

Our Discipline & God's Holiness

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[0 : 00] The Lord has exalted above all things his name and his word. So let's turn to his word. Specifically Hebrews chapter 12.

We've lifted up and exalted his name in song! We come now to have him lifted up before him, or before us in his own word, and the preaching of it.

Hebrews 12, and the first 13 verses. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders, and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood, and you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons.

[1 : 27] My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes anyone, everyone he accepts as a son.

Endure hardship as discipline. God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the father of our spirits and live?

Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.

[2 : 45] Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Hebrews 12 and verse 7.

Endure hardship. Endure hardship. The idea is stay under it patiently.

Stay under it perseveringly. It's heavy. It hurts. But stick with it. Stick with it.

Don't slip out from underneath it. Endure hardship is discipline. It's easy to lose heart. To have that totally deflated spirit.

To lose hope. Think. It's not going to get better. It's not ever. There's no purpose.

[3 : 49] There's no better end to this. Or to grow weary. Just tired. Tired. And maybe that's where some of you are at. Tired.

Worn out. You just want to be done. You're tired of fighting. Tired of the pain. You just wish something could change for the better.

Anything could change. Something. Anything would get better somehow. And you're tired. And it's hard. That's the problem that we want to talk about tonight.

And it's a problem that's common to all of us. We just read in this passage. Everyone undergoes discipline. So.

It's either happened. Is happening. Or is about to happen. But everyone undergoes discipline.

Every son. And so. There is that painful.

[4 : 47] Ongoing. Trial. Not the quick. Soon done. It's something you have to endure. Stick with. And so remember.

We're talking about God's attributes. God's character. And man's troubles. And so that's the trouble. That we're going to talk about. But. What do we look at? What do we look for in God?

That will help us to endure. In those long trials. What in God. Meets that need. Or helps us. To endure.

In that difficulty. Well. You see two things. In the passage that. I had read. In Hebrews chapter 12. You. You. You first. Just off. The surface.

You see God's fatherly. Heart. God's fatherly heart. And we're going to. Talk a little bit about that. And. And we really could. Go into great depth. About that.

[5 : 44] And maybe sometime. We will. We are going to talk. A little bit about it. But the second attribute. Is the attribute. That this passage. Actually. Ends on. It doesn't start there.

But this. That's where it. Ends up. And. It's something. Surprising. That's really what. That struck me.

As I was studying. And as I just sort of. Ran across this. In my reading. Is. It's probably not. The first thing. I think about. When I'm. Looking for something.

In God. To help me with a trial. It's certainly not. The only thing. But it's. It is something. And it's. A bit surprising. Maybe you've already. Figured it out. Just from reading it. But we're going to.

Get to it. And. Let's just see. How this passage. Takes us to that place. And. We begin. The Hebrews. Begins by talking about. Two fathers. Two fathers.

[6 : 39] And. So here we are. In this difficulty. This painful trial. That we have to endure. Hardship as discipline. Now. How can we do that. Without getting cynical. Without getting jaded. Without getting so worn out.

That we just. Quit. And give up. That was what. Was. Threatening to happen. In. The. The people. That the author of the Hebrews. Was writing.

Some of them were. Really starting to think. I'm done. I want to be over. This is. I'm going to walk away. Well. How do we. Go through a trial. Without growing cynical. And jaded.

Without losing heart. Without saying. I just quit. Why even bother? Well. He says. Endure hardship as discipline. Because God is treating you. As sons. And then he begins to talk about these two fathers.

And the first is. The earthly father. As. Our human fathers. It says. Literally. It's the fathers of our flesh. The fathers of our physical.

[7 : 34] Nature. Verse nine. So the fathers of our flesh. Disciplined us. Now. They gave us life. Our life comes from them. That's where we get our earthly life from.

Our physical life. We come from them. And what did. They do. They disciplined us. You can. If you're older than a child.

You can now look back. And say. They disciplined us. They disciplined me. And they had a right. To do so. They had a right. To discipline us.

And they. Did. They gave us life. We came from them. And God gave them the right. The responsibility. The authority. To discipline us. And Hebrews said.

They did. They did. Now. Children. When your dads discipline you. He is not doing something. Wrong. He is doing something.

[8 : 26] That God wants him to do. God gives it to dads. To discipline. Their children. They aren't being mean. They aren't being bullies. They're obeying God.

