

Hebrews - Part 5

by Richard Owen Roberts

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discipline in the Christian life, and how it is used by God to shape us into the image of Christ.

Duration: 1:26:27

Scripture: Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Christian Discipline", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of self-discipline in the Christian life, highlighting the need to endure suffering, lay aside sins and incumbrances, and focus on Jesus as the ultimate example of discipline. It discusses how God's discipline is evidence of His love and the necessity of accepting it with thanksgiving. The sermon also touches on the role of discipline in personal growth, the discipline of parents, and the need to strengthen the weak areas in our lives to prevent further harm.

Transcript

Careless reader and careless listener hear things such as we have been looking at in the course of this week and are apprehensive that what is being taught means that salvation is not certain, that a person can be saved and lost. And of course that is the position of Moslems, but it is certainly not what is stated in Hebrews and not at all what any of us should be thinking. These warning passages make it clear that repentance as a one-time event is not true repentance.

True repentance is ongoing. Day in, day out, we live repentance lives. If a person hangs the whole of their salvation upon repentance of something once done, forever accomplished, then indeed they are in for a tragic awakening when it will be too late to do anything different.

At the same time, these passages make it clear that faith is not a single moment of time when one feels truth and embraces it temporarily, but that saving faith is ongoing, as is true repentance. So what really we are faced with in these passages is that extremely large portion of the Church that has hung their entire future upon a single act of repentance and a moment of faith. And they are truly doomed.

But all of you have been well taught by the grace of God in this Church, and no better. But these warning passages are still of incredible consequence because of the very reasons that we have looked at and will still look at as we continue. Now the part of the passage that we have read tonight deals with the subject of discipline.

Discipline is an essential part of the Christian life. But the passage focuses both upon personal discipline and the discipline that the Lord himself brings upon the believer. Both parts are of very great consequence.

The personal aspect of discipline, I trust you have your text open, is spelled out in three particular ways. In verse 1, first of all we are reminded of the discipline of the cloud of witnesses. That is tremendously consequential.

Secondly, we are reminded of the discipline of the runner. How tremendously important in all genuine sporting events, discipline is. Our coach here, I'm sure, doesn't want to be coaching students who are completely devoid of discipline.

He knows that undisciplined players are a liability and not an asset. So in a very significant way, personal discipline is mandatory for everyone who is involved in the life of Christ. Without it, your life is a shamble.

Your witness is detrimental to the cause of Christ. And your own personal life is a series of ups and downs instead of a straightforward, ever-ascending pattern. So, number one, the discipline of the cloud of witnesses.

Number two, the discipline of the runner. And number three, the discipline of the Savior. Beautiful truths here about the self-discipline that Jesus Christ exercised.

And his self-discipline as well as the discipline of the cloud of witnesses should be, for each of us, a wonderful encouragement and help. Then it moves to the discipline of God upon our lives and the very essential role that God's discipline plays in our lives. Now, unfortunately, the bulk of the Church does not understand the discipline of God.

Some of you came here from other churches. Some of you are involved in other churches currently. Let's think just for a moment of other churches that still have prayer meetings, corporate prayer meetings.

What is the most common request offered in these corporate prayer meetings? The most common request is deliverance from the discipline of the Lord. I have yet for the first time to hear a pastor who is leading the corporate prayer meeting of the Church rebuke anyone for putting in a request for relief from the discipline of God. But they should.

No prayer meeting ought ever to be tolerant of requests that the discipline of the Lord be suspended or that a person quickly escape from it. And yet that's mostly what is happening. Some of you have heard the expression, descriptive of a local church prayer meeting.

I've had many pastors say to me, our prayer meeting is an organ recital. And what they mean by that is the bulk of the prayer request sometimes, all of the prayer requests, have to do with physical things. Sickness.

Please pray for Aunt Tilly. She fell and broke her thumb. Please pray for Charles Jones.

He's going into the hospital tomorrow for his thoracic surgery. My aunt is very ill. Please pray that she will be healed.

