

God's Discipline Versus Punishment for Sin

We're the children of whom we live with. If we live with God in a daily relationship with Him as our Father, then we are a child of God. If not, then we are a child of the devil. Sometimes, as children of God, we might feel disciplined by God. This discipline for our benefit is generally not at the same scale as God confronting a given earthly situation to punish sin. As an analogy, oftentimes a parent has to correct and encourage their children. But less often, a parent might have to confront a situation regarding their family that requires more direct, firm intervention and consequences, especially in an evil world.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, carries both a rod and a staff (Psalm 23). The staff is for the sheep's safety, help, correction, and guidance. The rod... it's best that we're not an enemy of the sheep.

Now, regarding God's discipline to His children:

"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor detest His correction;
For whom the Lord loves He corrects,
Just as a father the son in whom he delights." - Proverbs 3:11-12 (NKJV)

Therefore, if we receive discipline and correction from our Father, God, it's because He Loves us ! He knows we need both Wisdom in His Word and His discipline to prevent any ill-fated consequences, for both are critical for keeping us safe and headed in the right direction as we Grow with Him.

From this, we should understand that God disciplines us only for our own good, and only as needed.

And typically, His discipline is for just two reasons:

- (1) to get us to Grow in knowledge, character, and responsibility, and
- (2) to keep us from backsliding away from Him and heading off the Path.

Regarding reason (1), God simply wants us to Grow and mature in Him. Why ? First of all, so we can continue to Spiritually receive the Best He has to offer, and in ever-increasing amounts. And from that, He knows we'll also be able to bear fruit in increasing amounts, so that our Walk may help encourage others to come to Him to prosper in the Spirit as well.

God really wants each of us be a part of a continuous Life-Prospering Machine, for the good of every living being. God's Way of prospering in the Spirit which flows to Life is infinitely more priceless than any form of so-called earthly prosperity that serves only to feed the carnal human side and defeat the Spirit.

God's discipline for reason (1), to keep us continually Growing, is also described in the Bible as His "pruning" of us, as the Vinedresser (God) does for those who are connected to the Vine (Jesus), in order to help them bear more fruit.

It is no offense in the least when we truly understand His purpose, and that we really cannot do any Valuable thing for God's Kingdom without His help in our life (John 15:5). It is quite an honor, actually, when one considers God's purpose for their life.

Regarding reason (2) for God's discipline, to keep us safely near Him... again, if we understand His purpose, it is revealed for the incredible honor it is: the King of the Universe Loves us, individually and jealously, and wants no harm to come to us ! God is very protective of His own.

God certainly does not want us headed off the Lighted Path of His Love and Truth that serves to guide and Protect us, so He will discipline us if needed in an attempt to keep us safe. What we want to make sure of is that we are correctable, that is, convict-able by the Holy Spirit, in order to remain with God where Love and Protection abound. We do not want to willfully sin and ignore God's discipline, and persist in grieving Him so badly that He has no choice but to allow His Holy Spirit to depart from us, in order to no longer restrain our insistent desire to leave His Kingdom.

God will not fight with us or chase us down, because He wants His children to be with Him by True Love, not by obligation. But know that God is greatly saddened when a child of His leaves, because He knows that outside of His House lies the domain of the devil, where there is no Protection.

Away from God, living a "worlded" or carnal existence, it's true we wouldn't feel God's discipline anymore (which was only ever for our own good), and we'd no longer feel subject to His Law of Love and Truth (Romans 8:6-7). But once outside of God's House, we might want to take a look around and assess just where we are. The "freedom" we thought we'd have starts closing off real fast as we no longer see the Real Love or Real Truth or Peace or Joy or Protection that we took for granted with the Father. The prison we stepped out into comes into sharper focus as we realize the devil has zero interest in our safety and well-being, and wants only to burden us with sins and evil to our death, and for us to spread that same disease to others as we go.

When it finally becomes apparent that we are actually subjecting ourselves to mental, physical, and emotional damage as we suffer in a downward spiral toward death, Spiritually and otherwise, we will hopefully realize we were much better off in God's Home, living in the Light of His Love and Truth, in the Protection and safety that can only be had under His Wing.

From there it becomes easy to embrace any discipline God might have for us, knowing it's only given by His Love and for our benefit, to keep us from heading astray.

Again, God does not want us to take even one step toward any risk to our well-being. His strong desire is for a continuous Family relationship with us, both while we live on this Earth, and also of course Eternally, so that we may continually partake of the Peace and Joy and True Freedom that can only be had in His Kingdom. If we understand anything of God's Heart, let us understand that.