

THE PURPOSE—AND PROFIT—OF BEING CHASTENED BY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Similar to Mother's Day, Father's Day stirs up a **variety of emotions**, dependent upon what kind of **father** you had. For some, it's **just another day**. Why? Because they **don't even know who** their father is!

For others, Father's Day conjures up all kinds of **unpleasant** memories. They **know** who their father **is**—or **was**—but wish they **hadn't** because of the abuse he inflicted upon them!

And then there are those who have **pleasant** memories because they had good fathers, fathers who were present in their lives...and protected them...and provided for them...and taught them—and even punished them when they needed it!

Studies have shown that the kind of father you had does impact your view of God. Does that mean if you had a **"bad dad"**—or **no** dad—that you are forever stuck in having that **same view** of God? Not at all! Why? Because our view of God should be **based** on the Word of God—not on our earthly fathers!

On the flip side, does that mean earthly fathers are "off the hook" and **don't have to try** living a godly life? No; I'm not saying that either! God's desire—and command—is for **all His children** to be holy—not just mothers and fathers!

Some of you might remember that I said during the intro to my Mother's Day sermon that I have this **unexplainable urge** to **encourage** mothers on Mother's Day—but **"beat up"** the fathers on Father's Day! The Lord led otherwise, though, and we are instead going to be looking at **God as our Father**, specifically how He **disciplines** us.

Please take your Bibles and turn to Hebrews 12 and follow along as I read verses 5-11.

First, let's notice ... **1. A pointed reminder (vs 5)**

We see that in vs 5 "And ye have forgotten..." Sounds like Peter, doesn't it, **reminding them** of things they already knew—but had forgotten! It's **not Peter**, though—and we are not really sure **who the author** of Hebrews is!

The writer does another thing that we notice Peter doing in our study of the book of Acts—he reminds them what it says in the OT by quoting verses from it! Where was the author of Hebrews quoting from? Notice on your outline **Proverbs 3:11-12** "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction: ¹²For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

I'm not going to take the time to analyze the differences, but I did want to at least give it to you. So what did the writer of Hebrews want them to remember?

A. Not to despise the chastening of the Lord

We see that in the middle of vs 5 "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord..." Don't esteem lightly...don't make light of...don't hold in low esteem...don't disregard, the chastening of the Lord.

But what does "the chastening of the Lord" mean? We need to take the time to define "chastening" because we can see a form of it in six of the seven verses I just read. The only verse that "chasten" **does not appear** in is verse 9. But...the word "corrected" in verse 9 actually comes from the root of the same Greek word that chastened...and chasteneth...and chastening...and chastisement comes from!

Each of those words have for a root the Greek word "pahee-di'-ah"—which primarily has to do with the **training and education of children**. It involves correction...and... discipline... and guidance...and instruction...and reproof...and punishment.

The Greeks emphasized more of the **education and training** aspect; the Jewish people emphasized **corrective punishment** more. The goal was to train the mind to make appropriate choices by correcting mistakes and keeping their desires—and emotions—"in check."

The same reminder that was given to the **original readers** of this book is now given to us.

We are not to despise the correction...and instruction...and rebuke...and trials that God sends our way to “grow us up.” Let’s not forget that God is more concerned for our **holiness** than He is for our happiness. We’ll see that later in this passage.

A second reminder is this: B. Not to faint over the rebuke of the Lord

Faint means “to grow weary” and exhausted to the point of fainting. It means to “throw in the towel” and give up. It’s used only 5 times in the Greek NT but one we might be familiar with is **Galatians 6:9** “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we **faint not**.”

Difficulties and hardships and trials will come—those are all things God brings into our lives to grow us. Don’t despise **them**—or Him—when that happens; and don’t quit when they come!

Why? Because of what God says about chastening! We see that in verses 6-8.

2. The proclamation regarding chastening (vss 6-8)

What does God say about chastening? We already know—based on the word itself—that God corrects us and disciplines us to **grow us** but notice what else it says.

A. Chastening is a proof of love (vs 6)

Vs 6 “For whom the Lord **loveth** He chasteneth...”

Do we **believe** that? Do we believe that when God **corrects** us—and brings difficulties into our life—that it is because He **loves** us? We often consider it the **opposite**, don’t we? ‘God hates me—that’s why He is bringing difficulty into my life.’ Instead, our thoughts should be something like this: “Wow; the God of the universe **loves me** enough to not only look upon me and **think about** me—but to be **involved** in my life!”