The question is, where do these various afflictions come from? A number of years ago, at the time of my life when I was regular in the South, among Southern Baptist churches, and many times every year involved in conferences on revival, with Ron and Patricia Owens, the physicians, and Henry Blackaby,

who at that time was the head of the Prayer and Spiritual Awakening Commission. We were together in conference in Atlanta, and it just seemed as if every conversation that we overheard, and every person who spoke to us directly, was talking about spiritual warfare. And they were blaming the devil for every adverse thing that happened in their life.

And both Henry and I were deeply distressed, and we conferred together concerning how to head off that monstrous error. So the next public session, Dr. Blackaby got up and gave a powerful rebuke to people who were blaming Satan for every adversity in their life. And he said to them, if you credit the devil with every adverse thing that happens to you, where does God have any opportunity to speak to you in the direct manner of discipline? Now all of us need to have a fresh look at the place of God's discipline in our lives.

And there are some here, no doubt, who have reason to repent of having violated God by asking him to remove something that he deliberately sent for our good. I stated in just giving you the overall summary of the plan for the week, on Sunday, that the church prayer meeting, which of course I've alluded to again this evening, that the church prayer meeting ought never to tolerate requests for deliverance as the first order. The prayer ought to be, Lord, don't remove this difficulty from me until I have learned what you intended me to learn from you.

And it ought to be a prayer of thanksgiving. Thank you, Lord, that you obviously care enough for me to bring this affliction into my life. And if indeed you have the guilty of asking for deliverance before you have learned the intended lesson, by God himself that is cause for true repentance.

So we have this lengthy section about the role of discipline as God sends it to our life. Then the passage moves to verses 12 and 13, which we will be looking at after a while. Where there are times when there is an incredible need of renewal of strength in the facing of the disciplines that come to us.

The passage basically closes by returning again to the issue of self-discipline. And it uses an Old Testament character as a very profound illustration of an undisciplined person, whose entire life was a throwaway life because he had no room in his life for personal discipline. That's the plan that we will follow this evening.

Before we focus upon the Hebrews passage, I want to take just a moment to ask you to turn to 1 Peter. Some of you have learned, I'm sure, that the major portion of 1 Peter is devoted to the subject of suffering. And indeed it is a matter of extraordinarily great consequence.

I'll read actually two passages, both brief, but look first, if you will, at 1 Peter chapter 1. Starting at verse 17, 1 Peter 4 at chapter 17. For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God. And if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome? For those who do not obey the gospel of God.

And if it is with difficulty that the righteous are saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful creator in doing what is right. Now years ago, before we had the plenitude of modern translation, most of us had and were pretty well stuck with the King James Version. And I remember, as a young preacher, wrestling with this passage.

And I think I can cite it, if not precisely, accurately, but close to it. For in the King James it says, if the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinners appear? And as a young man,

preaching several times a week, I felt the call to preach upon that passage, and I struggled for a very long time trying to make sense of what is meant by the words, if the righteous are scarcely saved. Now I was astute enough at least to know that it was not saying, if the unrighteous are scarcely saved, then where shall the ungodly and the sinners appear? But it was saying, if the righteous are scarcely saved.

So I was trying to envision a salvation in which a person was barely or scarcely saved. And I couldn't help but feel that couldn't possibly be what it meant. Because surely there's no shortage in the power of God to say thoroughly, abundantly, completely to the utmost.

And there I was struggling with this issue. Does that mean that you're saved by the skin of your teeth? Does that mean that while you get to heaven you just barely pass through the pearly gate? And what a relief it was for me to discover that what it was saying was, the righteous are saved with great difficulty. But what is that great difficulty that it is speaking of? The difficulty of salvation was what Christ accomplished.

He's the one that paid the great price. It doesn't cost me what it cost Christ to say. He had to endure the agonies of the cross.

He had to bear the abandonment of the Father. He's the one that paid the price. But in the context, it's clear, there is the cost of suffering.

