and teaching, not inflicting us with physical harm.

**D. Examples of Discipline/Reproof**

1. **Correction of Behavior—Peter by Paul: Galatians 2:12-14**  
*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned...<sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”*
2. **Correction of Beliefs—Apollon by Priscilla and Aquila: Acts 18:24-26**  
*Now a Jew named Apollon, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.<sup>25</sup> This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;<sup>26</sup> and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*

**II. WHAT THE DISCIPLINE OF GOD IS NOT**

**A. Persecution is NOT Discipline**

1. **Definition of PERSECUTE**  
 To harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict; specifically : to cause to suffer because of belief
  - a. *Persecution comes from forces OPPOSED TO GOD, not from God.*
2. **We don’t need persecution to perfect us from sin. The blood of Jesus has forever perfected us when it comes to sin.**  
*Hebrews 10:14-18*

For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. <sup>17</sup> “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” <sup>18</sup> Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

**3. The blood of Jesus, not our blood, continually cleanses us of ALL sin.**

**1 John 1:7**

*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

**4. We have been made holy, blameless, and beyond reproach in His sight by the blood of Jesus as a GIFT.**

**Colossians 1:21-22**

*And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.*

**5. NEWS FLASH!!! Persecution does not come because we are desiring to sin. It comes because WE ARE DESIRING TO LIVE GODLY.**

**2 Timothy 3:10-12**

*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, <sup>11</sup> persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. <sup>12</sup> Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

**John 15:18-22**

*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. <sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.*

**B. We Have an Enemy**

1. In addition to the world hating us because of our belief in Jesus, we need to remember that we have another enemy who seeks to keep us from declaring the good news that will set people free from his domain.

**John 10:10**

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*

2. Resist Him Steadfastly

**1 Peter 5:8-11**

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup> **Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.** <sup>10</sup> But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. <sup>11</sup> To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

**C. Tribulation is NOT Discipline**

1. Tribulations are what we overcome.

**John 16:33**

*“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”*

**2. Tribulations work for our good.**

**Romans 5:3-6**

*And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.<sup>5</sup> Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

**3. Tribulation is what can happen on our way to doing God’s will.**

**a. The Macedonian Call**

*Paul was called by God in a vision to go to Macedonia to “help” the believers there. On his way he was faced with trouble after trouble. He could have questioned the call of God thinking these tribulations meant He was out of God’s will, but He wasn’t.*

**b. As a prisoner, Paul found himself on a perilous ship ride on which he could have died.**

**Acts 27:20**

*Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.*

**c. While still a prisoner, Paul was bitten by a venomous snake. The natives were sure that “fate” had caught up with him and he would soon die, but Paul just shook the snake off and nothing happened to him.**

**Acts 28:3**

*But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.*

**D. Discipline is NOT Trials/Testing**

**1. God doesn’t purify us with fire. His blood did that. Our faith is proven with fire.**

**1 Peter 1:6-7**

*In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,<sup>7</sup> so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

**2. Consider Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**

**a. Their faith was already strong. The fire that they faced PROVED their faith.**

**b. Our faith is tried—proven, not to make it strong or to “remove impurities”, but to show it IS strong.**

**c. God knows what our faith can handle. We don’t have to worry that our faith will be tried beyond what we can bear. We can also know that God will provide a way of escape.**

**1 Corinthians 10:14 Mounce**

*No trial has overtaken you that is not distinctively human; and God is faithful; he will not let you be tested beyond what you can bear, but with the trial will also provide the way through, so that you will be able to endure it.*

**E. Discipline is NOT Sickness**

**1. Jesus was SCOURGED so that we could be healed!!!**

*1 Peter 2:24*

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness. By his wounds you were healed.*

**2. Jesus healed ALL who came to Him.**

**3. He made NO ONE sick to teach them a lesson or purify them.**

**F. God DELIVERS us out of Persecutions, Tribulations, and Trials**

**1. Paul wrote that the Lord delivered Him. He meant that He survived them after having endured them.**

*2 Timothy 3:11*

*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, <sup>11</sup>persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.*

**G. Discipline from God is NOT the Consequences of our Own Foolish Behavior**

**1. Getting a parking ticket for illegally parking**

**2. Getting sick from substance abuse**

**3. Getting an STD from immorality**

**4. Collapsing from working too hard**

**5. Etcetera...**

**III. Judgment Begins at the House of God**

*1 Peter 4:17*

*For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

**A. Some commentators believed that this verse was speaking of a pending judgment being foretold, that of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Adam Clark wrote, “The Christians, though with difficulty, did escape, every man; but not one of the Jews escaped, whether found in Jerusalem or elsewhere.”**

**B. Our “judgment” is not the same as the world’s “judgment”.**

*1 Corinthians 11:32*

*But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.*

**1. Jesus said that those who believe in Him would not come into judgment.**

**2. Our “judgment” is discipline.**

**3. The world’s judgment is condemnation.**

**IV. God is for Us NOT Against us**

*Romans 8:31-34*

*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; <sup>34</sup> who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup> Who will separate us from the love*

## Toward a Better Understanding of Judgment and Discipline

of Christ? <sup>36</sup> Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>37</sup> But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

- A. God's discipline teaches.
- B. Persecution, trials, and tribulation try to separate us from God's love, or perhaps we could say, to separate us from knowing we are loved by God.
- C. We overwhelmingly conquer through Him.
- D. Be Convinced of His Love

*Romans 8:38-39*

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

V. Rejoice if You Are Disciplined

- A. Remember discipline is NOT persecution, tribulation, and trials.
- B. Discipline is God correcting us about our beliefs or our actions either in our spirits or through another believer.
- C. REJOICE
  - 1. It means you are God's child.
  - 2. It means He loves you.
  - 3. It means He is guiding you.
  - 4. It means things are going to change.
    - a. *Answers to "situations"*
    - b. *Peaceable fruit of righteousness*
    - c. *Faith to receive His promises*

If you would like to continue your study on this topic,

please see our lessons on Hebrews 12 available on our website.

[www.graceandfaithministries.org/toward-a-better-understanding-of-hebrews](http://www.graceandfaithministries.org/toward-a-better-understanding-of-hebrews)