

Divine Discipline

The Greek word for discipline is paideia. It is found in every verse of our text.

“Paideia is used of the whole training and education of children. It speaks of instruction which aims at increase of virtue. The word does not have the idea of punishment, but of corrective measures which will eliminate evil in the life and encourage the good.” (Word Studies in Greek NT by Wuest, pg.217)

The writer of Hebrews began by reminding the believers that they had forgotten the doctrine of Divine Discipline:

(Heb.12:5a) “And you have forgotten (eklanthanomai / perf.m.ind.2pl) [they have chosen to utterly forget] the exhortation which is addressed (dialegomai / p.p.ind.3ps) [to ponder or resolve in one’s mind] to you **as sons**.”

This lesson will study six aspects of Divine Discipline.

1. The doctrine of divine discipline that the Hebrew believers had forgotten had come from Prov.3:11-12.

(Prov.3:11-12) “My son, do not reject (maam / kal impf.2ps) [refuse] the discipline of the Lord, or loathe (quts / kal impf.3ps) [abhor] His reproof, for whom the Lord loves He reproves (yakach / hiphil impf), even as a father, the son whom he delights.”

(Heb.5:5b-6) “My son, do not regard lightly (holigoreo / p.aimpv.2ps) the discipline of the Lord, nor faint (Ekluo / p.m.impv.2ps) when you are reproved (elegcho / p.m.ptc.nsm) by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges (mastigoo / p.a.ind.3ps) (2 Cor.11:24) every son whom He receives.”

Heb.12:5-6 was taken from the Septuagint translation of Prov.3:11-12. The “Septuagint was the Bible of early Christianity before the New Testament was written. After the New Testament Scriptures came on the scene, they were added to the Septuagint to form the completed Scriptures of Christianity.” (Unger Bible Dict. pg.1149)

2. Both the OT (Prov.3:11-12) and the NT (Heb.12:5-11) teach that divine discipline was the evidence that a believer remains a member of family of God in spite of personal sin.

(Heb.12:7-8) “It is for discipline that you endure (hupomeno / p.a.ind.2pl); God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become (ginomai / perf.a.ind.3pl) partakers, then you are illegitimate children (nothos) not sons (huios).”

Note that this contains 1 of 2 rhetorical questions of our text (Heb.12:7, 9).

Question #1: “For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” (Heb.12:7)

Question #2: “Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much more rather be subject to the Father of spirits and live?” (Heb.12:9)

3. Therefore divine discipline is parental between the heavenly Father and His earthly children.

When you examine our lesson text of the doctrine of divine discipline (Heb.12:5-11), you realize its importance regarding personal sin and our relationship to God as Father.

(Heb.12:5-7)	Father and son relationship and discipline
(Heb.12:8)	No Father and son relationship and no discipline
(Heb.12:9-11)	Father and son relationship and discipline

Personal sin hinders our fellowship with God our Father, but does not change our relationship as His son. This is taught in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk.15:17-24) – “**This son of Mine was.**” (Lk.15:24a)

4. Divine discipline is not punishment or retribution of sin but corrective spiritual training (Heb.12:9-11).

(Heb.12:9b) “Be subject (hupotasso / f.p.ind.1pl) to the Father of spirits and live (zao / f.a.ind.1pl).”

(Heb.12:10b) “He disciplines us for our good (sumphero / p.a.ptc asn), that we may share His holiness (tes hagiotes).”

(Heb.12:11b) “Yet to those who have been trained (gumnazo / perf.p.ptc dplm) by it, afterward (husteros) it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Often a misguided believer wants retribution because of a guilty conscience. He feels a need for penance and emotional purging in a struggle to forgive himself / herself. The prodigal son was of this mind set (Lk.15:18-21) [I am no longer worthy].

5. God forgives sin and to cleanse from all unrighteousness when the CAB confesses his sin because - “The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7b) [His Son is basis for forgiveness].

(1Jn.1:9) “If (3cc) we confess (homologeio / p.a.subj.1pl) our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive (aphiemi / a.a.subj 3ps) us our sins and to cleanse (katharizo / a.a.subj 3ps) us from all unrighteousness.”

Confession of sin restores the believer to fellowship with the Father. It removes divine discipline from the carnal believer (1 Cor.3:1-3) and restores the believer to the filling ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Eph.5:18).

6. God’s dealing with David’s sin teaches us that while sin is forgiven by confession and divine discipline is removed, the sin might carry future consequences with it.

God forgave David’s sin with Bathsheba and Uriah but it carried two future consequences (2 Sam.12:7-15). This was not true of the prodigal son of Luke 15.

Sin carries consequence beyond confession when it involves an attack upon the plan of God and directive will

(2 Sam.12:7, 9, 15) “However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die.” (Heb.12:14)

The child was illegitimate and attacked the messianic lineage: (Deut.23:2; Heb.12:8) because David was an heir in the messianic lineage. (Matt.1:1).