Suffering for Christ's sake. Suffering the discipline that God himself brings upon us. Now if believers are having great difficulty enduring the suffering that is part and parcel of sanctification, then the question is asked, what hope is there for the ungodly? And it's a powerful matter to meditate upon and to come to a clear understanding of it.

Now I mention that because the popular teaching of the day is that God loves us, and he's not willing to let us suffer. Now the whole of that nonsensical movement, the prosperity movement, is built upon the fundamental error that God loves us, and is unwilling to let us suffer, either in the realm of physical sickness, or in the realm of shortage of money. Now they are heritage, if ever the church has seen that.

But nonetheless, although the majority of Christians reject the prosperity gospel, many have been influenced by the basic error that's within that movement, that God doesn't ever cause difficulty in our lives. He's the one who always delivers us from difficulty. But there's got to be a realist.

Discipline is required. You must discipline yourself. I must discipline myself.

God does discipline you. God does discipline me. Discipline does not hint even that we are displeasing to God.

The message of discipline is whom the Lord loves. If you are without discipline in your life, you have cause to wonder whether you really are loved by Christ. The presence of discipline in your life is indeed a wonderful encouragement.

But turn back in 1 Peter to chapter 2, and let me call another brief passage to your attention. Chapter 2, starting at verse 18. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but to those who are unreasonable.

For this finds favor. If, for the sake of conscience toward God, a man bears up under sorrow when suffering unjustly, for what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure with patience? But if, when you do what is right and you suffer for it, patiently enduring it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth, while being reviled he did not revile.

In return, while suffering, he uttered no threats, but he kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously. And he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. For by his wounds you were healed.

For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and the guardian of your soul. This is a crystal clear passage. There are times when we take a beating from others because we've earned it.

Many times I've gone back to my hotel room after a meeting and groaned in my spirit because I realized that I may have spoken for an hour and 29 minutes and 30 seconds truth that I would gladly die for. And 30 seconds of blubber that undid the 129 that I had by some stupid or foolish or erroneous or mean-spirited statement. So when I take a beating for having said something out of order in a public meeting, or write last complaints, I earned it.

You've earned many a beating from others. And then most of us are stalwart enough to accept the fact we did a dumb thing and we deserve a good licking for it. So the question that is asked in that brief reading, what is the merit if when you deserve a beating, you take it? Because when you don't deserve the beating and yet you get it and you take it with good grace and you smile and you make no response, you attract nobody in return, then there's some merit in it.

But then at the heart of the passage that we've just read, you have been called for this purpose. All of us have been called for something. Now, most all of us know that at the time we truly come to Christ in faith, we are there.

And we know that it is our calling to grow up in the Christian life. I was already this week on the passage talking about being on the bottle when we should be capable of handling solid meat. But it's very easy to overlook the fact that our greatest advancement in holiness is most likely to come when we suffer the most in the Christian life.

When we encounter some unexpected difficulty, if I may just speak in a personal vein for a moment. Maggie and I have blessed with only two children. Our son, whom some of you know, who is a dear guy, who works within the diocese of Christian fellowship, who has a tremendous heart, who's bright and who's capable, who has six children.

Then we have a son, or daughter, excuse me, who is severely handicapped. She suffers from one of these incurable brain chemistry problems. While she's in her forties, she acts like she's perhaps eight or nine years of age.

She's a sweet girl. She loves the Lord. But when she first began to provide evidence that there was something grievously wrong, she made a number of very serious attempts at suicide.

Those were hard to bear. She was in high school at the time. She became very erratic in her attendance.

She would go off to school on time. But she wouldn't show up. And so she was called in for counseling.

And the conclusion was, your father is a religious fanatic. And the best thing that could happen would be that you would be removed from the home and placed with the normal people, which was something of a difficulty for us to bear. Then, one day, she simply disappeared.

And we hadn't a faintest notion where she was, whether she was dead or alive. And the police were searching for her. Her mother was in a constant flood of tears.

Both of us were in great agony. Eventually, she was found and returned home safely. Many Christian men in the public health department looked into her situation and realized the nature of her disease, that she was a schizophrenic, and that her only hope was to be on medication throughout her life.

