

Endurance and Discipline (Hebrews 12:4–11)

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Introduction

1. What is expected of the New Covenant believer?
 - a. We are to *lay aside* whatever does not contribute to the race (12:1).
 - b. We are to run with *endurance* the race—our earthly Christian life (12:1).
 - c. We are to run this race because Old Covenant saints who passed before us depend on us (11:40).
 - d. We are to run this race, *looking to Jesus* and His marathon, *considering* Him and His response, in light of our own response (12:2, 3).
 - e. We are to endure in this race because this is God’s way of dealing with His children—*discipline* (12:4, 5; Pro. 3:11, 12; Job 5:17).
2. Why is discipline important?
 - a. “*For child-training you have to endure because God is dealing with you as sons*” (v. 7).
 - b. Discipline (*paideia*, meaning to train children) is not penal but how a loving father trains his children.
 - c. Thus, the one who endures is being trained because he is God’s child.
 - d. It is not an option for believers but a necessary process—being made perfect—in our *sanctification* (11:40).

C. H. Spurgeon quotes Edward Payson (1783-1827): “I have been all my life like a child whose father wishes to fix his undivided attention. At first the child runs about the room, but his father ties up his feet. He then plays with his hands until they likewise are tied. Thus he continues to do, till he is completely tied up. Then, when he can do nothing else, he will attend to his father. Just so has God been dealing with me, to induce me to place my happiness in him alone. But I blindly continued to look for it here, and God has kept cutting off one source of enjoyment after another, till I find that I can do without them all and yet enjoy more happiness than ever in my life before.”

I. The Problem (v. 5)

1. The floundering believers had *forgotten* something—God’s exhorting His sons in the faith through the Word.
2. What caused this failure?
 - a. They were not taking seriously the Lord’s disciplinary process.
 - b. Because of not taking the discipline seriously, they were fainting (*ekluo*, “to have one’s strength relaxed”).

II. The Principle (v. 6)

1. Child-training is the fruit of God’s love for His children (Prov. 13:24; 29:17).
2. Child-training involves two things:

- a. Instruction from God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Prov. 1:8, 9; 4:1–4)
- b. Correction when instruction is not heeded (Prov. 15:10, 32; 22:15; 13:24)

III. The Process (vv. 7–9)

1. Discipline is the work of God who is treating the disciplined as sons (v. 7).
 - a. Discipline is a natural and expected process (v. 7b).
 - b. Discipline involves every true son (v. 8).
2. Discipline anticipates an expected response—*respect* and *subjection* (willing submission to the will of the Father, v. 9).

IV. The Purpose (v. 10)

1. Discipline in the natural family setting was important, if not perfect.
 - a. It was for a few days only; at adulthood child-training ceased whether the objective was accomplished or not.
 - b. Nevertheless, it was deemed good to our earthly fathers, no matter what the outcome.
2. Discipline by the Father is perfectly realized.
 - a. It is always to the advantage of His children.
 - b. It makes them partakers of His holiness.

V. The Product (v. 11)

1. All discipline will involve temporal pain.
2. Nevertheless, the dividends of discipline are great, both temporally and eternally.
 - a. The inward fruit of discipline is *peace*—bringing the son into a harmonious relationship to the Father and the blessing of inward peace of conscience.
 - b. The outward fruit of discipline is *righteousness*—right conduct before God and before the world.

Application

1. We need to understand how God deals with His children so that we may understand why trials and difficulties come to us. In this way we will not doubt or question God's will and ways.
2. We need to examine ourselves honestly as to whether we are truly sons, especially if things go well with us or, if not, how we respond to the difficulties.
3. We must submit ourselves to the Father of spirits and live.