

Receiving God's Discipline

Hebrews 12:4-11

If you are a parent, you probably know that your child needs some training, right? There is simply no perfect child. All of them will misbehave at some point. And so, part of a parent's role is to bring loving discipline into a child's life . . . for that child's good. Today's passage tells us that God is a heavenly Father who disciplines us because He loves us and wants us to grow up and have all the advantages of holiness. Discipline is never fun. But it is necessary . . . for our good.

Opening Question: How were you disciplined when you were growing up?

Read Hebrews 12:4-11

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What do we learn about ourselves in this passage?
3. What does this passage teach about God's discipline?
4. Read Proverbs 3:11, 12 and Psalm 94:12; 119:67, 75. What added insights do these passages give us about the Lord's discipline and its role in our lives?
5. What is the connection between endurance (a central theme in Hebrews) and God's discipline (v. 7)?

Steve said:

When we are experiencing some type of suffering/pain, we need to be careful to ask the right question. Actually I don't think there are any wrong questions; but we need to realize that God isn't committed to answering every question. We tend to ask questions like, "Why did this happen to me?" or "God, why didn't you stop this from happening to me?" or "Did God or Satan bring this suffering into my life?" Those are legitimate questions, but today's passage suggests that the **main** question we should be asking is, "Father, what are you trying to teach me through my suffering?"

6. How might it be helpful to learn to ask the question, "Father, what are you trying to teach me through my suffering?" rather than some form of the question, "Why is this happening to me?"

7. What does this passage say is the fruit of God's discipline in our lives?

Steve said:

Can you identify ways that God is disciplining you? You don't have to make anything up; just think about the big things that are happening in your life (the things that are joyful, the things that are painful, and everything in between) . . . This is where you need to believe that God is disciplining you and trying to teach you the things that are advocated in Scripture. What are "the sins that so easily entangle you" and keep you from running with endurance? God is disciplining you, teaching you to love Him more than that sin. Maybe He's wanting to reveal to you a cluster of lies that surround that sin. Maybe He is trying to show you that you can't lay aside that sin without His grace every single day. Those are biblical ideas that we know God wants to teach us. How have you bumped up against your weaknesses this past week? When you experience weakness (of body or mind or will) you can rest assured that God is trying to teach you that "His power is perfected in your weakness"; maybe God wants to teach you to quit being obsessed with your weaknesses; God wants to show you how His power is actually best displayed in the context of your weakness . . . [These] are just examples. Can you identify ways that God is disciplining you?

8. Can you identify any ways that God may be disciplining you?

9. Steve encouraged us to "catch a vision for what [our lives] might be like if [we] actually learn" from God in an area in which He is disciplining us. As you think about an area in which God may be disciplining you, what might your life look like if you actually learn from His discipline in this area?