There's a term we quite love. Some of you have gone through similar things. Some of you may yet face, in your children or in your grandchildren, some of these diseases come out at the age of 15 to 16.

Some of you may be facing that. But I mention that to say that without any question, one of the most profound seasons of personal growth in holiness came to me as a result of our daughter's illness. I had never been aware of the fact that I was very hard on others.

You may still think I haven't. But if you had known me then, you would know what I'm talking about. I had perfect health, and if I had any physical problems at all, I refused to pay any attention to them.

I went down about my daily labors and had total intolerance for anybody who allowed himself to be troubled by any difficulty whatsoever. But as a result of what happened to our daughter, I began to realize something of the hardness with which I had dealt with other people. And I began to plead with God for an inner change that would not take away the directness of the approach or the plainness of speech, but that would soften me internally, so that I spoke in love, even if some were offended.

Soon after this event of her disappearance, I had a pastor's meeting where I was to speak about an hour and a half to two hours from my home and had to be there at six in the morning, which meant I had to leave home quite early. I made the trip. I arrived at the meeting place.

There were a lot of pastors there. Not one of them even came and shook my hand. They were all in little huddles, and I felt quite concerned, having made the trip and having encountered such a wall on the front desk.

After a while, they called for breakfast, and they rushed to the table and left me standing there. So I found an empty seat, with empty seats surrounding me, and sat down. About a half an hour into the meal, the door slammed, and a man raced in, sat down beside me, and he said to me, put out his hand, shook my hand, told me his name.

He said, I'm so sorry. I meant to be here early. Something happened last night that I'm sure you couldn't understand.

But my daughter ran away from home. We've been up all night. The police have been searching for her.

They just found her. I'm so sorry to be late, and that it was appropriate to make a response. And I was able to say to him, with genuine integrity, I understand better than you realize.

Then, the time came to stand before this group of pastors and to open both the word and my heart. They had treated me in a very unfriendly fashion. But when I stood before them, I was moved tremendously with contraction, thinking, how many of these men are faced with difficulties equal to that of a man who came late? And how many of them, this morning, need to hear a tender word of appeal? I'm simply reporting, God brings into our lives very severe difficulties.

We can grow angry with God. We can feel as if God has abandoned us and doesn't really care. Or we can rejoice that He loves us sufficiently to allow the truly difficult things to happen in our lives, so that we might make profound advancements in the life of holiness.

I believe the Hebrews, warning number five, is intended to help us, instead of inching along forward in the Christian life, to adopt a whole new viewpoint of both self-discipline and the discipline that God sends, so that we might rise up like men and women of God and begin to shake this earth by the profoundness of our commitment to Christ, the depth of our confidence in Him, and the yearning compassion of our heart to see the world impacted by the gospel. So with those words as introductions, let's come along now to the passage in front of us, Hebrews chapter 12, and to give focus to it. As I indicated clearly, the passage begins in three realms of self-discipline.

So Hebrews chapter 12, verse 1. Therefore, we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us. And most of you, I hope, recognize that those words are the summary of the lessons that we are to have learned from the 11th chapter. And perhaps you have already done this, but if you have not, use your imagination a wee bit.

Imagine us now, instead of this auditorium, imagine that we're gathered together in one of these huge European cathedrals. And there are several layers of doctrine in this cathedral. But at the very top, there is a balcony that goes around the entire auditorium.

And as you study the faces in that uppermost balcony, you say to yourself, that looks like, well, I'll do it again. It must be. There's Moses.

And then, oh, I wonder if that's not Abraham. I never saw Noah, but surely that looks like Noah. And you realize that all around you, in that uppermost balcony, is this incredible cloud of witnesses.

And they are telling us that the life of faith is worth the cost of the journey. They're bearing witness of the fact that faith does indeed mean salvation. And all of those mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 pay an awful price.

Put yourself in Noah's shoes. Can you imagine living in Noah's day and receiving a command from the Lord to build an ark? And you're in the middle of the dry plain. And nowhere, anywhere around you is enough water to float a canoe let alone an ark.

