

God's Discipline

Hebrews 12:3-11
June 3, 2007

What is God's Discipline?

1. Why am I suffering?

The Suffering of the Hebrews

"³²But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, ³³partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. ³⁴For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one." (Heb. 10:32-34)

What is God's Discipline?

1. Why am I suffering?
2. What is discipline?
3. Is God like my earthly father?

How Does God Discipline Us?

1. The Purpose of God's Discipline
 - Correction

God speaks through our pain

"God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." (C. S. Lewis)

How Does God Discipline Us?

1. The Purpose of God's Discipline
 - Correction
 - Prevention
 - Education

God's goal is our character

"Many would rather have a benevolent grandfather in heaven whose prime interest is our contentment than have a Father whose prime interest is our character."

[C. S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain*, pp. 40-41]

How Does God Discipline Us?

1. The Purpose of God's Discipline
2. The Means of God's Discipline
 - Our own mistakes and sins
 - The mistakes and sins of others
 - God's providential dealings

How Does God Discipline Us?

1. The Purpose of God's Discipline
2. The Means of God's Discipline
3. Discerning the Purpose of Suffering

Discerning the Purpose of Suffering

- The problem of discernment
- Not all suffering is a lesson from God
- Discipline takes place in the context of a relationship
- We must listen to see if God is speaking to us through suffering

Hearing God's Music

"We too in the Christian community can turn a deaf ear to this language of God, this pain language, or at best strain to hear God's message through our difficulties, especially when they come at the hands of unfair and hurtful people. We weep at our emotional loss, our bitter sense of rejection and being misunderstood. . . ."

Hearing God's Music

"Our pain deafens us to God's music playing in the background, music that seeks to teach us to sing joyfully of what God can do *in* us, even while others seek to do harm *to* us. But we must ask him to discipline our ears to hear, to help us rouse ourselves to readiness for receiving what he wishes to teach us through our painful experiences." (George Guthrie)

Responding to God's Discipline?

1. Wrong Responses
 - "So what?"
 - "It's not fair!"
 - "I'm gonna die!"

Responding to God's Discipline?

1. Wrong Responses
2. The Right Response

The Right Response to God's Discipline

- "I am a child of God!"
- "I respect God's right to deal with me however He chooses."

Job's Example

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." (Job 1:21)

The Right Response to God's Discipline

- "I am a child of God!"
- "I respect God's right to deal with me however He chooses."
- "I will draw close to God and see if He is speaking to me through this situation"
- "This isn't much fun right now, but I'll be better because of it!"

God's Discipline

Hebrews 12:3-11
June 3, 2007

Additional Information

© 2007 Kenneth P. Carlson

Presented at Chinese for Christ Church in
Berkeley, CA

Sermon audio can be found on the church
web site at <http://cfcberkeley.org/english/>
(look under Equipping Ministry/Sermons)