

"The Chastening of God"

Hebrews 12:5-24

Part 6

Introduction: In our study of Hebrews we have been looking closely at the Words of the writer concerning the Chastening of God in the life of the believer. Chastening comes into the lives of everyone of God's children.

Proverbs 13:24

²⁴ He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes [early].

In order to understand and to grasp the verse which we have come to in this study we must consider what the writer has written concerning the subject so far.

1. The chastening of God in our lives is for our profit. **(Hebrews 12:10)**
2. Chastening always flows from the love of the Father. It is never from His anger or His wrath. **(Hebrews 12:6)**
3. Chastening is evidence that we are the children of God. **(Hebrews 12:7-8)**
4. When we are chastened by God we are to submit to what He has permitted to come into our lives. **(Hebrews 12:9)**
5. Surrender to God's chastening leads to the Abundant Life in Christ. **(Hebrews 12:9)**

Last week in our study we looked at 5 points of profit which we gain when we have the proper attitude toward the chastening of God.

- a. **Chastening detaches us from the world.**
- b. **Chastening drives us to God.**
- c. **Chastening brings the promises of God into focus.**
- d. **Chastening equips us to minister to others.**
- e. **Chasten is used by God to bring us to spiritual maturity.**

Now with all of this considered there are always going to be negative responses to the trials and the storms of this life which are part of the chastening of God. There is no child that ever looks forward to discipline from his father. There is no athlete that ever looks forward to pushing himself to the point of collapse in training. We all desire a smooth pain free life with very little anxiety and stress. So when the times of chastening come it is easy to read the section we are in and to learn the facts about chastening but it is another thing to surrender.

I am sure that the Hebrews who received this letter were thinking, "Yes, we understand what you are saying about the chastening of God and how you say it is for our profit, but it is still very painful and very difficult to face! And if we had our way we would certainly choose another path!"

This brings us to where we are tonight in our study.

I. The Paradox of Chastening

Notice Hebrews 12:11a

There's no chastening in this life which SEEMS to be joyous. The idea here is that when we are in the midst of the chastening it is very difficult to see the profit which will result from the storms which we are facing. It is sometimes difficult to see through the pain, the hurt, the mistreatment from others, the loneliness, the heartache, or the criticism from others.

Let me stop here for a moment and share with you comfort for the times of chastening. Let us remember that when our Lord walked the face of this earth He too faced the storms and the trials of this life.

Hebrews 2:10, 17-18

¹⁰ *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

¹⁷ *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

¹⁸ *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.*

Jesus was made perfect through the sufferings which he faced as He walked the earth and this means He was made perfect in experience. Because of the suffering which he experienced He can now relate to what we face in the trials of life. He therefore can "succor" us when we are in the times of trials and tests. The word "succor" means "to come to the aid of the one who is hurting".

Let us now get back to the verse.

Notice Hebrews 12:11a again.

There is a valuable lesson here for all of us to see in the first part of this verse.

Application:

"When we face the trials and the storms of this life our flesh will always judge the chastening in the light of the present."

It is very difficult for us to see the benefits of the chastening when we are in the midst of the storm. The light of the PRESENT is often never bright enough to see the benefits which shall come after the storm. When we are facing the storm we are entirely too close to gain the proper perspective of how God is working. If we stop[and we think over the past experiences in our lives we can NOW see the grace of God and often we can see the benefits of what our Heavenly Father permitted us to go through. I want to walk you through a few days in Jacob's life to help us to see how his vision was also distorted in the light of the PRESENT.

The first scene is when Jacob was showed the coat of many colors which belonged to Joseph after Joseph's brothers had sold him and dipped his coat on the blood of the goat.

Genesis 37:31-35

³¹ *And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;*

³² *And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.*

³³ *And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.*

³⁴ *And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.*

³⁵ *And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.*

Then in Genesis 42 when Joseph's brother came to Egypt to buy corn Joseph kept Simeon and told them to return back to their father and bring Benjamin and he would then set them all free. When they took this message back to Jacob his spirit was crushed. Let us notice how he responded.

Genesis 42:36

³⁶ *And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.*

Jacob could see absolutely nothing beyond the PRESENT circumstances. He had no idea how the dreams, which Joseph had, were all unfolding and that God was about to bring him into a life of abundance and joy.