And yet it is your command to build the ark by precise instruction. And so you get busy. And your neighbors and your supposed friends come around and ask, hey, what do you think you're doing? And they smile.

Bob has this huge boat begins to take shape. Their smiles turn to laughter of squirming and verbal ridicule. You are made to look like an absolute idiot.

You've got to be out of your mind. You'll never float that thing. This is ridiculous.

How can you be such an idiot? And for 120 years you labor on. You try to bear witness to your neighbors but they just laugh at you. It costs Noah to be in that gallery of witnesses testifying to us tonight.

That self-discipline is important and does carry with it a very great reward. You know as well as I do that it takes an immense amount of self-discipline to stick with the task of that magnitude and to accomplish it against such mean-spirited and violent taunting and fear. And we know about Abraham how he was called to leave his home and to go to a place where he knew not you know something of the difficulties that he encountered and then having at last received the son of promise he is commanded to take that son Isaac and offer him as a son.

And we have a pretty good ability to imagine how that cost Abraham and the incredible strain upon his confidence in God. And yet is it not both remarkable and wonderful that he went through with that command and did precisely what was told and is now in the gallery of witnesses. How many of us have the level of self-discipline that Abraham had? Well you see the point is that what God is calling each of us to don't for one moment think the life of faith is a breeze a matter of ease.

No, it is a life of incredible difficulty. It is costly. But when you have met Christ and have fallen in love with him no price is too great to pay.

Or if you will think about Moses found in that basket among the rushes in the river brought into Pharaoh's household. And then through a call of God upon his life he leads the luxurious life of the power. He leads the riches and the pain and the pleasures of Egypt.

And he follows Christ. He meets the commands that God gives him. And by self-discipline no he was not perfect in self-discipline perfection is not the issue.

Pressing forward time after time no matter how high the difficulty no matter how low the circumstances in your life on and on and on you go. And when you fall flat on your face because of our discipline you immediately get up brush yourself off and get moving again. But all around us are helpless Christians who fall and remain there in self-loathing and criticism and feel sorry for themselves and raise questions about God how would he let these awful circumstances occur.

You could work your way through the entirety of Hebrews chapter 11 and taste the issues that each of the persons made their taste and come away with the same conviction. These words must be noted in Hebrews chapter 11. What more shall I say?

Verse 32 Time would fail me if I tell of Gideon Beric, Samson, Jephthah David, Samuel and the prophets who by faith conquered kingdoms performed gifts of righteousness obtained promises shot the mouths of lions quenched the power of fire escaped the edge of the sword from weakness remained strong became mighty in war put foreign armies to flight women received back their dead by resurrection and others were tortured not accepting their release in order that they might attain a better resurrection and others experienced mockings and scourgings yea, also chains and imprisonment they were stoned they were sawn in two they were, I mean, sawn in two can you imagine now a big saw placed at the center of the top of your head and your body cut in two right down the center every person mentioned

in Hebrews 11 exercised self-discipline to talk about Gideon a serious Christian and not to learn self-discipline and to stick with him is to speak in an unthinkable fashion so the cloud of witnesses the second part as I pointed out to you the runner letter, verse 1 again also lay aside every incumbrance and

the sin which so easily entangles us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us surely a powerful picture of self-discipline how could anybody hope to win a race who allowed themselves to grow flabby who did not diligently prepare themselves for that race who thought that the great value of a race was to enter an absurd thought no, the value of a race is to win and if you can't win at least to finish and if you end up as the last one to finish it's still better than

starting and stopping the self-discipline of the Christian life calls for the forceful action that it takes to be successful in sports two things are specifically called for of the runner to lay aside every incumbrance some of us don't get very far in the race of life because there are so many incumbrances in our life we're willing to serve Christ provided we don't have to sacrifice this or forsake that as I mentioned the other day often persons obedience is conditional obedience I'll do it if but no if you're going to run the Christian race if you're going to be a winner then you're going to have to lay aside everything that will slow you down everything that will keep you from finishing well an attachment to earthly burdens may be a problem a devotion to tenants or God might be an