God. Because above your. Dad. Is. Our heavenly father. And he gives us. To discipline. God says. Fathers.

Bring up your children. In the training. And in the instruction. Of the Lord. Proverbs says. He who spares the rod. Hates his son. But he who loves him. Is careful. To discipline him.

So children. Your dads discipline you. Not because they hate you. Not because he hates you. But because he loves you. Now. It's no fun. It's not pleasant.

I remember enough about being a child. And remember. It's not pleasant. It's not fun. But. Not all pleasure is good. And not all pain is bad.

[9 : 27] And. Our fathers. Disciplined us. Well how did they do it? Well for a little while. As they thought best. For a little while. Well. Thankfully.

Human discipline. Human fatherly discipline. Is only for a little bit of time. And then. It's in the past. It's over. So my dad quit disciplining me. A long.

Time ago. It's a good thing. We'd have a really hard relationship. If it was still going on. Years and years ago. He quit. So a little while. And as.

They thought best. Now your dad is trying as best as he can. He's not doing it perfectly. But generally.

Fathers have good intentions with their discipline. And. Sometimes it's not very smart. Sometimes they do it out of the wrong motive. Sometimes dads really mess up.

[10:22] But they're doing it. As best they can. What they think is best. And it's not perfect. But. Believe it or not. As you look back. You can say.

Oh. They were trying. It wasn't always right. It wasn't always perfect. But they were trying. And now we respect him. That's what it also says. So.

You have a human. Earthly father. And they disciplined you. And now you respect them. Dad. Dads. It's hard now.

For some of you. But respect is coming. Respect is coming. Well. We look back. And we say. It was hard. But it was good. And now.

The author says. Now let's talk about. A different father. And he says. Now. How much more. Should we submit. To the father. Of our spirits.

[11:18] So now we're talking about. A different father. Here's the second father. He's not a fleshly father. He's the father. Of our spirits. So where does our. Spiritual life. Come from. Well.

We're born of God. We're born of God. He gives us. When you are born again. He imparts. To you. Spiritual. Life. His own life.

By the spirit. Gets put into you. So he chose. To give us life. Born again. Not a perishable seed. But of imperishable seed. The living. And enduring. Word of God. So he gives us.

Life. By the spirit. Through the word. He. He imparts. His life. To us. And so we awake. We awake. To new. Spiritual realities.

We're born. Our eyes are opened. And we see things. That we never saw. Before we were once dead. But now we're alive. Now our life. Comes from him. And that's why. We should submit. To his discipline.

[12:13] That's why we should submit. To his discipline. He too. Has the right. To discipline us. Our fathers. Our earthly fathers. Had the right. To discipline us.

Because they. Were. That's how we. Were alive. That's how we were born. And so. Our heavenly father. Has the right. To discipline us. And that's what he does.

That's what he does. And when our heavenly father. Disciplines us. He's not doing anything. Wrong either. He's not being mean. He's not being a bully.

He's doing what. Is good for us. He has the right. To do. What. He wants. Not only because. He created us. But because he gave us.

Spiritual life. And so. We saw what governed. Our earthly fathers. And their discipline. It was. What they thought. Best. And sometimes. Dads. Don't get it right.

[13:09] They're confused. They're mistaken. They're wrong. But it's what they thought. Best. But look at. Our father. The father of our spirits. Verse 10. It's for. Our. Good. So.

God doesn't do merely. What he thinks is best. He. Certainly. And definitely. Does it. For. Our. Good. So.

Earthly fathers. Might make a mistake. About what is best. But. Our heavenly father. Never makes a mistake. About what is for our. Good. And so. When he is. Choosing. And shaping.

Our discipline. It's always. For. Our. Good. And so. What's behind. What is behind. That painful. Trial. That. Is just. Ongoing. Well.

It's a father's. Loving heart. A father's. Determined. Set. Will. To do. Us. Good. And what is the good.

[14:05] That he's after. The good. That he's after. Is certainly not. Having a. Pleasant. Wonderful. Life. Here. Necessarily. What.

Does. He. Want. To do. What. Is he. After. What. Is the. Particular. Good. That he. Is trying. To instill. And give. To us. Well. What does it say. That we. Might.

Share. In his. Holiness. That we. Might. Share. In. His. Holiness. There.

It is. That's. The surprising. Attribute. That we. Need. To be. Focusing. On. When. We're. In the midst. Of. A painful. Discipline. Trial. And.

