

The Chastening of the Lord

Sunday, October 10, 2021
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Hebrews 12:5-7 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Proverbs 3:11-12 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Deuteronomy 8:5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Psalms 119:75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

Jeremiah 10:23-24 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

- I. Most people seem to have a wrong, or at least incomplete concept of what chastening means.
 - A. The first thing that comes to mind when we hear the word “chasten” is punishment, and we think of spanking or scourging, or some kind of pain.

Strong's - tutorage, education or training; disciplinary correction: instruction, nurture.

Websters 1828 - CHASTENING, n. punishment for the purpose of reclaiming.

- B. The Scripture here strongly likens God's chastening to that of a father with his children.
- C. We are told in verse 10 that earthly fathers sometimes chasten their children “after their own pleasure” but God always does it for our own good that we might be partakers of his holiness.
 - 1. Earthly fathers may chasten their children for THEIR own benefit rather than the child's.
- D. The chastening of the Lord is always in love and always designed to bring us to a closer walk with God and a heart, mind, soul, and spirit that are more conformed to himself – that we might be partakers of his holiness.
- E. Physical pain is the only way to correct bad behavior in a small child who is yet unable to understand good and evil.
- F. So chastening certainly includes punishment by pain and affliction, but it is more than just a sentence given in response to bad behavior to maintain justice.
- G. God's chastening of his children is designed with the long look in view, and administered in such a way as to make us more like Him.

- II. God treats those who are saved as his children.
 - A. If they wander He will chasten.
 - B. He will send affliction and hardship into their lives.
 - 1. To stop their pride and stubbornness.
 - 2. To cause them to realize they need help from a source greater than themselves.
 - C. However, we must always keep in mind that the chastening of the Lord is not always to punish for wrong.
 - 1. Rather, it is correction, to guide back into the right way.
 - 2. So we are in no position to judge whether another person's troubles and hardships are God punishing them or not.
 - 3. Rather, we are to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

- III. We should not regard the chastening of the Lord as a small matter.
 - A. The fact that afflictions come from God ought to be enough for us to take special notice.
 - B. When entering into afflictions and hardships we ought to search ourselves and find the reason God has sent them into our life.
 - 1. What is He trying to teach me?
 - 2. Am I doing that He does not approve of?
 - 3. Which way am I going that He is attempting to alter?
 - C. When do we "despise" the chastening of the Lord? (v. 5)
 - 1. When we treat it with unconcern.
 - 2. When we resist it.
 - 3. When we are unaffected by it.
 - 4. When we fail to realize that it is from God himself.
 - 5. When we treat it as if it were of no intelligent design – just chance, or bad luck.
 - 6. When we receive it with contempt, and blame God for not making our life comfortable and pleasant, and charge God foolishly, as if He is mistreating us, or allowing things upon us that we don't deserve.

- IV. We should not faint when we are rebuked of Him.
 - A. Being rebuked means to be told and shown plainly that you are wrong.
 - 1. You have done, or are doing something wrong.
 - 2. Or you are heading in the wrong direction.
 - 3. Rebuke is not an argument, it is just a plain, stated fact that leaves no room for argument – you are left without an answer.
 - B. Being rebuked by an earthly father or master sometimes causes us to be discouraged and faint.
 - 1. Just want to give up and quit trying.
 - 2. Always the excuse is, "He's just impossible to please!"
 - C. Being rebuked by the Lord is evidence that you are one of His children, and He is concerned about you and what you are doing.
 - D. His rebuke should not defeat us, but instead should build us up.
 - E. God's design when He rebukes us is not to discourage us and make us quit.
 - 1. If we faint at his rebuke the problem is with us – not with God.
 - F. If you can do as you please and God never rebukes you, it is evidence that you are NOT one of his children (v. 8) and so it should give us assurance that we are his.