incumbrance for you no one else is in a position to tell you what incumbrances stand in your way of success in running the race of the Christian life the issue is will you lay aside every incumbrance and to talk about being a serious Christian and to be unwilling to get rid of the liabilities in your life is absurd now why are people willing to sacrifice greatly in order to win a race well for far lesser reasons than the Christian perhaps for laying aside incumbrances I personally cannot think of anything more desirable and pleasurable than bringing glory to the Savior if by God's grace I can finish the race of my life my faith goal is not heaven frankly I'm not even interested in the streets of God I fall down on cement I fell down in my warehouse a couple of weeks ago and lay sprawled

out on the floor saying I wonder if I'll even be able to get out and I managed finally to do so and was glad that nothing was broken but I had some tiny big bruises walking on streets of gold does not excite me I know God could make non-slip gold if he chose but still I don't find that any great incentive but the possibility of seeing a smile on my Savior's face of hearing him say well done makes me want to lay aside every encumbrance that hinders me from running the race and the call is also to lay aside the sins that easily beset us there are besetting sins there are multitudes of Christians who make no progress because they do not have the discipline necessary to lay aside the sins that beset them the third portion of the self-discipline passage has to do with Christ starting at verse

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and the perfecter of faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despised the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God for consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself so that you may not grow weary and lose heart wonderful to have the example of Moses and Noah and Abraham and that other wonderful assortment of witnesses in that cloud but better than all of us is Christ himself if you're struggling with the issue of self-discipline focus your eyes on Christ do you think it was easy for Christ? have you really considered what it cost him to provide salvation for you? some very powerful statements are in the portion we've just read he endured the cross he despised the shame I have met

many people over the years who have simply given up because living for Christ brought shame to them I was reading this week a brief piece about a church where the communists took over there were approximately 100 believers supposedly in this church when the communists took over 90 out of 100 denounced Christ and that's not extraordinary that's about the way you expect to see some they can't endure either their cross or the embarrassment and shame of following Christ as I said if you are

struggling with self-discipline take some time to sit down and to study what Christ endured how endured such hostility of sinners against himself that would break our hearts if we really felt the depth of the hostility that he endured but he won he was successful he did accomplish the will and the purpose

of God he did not fail so you see we have three perfectly lovely things set in front of us and I want to review them because even if you make it to heaven and you get there and you bring no fruits with you if nobody's life has been deeply touched and transformed by your life I know that it wouldn't be safe to say that you'll be sorrowful in heaven but it seems to me everyone of us will want to arrive in heaven and hear the words well done and you'll not hear those words by living easily by acting carelessly it is those who have learned to endure those who have practiced self discipline who truly do win the race of life let's move then to the area about the disciplined God in our life now let's just face the reality if you do not discipline yourself you are not likely to experience very

much the disciplined God it's those who have become very earnest in self discipline who God then begins to shape and affect profoundly with his discipline so we're looking now at verses four to eleven and they begin with this important statement you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood in your striving against sin now I can say without any fear of contradiction there's not one person in the room who has shed their blood in their resistance against sin we wouldn't be here if we hadn't been speaking of death for Christ's sake but let me put to you the question how willing are you to suffer for Christ's sake is your commitment to Christ of such a nature that you would willingly die for him we meet people who say that they're living for Christ and everything about them

raises questions and makes you wonder do they even know who Christ is what could they possibly mean by saying I am living for Christ now some of us have had very real difficulties but none of us has given his blood but we remember don't we that Christ shed not only his blood on the cross but he shed his blood in the agony of his prayer in the garden if there is some point in your life when you're getting discouraged when you think the Christian life is too hard remind yourself of the Savior this passage is here to teach us that Christianity was not designed by God as a life of ease and pleasure but as a life of discipline and suffering so that the whole world could be awakened to its meaning when we are unwilling to discipline ourselves we have virtually no impact upon others many times