It's a bit. Surprising. Isn't it? We normally. Think of. Love. And grace. And those. Are all. Very. Good. Things. But. This is. Where we. Land. Here. Is. We. Want. To keep.

[14:59] The author. Says. Now. You need. To keep. Your eye. On. Where. This is. Going. And this. Is. Going. Into. You. Participating. In. God's. Holiness. So.

The pain. The medicine. Is painful. The treatment. Is painful. But. It's. Worth it. Because. We. Enter. In. We. God.

Is. Saying. This is. How. I'm. Going. To bring. You. Into. Full. Participation. In. My. Holiness. This. This. Is. How. I'm. Going. To. Bring. You. Into. Full. Participation. With.

My. Holiness. And. So. Here's. How. You. Don't. Lose. Heart. You. Get. Both. Of. Your. Eyes. You. You. Focusing. On. Jesus. But. You. You. Getting. This. Is. How. You. Get. Your. Energy. Back. This. Is. How. You.

Get. Your. From. Staying. Growing. Weary. It's. That. This. Is. Where. This. Is. All. Going. It's. Not. Just. Holiness. But.

[15:51] It's. Sharing. In. God's. Holiness. How. You. Put. It. It's. Not. Holiness. Generic. It's. Participating. In. And. Sharing.

In. God's. Own. And. We. Read. That. And. We. See. That. And. I. think it's too easy for us to miss what it's saying. He's not simply saying that we're going to be holy. Yes, it means that. That we will be sinless people, that we will be sanctified.

It means that, but it means more than that. It means we're going to enter in the full shared life of God's holiness. There's something much more personal that's met here. There's something much more God close to God here. It's not some sort of barren legal righteousness. It's not some sort of just we're conformed to this code of righteousness. It's that we will actually enter into the holiness of God, his holiness, whatever that is. And we're going to talk about that in a minute is going to fill us up and we're going to partake in it. Again, it's not just saying God is doing this so we won't sin anymore. It's not just saying that we're going to be good, righteous people. It's that we're going to take part. We are going to share in the very holiness of God. It's heart to heart, mind to mind, will to will, feeling to feeling, holiness. Listen to how John Brown, an old

Scottish commentator put it. He says this to become partakers of his in his holiness is just to have the mind brought to his mind. Now, I want you to notice as he's talking about as he's as he's going to talk, what is the direction that we are going? We're going to him. We're closing in with him. We're getting closer and closer to him. So to become partakers of his holiness is just to have the mind brought to his mind, the will brought to his will to think as he thinks, to will as he wills, to find enjoyment in what he finds enjoyment. This is man's profit. This is the perfection of his nature, both as to holiness and happiness. This is to live. This is to live. This is to live.

This is to live the life of angels, to live the very life of God, to partake of his holiness is to enter into his joy. This is the design of God and all the afflictions of his people.

[18:38] You hear this when Jesus for the joy set before him endured the cross. And the author of Hebrews is saying there is a there's a joy for you to look forward to.

It's entering into the very life and holiness of God where you're entering into his joy, where you're absorbed in his holiness. It's not even side by side, but we're right in it.

Again. God's holiness is going to if this is going to fill us and really encourage us, we we have to keep thinking. We have to go deeper here and we have to ask, well, what is it?

What is God's holiness? I'm going to be sharing in it, partaking in it. Well, what is it? John says God is light.

In him, there is no darkness. That's his holiness. That in him, there is no darkness. There's no imperfections.

[19:49] He's just perfect, bottomless. Radiance. So what is sharing in his holiness? Well, it is diving in.

It is living in that bottomless radiance. So picture that. You're surrounded and you're filled underneath you and above you with the brightest, purest, sinless light.

God is light. And there is no darkness. And so he's without any sin. He is without any kind of darkness. There's no shadow. It's just pure radiance.

He can't be tempted. He can't be tempted to darkness because he himself is light. And there's nothing in him that ever could be darkness. And there's nothing in him that would ever even want to be dark.

And so sharing in his holiness is diving into that. Living in that perfect, bottomless radiance until that perfection fills you.