Notice what else it says in vs 6: “...and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

What does “scourge” mean? It literally means to flog—to whip—a person that is strapped to a pole. Of the 7 times it is used, 4 refer to the whipping that Jesus endured. Does God “whip” every child of His?

Not literally—as in strapped to a pole and whipped. But—figuratively—God does **send pain** into our lives—and sometimes it is quite severe!

One person put it like this: “As in the Lord’s dealing with Job, *God’s purifying love is all-wise* when we experience temporal suffering. Hence, it always works for our *greater eternal gain* as we live in faith (Ro 8:18-25,38). For example, God authorized an incredible amount of earthly pain (bringing *heavenly gain*) in the lives of Jeremiah and John the Baptist.” (HELPS Word studies; biblehub.com/Greek/3146).

Next notice that... B. Chastening is a proof of sonship (vss 7-8)

We see that in both verse 7 and verse 8. God—through the writer of Hebrews—says it twice!

--Vs 7. “If ye endure chastening”—if you experience difficulties and hardship and training and trials—“God dealeth with you as with sons...” In other words, you know you are a son of God if God is doing things in your life to grow you!

--In the middle of vs 7 we have this question: “for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

What’s the implication? There aren’t any sons that aren’t chastened by their father! We’ve sure gotten away from that as a society, haven’t we?

--Vs 8. “But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers...” There’s the thought again—stated from the opposite side. If you **aren’t chastened**—if you **aren’t corrected** by God—it is because you are **not** a child of His. You are an illegitimate child—not a child of God!

Notice again the emphasis on all of God’s children are chastened: “...whereof all are partakers...”

Pretty hard to miss the point. Verse 7 can be boiled down to this: “chastening equals sonship;” verse 8 to this: “No chastening equals no sonship.”

3. The properness of chastening (vs 9)

Why is it “proper” to be chastened by God? Notice what it says in vs 9 (read). “Fathers of our flesh” refer, of course, to our **earthly** fathers. As mentioned before, “corrected” comes from the root of the same Greek

word that “chastened” comes from. “Reverence” carries the idea of **respect**. We don’t **worship** our earthly fathers, but we certainly should **honor and respect** them. So the argument being made is this: since we were corrected by our earthly fathers—if we had a good one—and we still respected **them**, shouldn’t we have the same desire to be in subjection—to obey—our heavenly Father? The answer, of course, is...yes; we should!

“Fathers of spirits” refers to God He is our **spiritual** father, not our **earthly** one. He is also the Creator of our souls—the immaterial part of us that lives on after our physical body dies.

So in what sense do we “live” if we are in subjection to our heavenly Father? Two thoughts:

1) We need to obey what God says in order to have **eternal life**. Am I suggesting that if we obey God and keep His commandments that we will get to heaven? Not at all! The Bible is unmistakably clear about that!

Romans 3:20 “Therefore by the **deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified** in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Romans 3:28 “Therefore we conclude that a man is **justified by faith without the deeds** of the law.”

Galatians 2:16 “Knowing that a man is **not justified by the works of the law**, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and **not by the works of the law**: for **by the works of the law shall no flesh** be justified.”

Obedying God’s commandments does not “qualify” us for heaven because we can’t perfectly obey them! But...we can’t make up our own way to get to heaven—we need to submit to God’s way!

What is God’s way? Through His Son Jesus Christ!

John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” **John 5:12** “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

John 1:12 “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:”

So to have eternal life and gain access to God’s heaven, we need to be in subjection to His way of getting there! But there is a **second sense** in which being in **submission** to the Father brings life and it is this:

2) We need to obey God in order to have an **abundant life**. Jesus said in John 10:10 “... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it **more abundantly**.”

Does every child of God have a **joy-filled** life? No; they don’t! Why? Because they are living a disobedient life! Notice the verses I have for you on your outline.

John 15:10-11 “If ye **keep my commandments**, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love. ¹¹These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that **your joy might be full**.”

--When is our joy full? When we abide in the love of the Father.

--How do we abide in the love of the Father—and the love of the Son? By obeying what Jesus said! Simply put, your sense—your awareness—of being loved does not happen when you are **being disobedient**.

Not only that, Jesus—after washing the disciples’ feet and telling them He had given them an example—said in John 13:17 “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

Stated another way, an abundant, joy-filled life comes from obeying the Father—not from disobeying Him! We know that in our heads—but are so slow to put it into practice in our lives!

4. The pronounced purpose for chastening (vss 10-11)

So what is the **purpose** of chastening? Why does God do it? What are the benefits of it? What does chastening produce?

