

"The Chastening of God"

Hebrews 12:5-24

Part 3

Introduction: When we ended our study last week we stopped at the end of Hebrews 12:6.

Notice Hebrews 12:6

In this verse we looked at how God's chastening is always done in love. I will remind you that the word "chasten" does not just pertain to discipline because of sin. It is a word that speaks of God's education for His children. This week in my reading I came across something very interesting about the word. The word "chasten" is from the Latin words "chaste" and "pure". So the idea is that as God chastens His children it is for the purpose of "purifying" us. The main point for us to keep in mind is when the Bible speaks of chastening it is NOT limited to discipline because of sin but it takes in every trial and storm within our lives which God uses to move us on toward spiritual maturity. Let us notice a clear picture of how God chastens His children.

Deuteronomy 8:1-

All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

² And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

³ And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

⁴ Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

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

⁶ Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

⁷ For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

Here we see that God constantly worked with the Nation of Israel as they wandered through the wilderness. They were under His CHASTENING all the time and He was in control of every situation which they faced. It is exactly the very same way within our lives.

Let us now get back to our study of Hebrews.

Notice Hebrews 12:7

"If ye endure chastening" - We must keep in mind this letter is written to a group of Hebrews who had placed their faith in Jesus Christ and for that reason they were being persecuted. There were also those who may have "professed" faith and were also feeling the heat of the persecution but they were not saved. They were mixed in with the TRUE church but they had never repented of their sins and placed their faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus said this would happen.

Matthew 13:24-26

²⁴ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

²⁶ But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

Hebrews 12:7 is a test for everyone who reads this letter. The writer tells them and us that **IF** we endure chastening God dealeth with us as sons. The idea here is that enduring the trials and the tests of life are the signs of a TRUE saving faith.

Isaiah 28:16

¹⁶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

This verse speaks of the coming of Jesus Christ and we need to notice what Isaiah writes at the end of the verse. Notice the words of Matthew Henry on *"he that believeth shall not make haste"*.

"And he that believes these promises, and rests upon them, shall not make haste, shall not run to and fro in a hurry, as men at their wits' end, shall not be shifting hither and thither for his own safety, nor be driven to his feet by any terrors, as the wicked man is said to be (Job 18:11), but with a fixed heart shall quietly wait the event, saying, Welcome the will of God. He shall not make haste in his expectations, so as to anticipate the time set in the divine counsels, but, though it tarry, will wait the appointed hour, knowing that he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. He that believes will not make more haste than good speed, but be satisfied that God's time is the best time, and wait with patience for it."

This is the very idea in Hebrews 12:7. The TRUE believer will endure the trials and the storms of life. We may not understand what God is doing and the pain may be very intense but the TRUE believer will trust God with the trial and he or she will face it with faith. Notice the words of an unknown writer:

"By enduring or remaining under the disciplining hand of God, we permit Him to mold us into His image. If we try to short-circuit His dealings with us, He may have to teach us over a longer period of time, using more instructive, and consequently, more difficult methods. There are grades in the school of God, and promotion comes only when we have learned our lessons."

Notice Hebrews 12:7 again.

The writer asks a question at the end of the verse to stir our minds. The writer knows that any father who has a child and cares for that child will do everything he can to see they are trained and educated.

Notice Hebrews 12:8

Here is a very important contrast. The one who "professes" to be saved but never experiences any chastening is not a child of God, but is an illegitimate child. John Phillips puts it this way, "Christianity may be their mother but God is certainly not their Father!" Now let me explain the thought here. Let us remember chastening is God working in our lives through many different situations to make us pure and holy. Unbelievers experience the same kind of storms and difficulties which we who are believers experience but there

is a major difference. The storms and the trials in the believer's life are used by God to refine us and to make us more like Jesus Christ. Therefore the verses in Romans 8 apply to our lives.

Romans 8:28-29, 35-37

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

No matter what comes into our lives we are more than conquerors in EVERY trial because God uses EVERY situation to refine us. Unbelievers CANNOT claim these verses. But for us who know Jesus the trials and the storms pull us closer to God and they build our endurance and our hope because we see the hand of God within our lives.

Now let me get you back to the verse again. What the writer is saying to these Hebrews is, "If you are not being changed more into the image of Christ in what you are facing and if you are not growing in the midst of these storms then there is a problem and the problem may be that you are not saved because this persecution you are facing is a workshop which God has permitted in your lives for the purpose of refining you."

Let us keep in mind again that there was wheat mixed in with the tares. There were those who professed to be saved but were not, just like today.

I want to take a moment and point out something very important here. One of the strongest proofs of TRUE saving faith is the chastening and the scourging of God when a believer gets involved in sin. If you are truly saved there is absolutely no way God will permit you to go out and live in sin. A believer may fall into sin but God will never let His children live in that situation without chastening and scourging. Let me show you the words of David concerning his sin.

Psalm 32:1-5

✓ **David's Relief**

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

² *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

✓ **David's Chastening**

³ *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

⁴ *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*

✓ **David's Repentance and Confession**

⁵ *I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

David was a miserable man for over a year while he kept this sin within himself. God would not allow David to rest until this matter was settled. Let me show you another example of God's scourging of His children.

Jonah 1:1-5, 7, 10-12

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

² *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*

³ *But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

⁴ *But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.*

⁵ *Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.*

⁷ And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

¹⁰ Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him. Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

¹¹ Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.

¹² And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

Jonah sinned against God and God began to chasten him. Even when the storm was sent Jonah refused to repent but the man was completely miserable. He became so emotionally distraught that he did not care if he lived or he died. He knew the storm was because he was outside the will of God. The point is God will NOT allow His children to get away with sin.

Numbers 32:23

²³ But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

Let me show you one more passage which will affirm Hebrews 12:8.

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The word "narrow" here is very significant. The meaning has the idea of compressing grapes and also the idea of being afflicted. Here then is the point. The GATE to eternal life is STRAIT which means it is narrow in the sense that we must enter with nothing in our hands. Then the WAY or the PATH we walk as believers is NARROW which means it is a PATH with tight boundaries and when we step off it becomes a PATH OF AFFLICTION.

Conclusion:

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The words of the Psalmist make it very clear that god chastens His children and He will not allow us to stay off the NARROW WAY.

Psalm 119:67-68, 71, 75

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

⁶⁸ Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

⁷¹ It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

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