

Those Whom the Lord Loves

Hebrews 12:5-6

*And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons; "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM. FOR **THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES** HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES" (vs. 5-6).*

I. Every problem, heartache and trial in your life is a *lesson* in the classroom of God's instruction.

Everyone wants to enjoy a life of blessing, delight and comfort; the good life. God grants this to us. However, there are times in the wrestling match of faith when we experience trials and problems.

A. Scripture teaches us that God controls both the good and the bad in our lives.

"And you have forgotten" could be translated "Have you forgotten?" The Hebrews were very familiar with the Scriptures and the common theme is that God is in control of every event of life. To summarize what Scripture teaches, the author of Hebrews uses a *prosopopoeia* (vs. 5b-6). The words in "ALL CAPS" are Wisdom personified; a summary of the teaching of the Scriptures.

B. So, every affliction in your life is "of the Lord."

Get your head around this. They may not be "from the Lord," but they are "of the Lord." This means that God designs every affliction for your good. There are no exceptions to this rule.

1. God disciplines you through them (KJV "chastise") - *"the discipline of the Lord."*

Many who read this get the wrong visual image of God whipping them like their dads. This word in classical Greek (500 BC to Christ) simply means to *instruct and to educate*.

2. God reproves you through them (KJV "rebuke") - *to bring a person to the acknowledgment of a fault, so that person is convinced, like David when rebuked by Nathan (2 Sam 12:13).*

3. God scourges you through them - most believe this word, scourge, is used as a synonym for the word discipline. There are times when the lesson is hard and the teacher must be stern.

II. Not the absence of problems, but your attitude toward them, determines the course of your life.

"My son, do not regard lightly (KJV "despise not") the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when reproved." Thomas Brooks writes in his book, *The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod*, that a Christian named Munster lay sick in bed and friends asked him how he was and how he felt. Munster pointed to His sores and ulcers and said, "*These are God's gems and jewels with which He decks His best friends and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world!*" How is this possible?

A. Those whom the Lord loves He teaches. What are you learning in the midst of your struggles?

"It was good for me to be afflicted!" (Ps 119:71). "How happy the one God teaches" (Job 5:17).

B. Those whom the Lord loves always receive tender care. The Teacher is tender; the lesson not.

Lawns which we would keep in the best condition are very frequently mown; the grass scarcely any respite from the scythe. Out in the meadows there is no such repeated cutting; they are mown but once or twice in the year. Even thus the nearer we are to God, and the more regard He has for us, often the more frequent will be our adversities (Charles Spurgeon).

III. You can never go wrong praying that you might know more and grow more in your affliction.

Nothing wrong with praying that God removes circumstances that are painful; but He may not! God never wastes a sorrow, never shortens a lesson, and never lets us out before the proper time. In Ephesians, Paul gives us two great prayers: (1) *A prayer of knowing* God better (Eph. 1:18-23); (2) *A prayer of growing* in God's love (Eph. 3:14-21). Not once did he pray to be released from jail. "I bow my knees and pray ..." Paul wrote. You can't really chain the person who knows how to pray.