

Answers in Affliction

Hebrews 12:11

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

We have seen in our study of Hebrews that the early Christians were Hebrews and suffered for their faith. Hebrews 12:1-10 reveals to us that all events in our lives, even our afflictions, are teaching times.

I. Wisdom and patience during your trial are more valuable than gold and silver.

Look at the first phrase: “All discipline for the moment *seems* (to us) not to be joyful, but sorrowful.” Have you ever thought something seemed right, only to discover it’s wrong? What *seems* sorrowful? The word “sorrowful” translates the Greek word *lupus* – grief that arises from disturbing irritations. When we get panicked because we see difficulties arising in our lives, we must remember that:

A. Not everything is as it seems.

All affliction *seems* sorrowful. Disruption in life feels grievous. It is emotionally constricting to us. The sorrow we feel is real. The grief that overcomes us is genuine. The feelings are legitimate.

B. Sorrow comes to us in the moment of affliction.

This is human. This is why Paul says, “We sorrow not as others” but we do sorrow (1 Thess. 4:13). This is where wisdom and patience comes in. This is where we need to take a deep breath and ask God what it is He is teaching us. We are in His classroom. He is lovingly instructing us.

C. Wisdom and patience allow you to look beyond the moment and your feelings.

Wisdom is *the ability to see life through God’s perspective*. It’s seeing the game as the coach. Patience is *accepting a difficulty as from God without giving Him a deadline to remove it*.

II. The training you need in your trial is to think of your trials in different terms.

All that flesh and blood can discover of *the quality of affliction* is its outward superficial appearance. The Spirit of God can help you discover the quality of affliction by seeing beyond the present time.

A. You don’t train for what comes naturally.

If you wish to live according to your momentary feelings and stay down with grief—do nothing. Training is work. It is not to please God, He is already pleased. It is work to change your thinking.

B. You have to train yourself to see beyond your sorrow.

“Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2).

1. God is present in my affliction, working things out for good (Rom. 8:28).
2. My life is better because of the affliction, or my affliction would be gone (Gen. 50:20).
3. It is normal to feel, but I will live my life based on my faith, not my feelings.

III. The end result of thinking of your afflictions differently is peaceful righteousness.

This righteousness is not the righteousness you receive from Christ (imputed righteousness). This *peaceful righteousness* is a theological way of saying “living your life right and feeling at peace.”

A. This is a *fruit* of truthful thinking.

If you have no peace in your problems, you have no truth in your trials. The peace which passes all understanding and fills your mind is the product of training yourself to think differently.

B. This is a *fruit* of tender timing.

“Afterwards.” Be patient with others. Sometimes it is best to give a hug and be quiet. There will come a time for truth, but the truth produces the fruit of peaceful righteousness *afterwards*.