This pain and sorrow was all brought on by the sinful actions of Jacob's own sons and how they had treated Joseph but in this entire story we can glean comfort for our lives and that comfort is: **"God can use even the darkest of situations to accomplish His will within our lives."** So as we face the trials and the storms and the times of darkness in this life we can therefore claim the Words of Romans 8.

Romans 8:31-32, 35, 37

³¹ *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

³² *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

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

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

Here in verse 35 Paul tells us that NOTHING can separate us from the LOVE OF CHRIST and that means NOT EVEN trials because all chastening flows from God's LOVE.

Notice Hebrews 12:11b

The word "nevertheless" here is so very important. The writer is telling his readers that NO MATTER what the chastening looks like and NO MATTER how dark the clouds are

which are swirling around us there WILL be a profit for the one who is EXERCISED thereby.

The word "exercised" here is very important to understand. It is the very word which we get the word "gymnastics" from. It has the idea of an athlete stripping off all that would entangle him so that he would not be hindered in his training. So the chastening of God must be permitted (as we surrender) to "exercise/strip us of that which hinders our strength and growth. This then causes me to raise a question: "What is it that is to be stripped away?"

I believe the list can include many things. We are to be stripped of PRIDE, SELFISHNESS, UNFORGIVENESS, THE SPIRIT OF REVENGE, BITTERNESS and the list goes on and on.

This though actually runs parallel with 12:1 which says, *"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."*

Sometimes we struggle to lay aside that which entangles us so God allows the chastening to assist us in getting certain things stripped away.

Notice Hebrews 12:11 again.

When we surrender and when we are exercised by the chastening then the promise here is there will be the peaceable fruit of righteousness AFTERWARD. When we are surrendered to the will and the ways of God for our lives we can be sure that as the storms and the trials come there will be following them righteousness in our lives. In other words the chastening will be used to make us more like our Lord and the result of this will be peace within the heart.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

⁷ *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

I. **The Application**

Notice Hebrews 12:12

The word "wherefore" here looks back over what the writer has just explained. That would be chastening flows from God's love, it is for our profit, and it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness when surrendered to. So based upon this Truth the writer exhorts his readers to lift (strengthen) the hands which hang down and to strengthen the feeble knees.

What is he talking about here?

Notice Hebrews 12:1

Here in this verse the writer exhorted his readers to run the race with patience/endurance. In Hebrews 12:12 the writer is still thinking about running the race. When a runner gets tired and weary it shows in his body language. His hands will begin to fall lower along his side and his legs will become wobbly.

Notice Hebrews 12:12 again.

It is very important here to notice the writer does not say to lift you YOUR hands or to strengthen YOUR knees though that thought is implied here but he does not say it that way. In the next verse he will make it personal when he tells them to make straight paths for YOUR feet. But here he lets the word YOUR out. The question is, "WHY?"

It is because your hands and your legs and my hands and my legs are all part of the body of Christ. So when you are tired and weary and your hands hang down and your legs become wobbly and you are about to faint it is the responsibility of all believers to come along beside you and encourage you to not quit. Let me refresh your mind on what we had looked at a while back.

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

²⁵ *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

The word "exhort" here means "to come along side to give instruction or comfort".

So it is our responsibility to help one another in this race we are in.

Notice Hebrews 12:13a

Here the writer is still thinking about running the race. When he tells his readers to make straight paths for their feet he is telling them to remain in that appointed lane.

If you have ever been to a track meet you know that each runner in certain races is assigned a lane. He or she MUST stay in that lane. If they get outside of their lane 2 things will happen.

1. They can interfere with another runner and cause them to stumble and fall.
2. They themselves will be disqualified.

Both of these apply to the Christian race.

1. If we step outside the lane (the will of God) we can cause someone who is watching us to stumble and fall into sin which is a very serious offense.

1 Corinthians 8:9-13

⁹ *But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.*

¹⁰ *For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;*

¹¹ *And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?*

¹² *But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*

¹³ *Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*

2. If we step outside the appointed lane (the will of God) we can be disqualified from service.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27

²⁵ *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

²⁶ *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

²⁷ *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*