
Words of Truth

Hebrews 12:5-13

By: Brian A. Yeager

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed” (Hebrews 12:5-13).

The instruction begins with the fact that they had forgotten a Proverb of old (Proverbs 3:11-12). Interestingly, the same collection of Proverbs includes this instruction: *“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments”* (Proverbs 3:1). It is beneficial to have a remembrance of what God has said (Proverbs 4:1-6). That is why teachers, such as those writing this Hebrew letter, remind people of what they once knew (I Timothy 4:6, II Peter 1:10-15, II Peter 3:1-2, and Jude 1:5; 1:17-19).

Correction should not be despised (Psalms 94:12). Correction from God comes about because of His love (Revelation 3:19). Correction keeps us from being condemned with the world (I Corinthians 11:27-32). One Proverb says: *“He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding”* (Proverbs 15:32). One of the reasons our Heavenly Father has given us His word and the instructions for His word to be taught is for correction (II Timothy 3:15-4:2).

One of the concerns that comes about with correction is fatigue. A parent may look at a child and say something like, “if you keep that up I am going to wear you out.” We know that being chastised often can wear one out. One of the Psalmists wrote: *“O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed”* (Psalms 6:1-2). Unfortunately,

sometimes correction has to keep coming about because the one or ones needing corrected are not changing. Sin cannot be ignored because the consequences are eternal (Romans 6:23 and Revelation 21:8). Yet, there is a real concern that being corrected often will cause some not only to get tired, but also to harden their necks (Proverbs 29:1). God's way of dealing with that is shown in this text. He is reminding those being corrected of the love behind that correction and His desire for them not to get tired (Galatians 6:9).

Those among God's people that are parents understand the need for instructing and correcting children (Deuteronomy 4:9, Deuteronomy 11:18-19, Proverbs 1:8, Proverbs 3:12, Proverbs 19:18, Proverbs 22:6, Proverbs 22:15, Proverbs 23:13-14, Proverbs 29:15, Proverbs 29:17, and Ephesians 6:4). So, God reminds the readers of this epistle that He is dealing with those He corrects as a Father to a son. Remember, we are the children of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18, Galatians 3:26-29, I John 3:1-3, and Revelation 21:7). As His children, there is something to keep in mind about correction that comes from our Lord's word. Notice: *"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes"* (Proverbs 13:24). So, the text asked a question concerning the relationship between God as a Father and His children. If reverence is paid to fathers in the flesh that correct, why not the same for Him? The reward for reverence towards God certainly supersedes the reward earthly parents can offer (Jude 1:21).

What does it mean that parents correct "after their own pleasure?" The word translated "pleasure" is most often translated "think" (Strong's # 1380). Parents in this world correct children based upon what they "think" is best. God on the other hand corrects based on what is truly best for us. We know human logic can be flawed (Proverbs 16:25). God is just trying to illustrate that we ought to receive His correction better than anyone in this world. It's best for us to do so. The goal behind God's actions is our salvation (John 5:34).

Though we desire salvation, being corrected is not a time of joy. That being said, if our course is corrected the end result is worth the process (II Corinthians 7:10). That process includes a time wherein you learn you're wrong and you hate yourself for it (Job 42:1-6). One cannot stay in that frame of mind though. If a person being corrected stays in the stage of sorrow that person can be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow (II Corinthians 2:7-8).

After being corrected and repenting of sin, that person has to get up and move forward. There has to be a healing process. If we deal with our sins properly, God will be merciful to us (Proverbs 28:13 and I John 1:9). God is of great mercy (Psalms 145:8). It can be easy to forget about God's mercy when one is being corrected. One may feel that sin will always be in front of them. We have to remember that we live in a time wherein we can have sins forgiven and remembered no more (Hebrews 8:12). So, if you find yourself being corrected or even if you are correcting yourself using the Scriptures, that process is for our salvation not our damnation (Ezekiel 18:18-32 and II Timothy 2:24-26).