

God disciplines and corrects those that are his.

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I read a true story of parents who were so thrilled with having a boy added to their family after having four girls that they foolishly gave him everything that his heart desired without ever disciplining and training him to consider anyone other than himself. From the time that he came into the world, he was pampered and his parents worked very hard to make sure that his every desire was satisfied. The daughters learned to resent him for his wants and needs took top priority in the family. His father worked overtime to make sure that when he graduated from high school that his son would have a new car and money to start his future with. The family was poor by society's standards, yet the parent had a bank account and saved every cent they could spare to reward him when he came of age. The school teachers dreaded having him in the classroom for his self-centeredness made it impossible for him to learn to share, care, relate to anyone other than his own desires and wants. No one was allowed to discipline the boy and thus he grew up without any sense of reality of life. The day came when the doctors told the father that he would have to stop working because he was wasn't taking care of himself and his body was wearing out. There would be no more extra money to set aside for Junior and he was told to get his business in order for his days were numbered. The man took his son aside and gave him a cashier's check for \$5000.00 and told him that he hoped that the young man would use the money to further his education so he could earn a good living. However the boy had been so pampered that he had no clue how to invest or prepare for a future for Dad had always given everything to him. The money was wasted within a short period of time and both mom and dad passed away. The young man was emotionally and spiritually crippled and he went to see the lawyer that handled the estate. The kind lawyer sat the young man down and told him that there was nothing left after the bills and the funeral expenses were paid. He saw the devastation in the boy's eyes as the words penetrated his heart. He argued asking how that could be for both his parents worked hard and there was always plenty for him when he asked for it. The lawyer looked him in the eyes and said, "Young man, your parents gave you everything they had while they were here and now they are gone. I suggest that you find a job and the sooner you realize that work is part of your future the better off you will be. There is no one that is going to take care of you now. You spent your inheritance and now you will have to find your own way." The boy left his office unsure and unprepared for adulthood and responsibilities. His earthly father had failed him miserably by not loving him enough to train and discipline him.

The God of the universe has portrayed himself to humanity as a "Father". In Hebrews 12:6 it tells us that those whom the Lord loves he disciplines and those who are called to be his

sons are rebuked and corrected. See Proverbs 3:11-12. King Solomon advises us not to despise the chastening of the Lord neither be weary of his correction for whom the Lord loves, he corrects, even as a father the son in whom he delights. Those who have received the Lord as their Savior are God's children. (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26) God blesses his children and he corrects us for our own good. Those who reject the Lord's discipline are not his legitimate children. A wise, caring father watches over his children and when they disobey and defy his orders and heads for danger, the father disciplines them in order to keep them safe. When a born-again believer heads for sin or refuses to resist temptation, God brings chastening into the person's life to redirect him back to holiness.

Chastening comes in form of feelings of guilt, unpleasant circumstances, loss of peace, relationship problems, or any number of negative consequences for making wrong choices. Sometimes it comes in forms of sickness and even death. (1 Corinthians 11:30)

People often ask if God punishes us for the wrong choices we made in the past. All the punishment for sin was taken by Jesus as he hung on the cross. (Romans 5:9) The wrath of God was poured out on Him so that for those who are "in Christ Jesus " no wrath remains. (Romans 8:1) When we give our lives to Christ, our Substitute for sin, past sins are forgiven and God remembers it against us no more. (Hebrews 8:12; 10:15-18). However, the wrong choices that we made may still bring unpleasant consequences now. God does not necessarily remove the natural consequences of sin when we repent. These consequences are tools that God can use to teach us and to help us not to repeat the same mistakes over and over again. It also is a reminder of God's wonderful grace and mercy towards those whom He loves.

Throughout the Old Testament, God sent prophets, priests and holy men of God to warn the people of the consequences of rebelling against the laws of God. However, the Jews rejected them, stoned them, killed them, and ignored the warnings that were sent to keep them in right standing with their heavenly Father. Thus God allowed the Jews to be governed and enslaved by heathen kings and governments. (Jeremiah 40:3)

There are examples of discipline to the prophets and holy men of God in the Old Testament. Moses (Numbers 27:12), David (1 Chronicles 28:3), Solomon (1 Kings 11:11) for examples. Although these men made mistakes and were chastened by God, He didn't stop loving or using them for his glory. He brought appropriate discipline into their lives, but always forgave the truly repentant heart and God restored the relationship.

God will not overlook sin and when we disobey God's word or his calling, we will suffer consequences because of his love for us. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should receive eternal life. He commands us to live holy lives. (1 Peter 1:15-16,

Romans 8:29) If someone proclaims to know Jesus Christ but is living a lifestyle of unrepentant sin and claims to feel fine about it, then that person is not a redeemed child of God. Without holiness, no man shall see God. (See Hebrews 12:14)