A. It is for our profit

Vs 10 “For they”—our earthly fathers—“verily for a few days chastened us after their **own pleasure**...” Does that mean our fathers “got their jollies” out of inflicting pain on us? No; that’s not what is meant. The word “pleasure” comes from the Greek word “dok-eh’-o” and means “to think; to have an opinion.”

The idea, then, is that our earthly fathers—many of them, anyway—chastened us in the way that seemed **good to them**. Did they always get it right? Obviously not—**just like me and the other fathers** in here didn’t always get it right! Sometimes we disciplined the **wrong way**—like out of anger.

And sometimes we disciplined for the **wrong reason!** But God can't discipline the wrong way—or for the wrong reason—because **He is perfect!** His discipline is **always for our good**; it is always profitable; it is always in our best interests! **If God** could discipline in the wrong way, He would not be perfect! We may not always like His way—verse 11 says it is grievous, not joyous—but it is never wrong!

Psalms 18:30 “As for God, His way is perfect:” How our faith needs to hang onto that truth!

B. It produces holiness and the peaceable fruit of righteousness

We see that in the last half of vs 10 “...that we might be partakers of His holiness”—and the middle of vs 11. I'm lumping them both together because they are more similar than they are different.

In vs 10, we have the proof that God's priority is for us to be holy. He brings chastening into our lives so that we might be a partaker of **His** holiness—which is true holiness. Is there a **false** holiness? There is, isn't there? Jesus “got after” the Pharisees more than once because they were all about the **outward appearance**—but their hearts were far from Him.

So what does it mean to be a partaker of His holiness. Does it mean we will become **totally sin-free** like God is? Yes—but **not until** we get to heaven! What it means now, though, is that we will become more and more like Him. We will be more and more separated from sin—and more and more separated unto Him!

How does chastening—in a practical way—enable us to become more holy?

First, **a disclaimer**. I did not “have this in the crockpot” as long as I would have liked to so I'm sure there is more that could be said than what I'm going to share with you. Here are some ways I've seen this work out in my own life, though.

1) First, chastening should cause us to look **inward**. Is God trying to get my attention about something? Is there a sin I'm hanging onto that He wants me to repent of? If so, that is what I need to do. Along the same line, I need to determine if there is something I'm **not doing** that He wants me to do. There are two kinds of sins—commission and omission. Sins of **commission** are what we do that we shouldn't; sins of **omission** are what we don't do that we should.

2) Second, chastening should cause us to look **upward**. God is God—and I am not. His ways are not our ways—and His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways and thoughts are higher—and we need to trust that He has good reasons for doing what He is doing. Whatever He is doing is perfect—and for our profit. We must have a stubborn faith to believe that.

I read something in a devotional not too long ago that really drove this point home. Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side—and the great storm came while they were doing what He said! Their faith wavered but it shouldn't have. Why? Because He said, “Let us go to the other side—not to the middle of the lake to be drowned!” (Streams in the Desert; Volume 1; June 3rd).

3) Third, chastening should cause us to look **outward**. Sometimes we are so focused on ourselves and what we are going through that we fail to notice or think about what others are going through. The trial you are going through may be **designed to help you be an encourager** to someone else. But if you are only looking at you, you won't see “the someone” else. Not only that, we can always find someone who has it worse than us!

And as we strive to look at what God is doing in our life through these three lenses, I believe there will be the fruit of both peace and righteousness in our hearts.

Lastly, **5. Chastening is not permanent! (vs 11)**

Vs 11 “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward...” Chastening...difficulty...hardships...trials—whatever you want to call them—may be present in the present—but they will be non-existent in the future!

Years ago I remember reading about a man who asked his friend what his favorite Bible **verse** was. He said he didn't have one—but he did have a favorite **phrase**. “What was that, the one asked the other?” His response: “and it came to pass.” Not sure that the man was using that phrase the way the Bible uses it, but you can't argue with the truth behind it—difficulties and hardships and trials will end someday.

Romans 8:18 “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

II Corinthians 4:16-18 “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

So what would God have us do in light of His Word this morning?

1. First, make sure you are a child of God! Don’t put off asking Jesus to be your Savior if He is not your Savior right now. We don’t know what a day may bring forth! Karen did not know that on Friday she would get a call that her Mom had passed away!

2. Second—if you are indeed a child of God—be honest about how you view trials in your life! If you are grumbling and complaining, you need to stop—and ask God for forgiveness. You also need to ask Him to help you have the right view—that He is doing it for your good and His glory!

Don’t despise the chastening of the Lord—and don’t quit striving to live for Him when trials come!