

GOD CHASTENS HIS CHILDREN

TEXT: HEBREWS 12:4-11

Introduction:

1. The word "chastening" is found three times in our text (12:5, 7, 11).
2. The word "chasteneth" is found twice (12:6, 7).
3. The word "chastisement" is found once (12:8).
4. The word "chastened" is found once (12:10).
5. That is seven times in just a few verses, plus similar words like "scourgeth" (12:6) and "corrected" (12:9)
6. There is a big distinction between the way God chastens His children, and the way God punishes the wicked.
7. God chastens us, and He corrects us. One preacher said, "God does not flog us in blind rage, but measures the weight of each stroke...Each stroke He administers is weighed by Him in fairness and firmness to suit our needs exactly and to bring us to our senses, not to lay us senseless in the dust" (John Phillips, *Exploring Hebrews*).

I. GOD CHASTENS US BECAUSE HE LOVES US

1. Let us never forget these Biblical exhortations (Heb. 12:5; cf. Proverbs 3:11, 12).
2. Our author is quoting Proverbs 3:11 and 12, but this exhortation is found all throughout the Word of God.
3. Job 5:17 says, "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty."
4. Psalm 94:12 says, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law."
5. Revelation 3:19 says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."
6. Spurgeon said, "I am afraid that all the grace I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows and pains and griefs is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the hammer and the anvil, the fire and the file? Affliction is the best bit of furniture in my house."
7. Cf. Hebrews 12:11.
8. Nothing happens to us without the permissive will of God allowing it to happen (cf. II Cor. 12:7-10).
9. Second Corinthians 12:7 and the book of Job clearly teach that Satan can only hurt us with God's permission (cf. I Thess. 2:18).

10. FB Meyer said, "Behind the whole course of nature there is the incessant activity of malignant spirits, who, as in the case of Job, may be plotting against us, reveling in any mischief, which, for some great reasons, they are permitted to work to our hurt" (*The Way into the Holiest*).

II. PARENTS CHASTEN THEIR CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY LOVE THEM (12:7-10)

1. Some people do not understand how God could chasten His children, and that is because they do not believe parents should discipline their children.
2. Hebrews 12:7-11 affirms that all parents should discipline their children.
3. Proverbs 13:24 says, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
4. Proverbs 19:18 says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."
5. Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."
6. Proverbs 23:13, 14 says, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."
7. Proverbs 29:15 says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."
8. Proverbs 29:17 says, "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."
9. A father put his son over his knee and just before he spanked him, he said to his little boy, "Son, this is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you." The little boy said, "Yes Daddy, but not in the same place!"
10. Susannah Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, raised seventeen children and said this about child discipline, "The parent who studies to subdue (the self-will) in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body forever" (from *The Journal of John Wesley*).
11. When we study the book of Proverbs, we see the connection between "the rod and reproof" (23:13; 29:15).
12. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Pro. 1:8).
13. "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Pro. 3:11, 12; cf. Heb. 12:5, 6).

11. "A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent" (Pro. 15:5).
12. Today many parents are not disciplining their children and that is one of the reasons our country is in such bad shape. We are living in a lawless day and age -- crime, drugs, promiscuity, homosexuality, pornography, gambling, etc.
13. Children are rude and ill-mannered, and so are many adults. I saw a video on the Internet of a woman in a bikini bathing suit tear up a fast food restaurant in Panama City, Florida. She jumped up on the counter and started throwing things at the employees.
14. Consider the lawlessness in Wisconsin, and more recently in London, and indeed -- all over the world.
15. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (II Thess. 2:7).
16. "Iniquity" means "wickedness and lawlessness."

III. IF THERE IS NO REPENTANCE, CHASTENING COULD LEAD TO DEATH (12:9)

1. "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die" (Pro. 15:10; cf. Heb. 12:9).
2. This is taught all throughout the Word of God.
3. A Christian can commit the "sin unto death" (I John 5:16, 17; cf. II Samuel 12:13; Acts 5:1-11; I Cor. 5:5; 11:30; James 1:14-16).

CONCLUSION:

1. Chastisement is inevitable, and it is how we react to it that makes the difference.
2. Spurgeon said, "I have looked sometimes at the waves when they seemed a delightfully pure blue and then, after a tremendous storm, the deep has been moved from the very bottom and its waves are thick and foul with sand and seaweed. Trials breed discontent, anger, envy, rebellion, enmity, murmuring and a thousand other ills. But God overrules and makes the very thing which would make Christians worse, to minister unto their growth in holiness and spirituality. It is not the natural fruit of affliction, but the *supernatural* use to which God turns it, in bringing good out of evil. Note that" ("Chastisement - - Now and Afterward").
3. Spurgeon was emphasizing that "the peaceable fruit of righteousness" is not the natural fruit of affliction, but the "supernatural" fruit.
4. In other words, when we recognize the hand of God, and we humbly submit ourselves to it, then God blesses us.
5. This is the best "exercise" (12:11) of all!

6. There were two boys who attended the same Christian high school. They went downtown and got caught stealing in a store. The school punished them. One boy was very contrite. After graduating from the high school he went off to Bible college and then became a preacher.
7. The other boy became bitter at the school principal, and he became a rebel.
8. The chastening does not necessarily produce "the peaceable fruit of righteousness."
9. It is our humble response to God's chastening that necessarily produces "the peaceable fruit of righteousness."