[20 : 58] Consumes you in his joy and his peace and his goodness. Consumes you in his, God, fills your soul. So that you're seeing him. And he is filling you with amazement.

and so you are holy and you are without sin and you are beyond temptation and it's not because you're just like him sort of generically but it's because you're so close to him you're filled with him you live in him you're sharing his life and his joy you're wrapped in his love and you're wrapped so close to him that you think like he thinks you love what he loves you want what he wants you are something of like what he is and your heart never leaves his your hand is always holding him and so for all of eternity wherever he goes you go whatever he loves and takes joy in you take love and joy in and you go with him there holiness we can't forget this holiness is relational so to be holy is to be set apart from sin set apart from ordinary things but it's to be set to god there's a relational aspect of this holiness and so you're set apart to god and so you are for him and he is for you so another way of thinking about god's holiness it is utter perfect wholeness utter perfect health and so and i'm talking about spiritually so in him there is no decay there's no foulness there's no sickness of heart there's no spot or blemish on any of god's hearts so jesus was a lamb without spot or blemish and he's worthy of a god who is utterly perfect and without spot or blemish there's no smudge of darkness in him there's no smudge of anything less than what is glorious and good and healthy and whole and perfect and so i want you to imagine a man who is perfectly healthy and so you you drill down you go from the surface all the way down to the very dna of his cells and there's nothing there except what is perfectly healthy and good and whole and full of life so every fiber of his body every filament every tendon every ligament every bone every muscle every tissue everything there's no sickness there's no virus there's no old age there's no decay there's no spot every bit of him is bursting with with life there's no sin there's no stain there's no blemish there's no blot there's no incompleteness there's no mistake there's no wounds there's no wrinkles it's just perfect vibrant health and wholeness now spiritually we're not like that physically we're definitely not like that now our hearts and our souls are are still full of sin not like what it used to be but there's stains there isn't there there's imperfections there's decay and and sometimes the situations happen and and that decay is exposed isn't it that pride oh i didn't see it there but oh it's this now it's this open sore wrinkles and spots and sickness but not god god has perfect life perfect holiness perfect wholeness and god disciplines us so that one day we might share in that holiness that we might share in that life in that glory and so jesus says this is eternal life that they they might know me and the one who sent me knowing that's what it means to be sharing in god's holiness so you're filled with this perfection you're swimming in his goodness so discipline is hard it's painful and it makes us lose heart we get depressed we get anxious we we feel like we want to give up but look brothers and sisters this that's the aim that is what god is definitely and certainly and infallibly doing though this present discipline is moving us preparing us and actually working in us this kind of holiness though that we might share in his holiness and so that trial that difficulty that you're in is not a tunnel that is just a dead end there is light on the other side there is a coming through on the other side it's not a cave that just ends in darkness and pointlessness and that's sometimes how we can feel though can't we we just go into this and it's like this is how it's going to be it's always dark always it's just going to be completely pointless and and sometimes we say or sometimes we feel i'll never be holy i'll always be a sinner and i'm just suffering suffering without a reason apparently this isn't i'm not where's the help that's how we feel and how miserable we are and how wrong we are because holiness is not out of reach it is our destiny it is what god has prepared for us and is preparing us for he's using that discipline to draw us closer to him this is what god is doing in all of our afflictions he's pulling us away from the sad unhappy dying dead world and he's pulling us more to himself more to life more to joy more to health more to wholeness so that his light and his glory and his joy is filling us and that's why he disciplines us that you might find all of your happiness in him at last you might find all of your happiness in him and so what does he say oh it's painful now it's painful now but it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace a harvest of righteousness and peace that's abundance a harvest harvest time is abundance time it's when you have you're trying to find places to put your food right so if you have your harvest of zucchini instantly i know when the zucchini crops in because everyone starts asking me if i want it and i have my own i would say it's the abundance fullness living the good life that's what he's doing that's what he's doing in this discipline it's a harvest of righteousness and peace and so it's it's like thanksgiving time the table is full of food the everyone's heart is full of joy that's what god is doing he's bringing us to this table of shared happiness and joy where he is with us and we are with him so