in my life when I've gone to a place to preach where I've never been before and I've taken in the back door onto the platform and I sit down on the platform and I look around and I see a huge percentage of the congregation is grossly overweight I don't know the pastor I've never met any of the people I just make the observation that a large percentage of the people are grossly overweight which proves almost always that they are lacking in self discipline so I say to myself when I meet the pastor and his wife it will be either one or both of those who are grossly overweight and invariably it's true some pastors are so fat they can barely walk the bible has more to say about eating than about drinking self discipline impacts every area of life it impacts our work schedule some are lazy and

don't put in an honest day's work some are zealots at work and where 12 hours would be enough they have to put in 16 it doesn't matter whether it's work or play whether it's food or drink all of us are called to be disciplined Christ was disciplined and those that Christ loved he disciplined so we have to get striven to the shedding of blood have we forgotten the exhortation verse 5 which addresses you as some my son do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord now think when you are through by him the those whom the Lord loves he disciplines and discourages every son whom he receives let me ask you kindly but firmly when you suffer do you treat it with thanksgiving if you lost your job in this recent financial distress did you

praise the Lord if you are on the verge of bankruptcy

have you praised the Lord if you have discovered that you have cancer have you praised the Lord do you believe come now let's be honest do you believe that whom the Lord loves he disciplines or like Israel of old do you murmur do you complain do you wish that you were back in Egypt do you think that God is unkind that he proves that he doesn't love you by the discipline that he brings into our lives we are commanded not to regard like the discipline of the Lord we are instructed do not faint when you are recruited by him it is crystal clear discipline is evidence of his love now phenomenal change occurs in the Christian life when they accept the fact that discipline is evidence of God's love a long ago when Maggie and I lived in California I went often on preaching missions to the United

Kingdom and Maggie stayed home out of the blue one day my father who lived in New York State called and he said to me I understand you're on your way to Britain again I said yes he said are you taking Maggie with you no I said quite impossible what do you mean it's impossible I said dad you know we have young children she can't just go off and leave them he said I'm telling you to take your wife well I said thanks dad but it can't happen no he said I mean it you take your wife and I said what do we do with the children he said mom and I are coming out and we'll look after the children well good wonderful we'll make arrangements for Maggie to go now all the time we were in Britain every day Maggie was saying I can't wait to get home time after time she said oh it would be so good to have

those kids run up and hug me and welcome me home when we came home the kids saw her and said oh hi mom and went off about what they were doing and she was crushed and finally it came out they said mom you didn't need to come home we were having a wonderful time well what do you mean by that well what we found out was they were getting away with murder my parents found it much easier to let them misbehave than to listen to them howl if they got a licking so the question arose who loved the children most my parents who let them run wild or my wife and I who kept them in a very straight and narrow channel well on the surface it might appear that those who do not discipline are more loving the truth of the matter is those who don't discipline love themselves not their children and the same

thing must be faced with God because God truly loves us he disciplines us and God has means of discipline that no parent has available to them God's discipline can indeed be very very thorough so we are commanded to rejoice and to accept as absolutely wonderful the fact that God himself loves us so the presence of discipline in the life is evidence of God's love and the absence of discipline evidence that God doesn't see any point of giving it up that's pretty sad when God sees that it wouldn't do any good to discipline you and he left you alone and to be yourself and to do as you please oh oh oh oh oh oh and it's also clear that the discipline of God is related to the discipline of parents now I don't know about you but I look back over the discipline that my parents brought into my life

I remember that sometimes I objected strangely but I can tell you honestly I'm deeply grateful that my parents loved me enough to discipline me I know that there were times when my parents disciplined me for their good just as they didn't discipline their grandchildren for their children but I also know that by and large their discipline was out of love I also know that sometimes I was disciplined unfairly my older sister came home one day and said she had heard me swearing and I got a terrible licking but it wasn't true there wasn't a shred of truth there but I got the beating nonetheless and I resented it at the moment but quickly I learned to be grateful that my parents loved me and even though they were not perfect in their discipline they were sweet spirited and earnest but God has

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