when you're going through discipline and it's hard look at where he's taking us everlasting joy everlasting harvest everlasting life perfect light perfect health perfect wholeness for our good and what a good it is so how do you endure hardship as discipline well you you have to look to god's holiness because you're going to be like him you're going to be sharing in that holiness and as you do that what do you need to do the author says submit do you want to be working with god do you want to be on the same page with him the author says submit as we look forward to sharing in god's holiness what we need to do now is submit and what do i mean by that what does that look like well one it means bending the knee surrendering and this is where peace in pain begins there is such a thing as having peace when you're in pain and it begins with submission not so much to the pain but submitting to your father saying god you have the right you have the authority i'm your child so i humble myself before you first peter 5 6 humble yourselves therefore under god's mighty hand humble yourselves god has the right to do what he is doing with you he's the king so god opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble therefore humble yourselves humble yourselves therefore under his mighty hand so that's what does submission look like it means actually putting your heart into the place where you say god you have the right to do this two you acknowledge his righteousness and his wisdom and what i mean by that is you own up and you confess god you are right and you are wise in what you're doing this is painful this hurts but because i believe that you are taking me closer to you i think you're right and i think you're wise everything that you do is righteous and wise and so it hurts but he but has he ever done you wrong it hurts but has he ever done you wrong has his ways ever been reckless or foolish you know what every time we come through on the other side we say with the psalmist it was good that i was afflicted that i might learn to obey it was good there wasn't anything foolish or reckless or wrong about what you were doing god this was good it was right and it was wise so acknowledge that that means recognize it own up to it charles burgeon said god is too good to be unkind and he is too wise to be mistaken so in your heart what it means to submit is you say god that is true you're too kind you're too kind you're too good to be unkind you're too wise to be mistaken three you see his love and his care for you in this because with this now more god word eternal perspective you can say yeah this is painful and in the short term this is not pleasant but i can see that what god is doing right now in my life it is love it is care it is concern so instead of just labeling your trial as merely painful labeling it as hard the author of hebrews is saying we need to put another label on it so you've seen those label makers maybe you have one and you put labels on things like and so get your label maker out and put a new label on that trial instead of just having painful and and this is really hard and i don't like this instead we need to put another label on it and and we could put god's love god's care this is how he's loving me and by faith we do that because that's what it is god is bringing me into his life bringing me more into his glory and so this is good this is his love for me so get out your label maker and write along painful and hard put god's love and god's care fourth and last submitting means you sit down and you ask god you you ask him you sit down and you think what does my loving heavenly father especially want me to do right now in this situation submission is not just merely a passive activity it is an active activity submissions means doing what the king wants you to do in the situation that you're in and so there's something to do and your father in these present painful circumstances that you are enduring there is something especially for you to do in the situation and i like

[35 : 32] I can't give you all the examples because it's going to be a million different things it could be something very practical of here I am but lord what do you want me to do and you think about it and you read god's word and you think about how how I can apply it in this situation it might be something like I'm going to go for a walk with my wife three times a week I don't know why that would be the answer but it could be the answer I'm going to give my children a hug every day I'm going to go to work and I'm going to tell someone that the lord is good I'm not going to let this trial put such a frown on my face and ruin my testimony I'm going to say no god is good submission is not passive it doesn't mean doing nothing it's saying you're my king what do you want me to do in this situation and so figure it out obedience isn't general it's very particular so figure it out bend your knee look ahead look at

God's holiness what is he doing he's taking you further up further in and so don't lose heart don't lose heart no discipline no discipline is pleasant at the time but painful later on however it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it that's where your father's taking you that's what he's doing further up further into him closer to him sharing his life and

he loves you and he won't be satisfied he won't be satisfied until you are sharing your whole life with him our sanctification is what God wants for us our sanctification is what he is longing for to have a close intimate perfect relationship with us and so that's what these disciplines are for to get us away from the world to get us away from sin and away from the flesh more and more leaning upon him closer in closer to him so don't lose heart you have your father's heart he loves you so don't lose heart let's pray oh heavenly father it is so easy to read these things to believe these things to preach these things when things are going okay or things are calm but you know how difficult it is in those moments of real pain and real uncertainty and real fear so thank you that you don't leave us we have often left you but you have never left us we've often gone into the trial with no faith in the front and yet you have encouraged us and helped us and invoked faith in our lives and so we thank you for your faithfulness and your love towards us so please help us in the trials that we're in whatever they might be to look ahead and to see that there is a positive end that you are doing something and so to keep our eyes fastened on you to keep our hope in your plan and what you have said so believing help us to endure and persevere father be a comforter be a help to those who are hurting and when they are weak help them to find strength in Jesus help them to find joy in what you're doing and in your heart so please send us on our way with your blessing send us on our way with your Holy Spirit helping us we need him we pray this all in Jesus mighty name for his sake that we might be a people holy and happy in him in his name amen