

God's Resolution Series
"Do not Despise the Lord's Discipline"
Proverbs 3.11-12

Introduction:

Currently we are considering six characteristics that our heavenly Father desires to implement into our lives in 2017 recorded in Proverbs chapter three. So far God has instructed us to trust in Him with all of our hearts, not to be wise in our own eyes, and to honor Him from our wealth. (Pr.3.5-10) These sermons are posted online if you missed them. (www.christcovenant.cc/media)

This morning we come to Proverbs 3.11-12, which reads:

*My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord
Or loathe His reproof,
For whom the Lord loves He reproveth,
Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.*

You might have noticed that this proverb has a different structure. Today's proverb states the main point and then is followed by a parallel point:

*My son, do not **reject** the discipline of the Lord
Or **loathe** His reproof,*

Then the motive is stated followed by a parallel motive:

*For whom the Lord **loves** He reproveth,
Even as a father corrects the son in whom he **delights**.*

Here we see that the motive for why we should not reject the Lord's discipline or loathe His reproof is because He loves us – He delights in us as His children. This is a very important truth as we consider the Lord's discipline. The Lord disciplines us because He loves us. The Lord disciplines us because He is our heavenly father. The Lord disciplines us because He delights in us as His children. The Lord does not discipline us because He hates us. The Lord does not discipline us because He is an abusive cosmic deity. The Lord doesn't discipline us because He dislikes us. The Lord does not discipline us because we have done something wrong. No! He loves us, He has a paternal relationship with us, and He swoons over us like a gloating grandparent.

ILL: Father of the Bride last weekend

The point is that the Lord loves us as a father loves his son and delights in us as a father delights in his son.

Now that we understand the motive for the Lord's discipline let's seek to discover actually what the Lord's discipline is. This is very important because some people rush to the conclusion that the Lord's discipline is God's punishing us for our disobedience. I think that some people believe that God punishes us because we have done something wrong. I think it is easy for some to conclude, as the Lord's disciples did, that someone must have sinned for a child was born blind. (Jn.9.1-3) But this is a wrong conclusion for a variety of reasons.

First, to insist that God punishes us individually for our sins defiles the gospel. The Bible tells us that Jesus *Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.* To insist that God is not completely satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice for our sin and therefore requires subsequent punishment from us, well, this goes against the very core of the gospel.

Secondly, to insist that God punishes us individually for our sins defiles the character of God. This assertion means that God is requiring double payment. This means that Jesus was punished for our sins and that we are punished for our sins. That's double payment and that's a crime – that is unjust and defiles the character of God.

Thirdly, to insist that God punishes us individually for our sins means that the way God produces holiness in us is through torturing us with pain, sorrow, and suffering. This assertion goes against Proverbs 3.11 that clearly states that the Lord loves us and delights in us as His children.

Let me give ask you a question. What would we call a parent whose only response to a child's disobedience was to inflict physically and emotional pain upon the child. Abuse! Right? So, if we as earthly parents know how to correctly discipline our children how much more does our heavenly Father!

The word for "discipline" in today's text is not the word for punishment. The word for discipline and the word for punishment are two different words with two different meaning. And the Lord's choose the word discipline not punishment. The word chosen by the Lord is "muwcar," which is translated "instruction." So, the discipline of the Lord is not God punishing us or bow beating us into submission but rather the discipline of the Lord is our heavenly Father giving us loving paternal instruction. And the admonition is for us, as God's kids, not to reject, despise, or loathe the Lord's instruction in our lives.

Let's face it – we have all loathe at our parent's instruction and all of our kids have loathed our instruction. You know the look the rolling of the eyes and the despondent stare. You know how it goes, "Honey don't put your hand on the stove – you will get burnt." "Billy! Don't put your hand on the stove – you will get burnt." "William Carter Smith! Don't put you hand on the stove! I've told you – you will get burnt!" OUUUUCH! What happened?! "I burnt my hand."

Now, was it the parent or Billy's fault he got burnt? Billy! Why, because Billy loathed his parent's instruction – he loathe his parent's discipline. To blame the parent would just be ridiculous.

Let me share with you some ways our loving heavenly Father instructs us. First, is through conscience. God has written His Word on our hearts and speaks His truth to us. (Rom.2.15) Secondly, our loving heavenly Father instructs us through His written Word. Thirdly, our loving heavenly Father instructs us through prayer. Fourthly, our loving heavenly Father instructs us through other believers. Lastly, our loving heavenly Father instructs us through providence. If needed, He can make a donkey talk. (Num.22.25-30) Now, a person can reject God's instruction. A person can loathe the Father's instruction but don't blame God when you get burnt!

*My son, do not reject the instruction of the Lord
Or loathe His correction,
For whom the Lord loves He reproveth,
Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.*

The admonition for the son to listen to the instruction of the father is repeated throughout the book of Proverbs. I understand that for some of you your father was absent and for others your father was abusive. I understand that it might be difficult for you to relate to that idea that our heavenly Father loves you and desires to give you beneficial instruction. But it's true. The Bible tells us that our heavenly Father gives us what we need. He will not play games. As Jesus told us, He will not give us a snake instead of a fish. He will not give us a stone instead of a loaf of bread. (Mt.7.9-11) He longs to give us give us what we need to navigate through difficult times.

The admonition is for God's children to not reject, despise, or loathe the Father's loving instruction. The fact is we can become callous towards God's Word instead of remaining soft and tender. We can become like the children of Israel complaining that God doesn't really care and He has led us into the desert to die. We can begin questioning God intentions and character. We can become despondent to His Word. But our loving heavenly Father desire that you would reject all of these things and embrace His loving instruction.

Our text today is also quoted in the New Testament book of Hebrews chapter twelve. (Heb.12.5-13) As a student of Scripture, you know that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek. What is interesting is that Greek word used in the book of Hebrews for discipline is "pideah." Pideah is a word used in the Greek used to describe a father's role in training and educating his children. The word is used to describe paternal instruction that will increase virtue, cultivate the soul, correct mistakes, and curb emotions so that a child might mature in the most positive way. So the point is that in both the Old and New Testament, God chooses the word that focuses in on His paternal role as our heavenly Father who desires to gives us instruction so that we would mature as His children and grow in His love.

Of course, the book of Proverbs and the book of Hebrews are two different types of biblical literature. The book of Proverbs is a book full of short pithy sayings, casted in poetic form, and composed for a broad audience. When we read Proverbs 3.11-12 there is no context surrounding the admonition to embrace the Father's instruction. Whereas, the book of Hebrews is an epistle (a letter), written to a direct audience, giving biblical instruction relating to their circumstances. As you read the book of Hebrews you begin to understand the context and begin to comprehend that these Christians were going through a time of tremendous conflict and tumor. They were carrying huge spiritual and emotional burdens and many of them were on the verge of giving up.

Since becoming Christians, their had become a public spectacle of reproach and tribulations. They had experienced persecution because of their faith in Christ. Many of them had been imprisoned while others had their property taken away because of their faith in Christ. (Heb.10.32-34) So I think it fair to say that these believers were under tremendous stress and enduring great hostility. Even though they had sought to endure these hardships, they were growing weary and beginning to lose heart. (Heb.12.3) They were leaning on their own understanding and had forgotten that the loving heavenly Father desired to give them instructions so that they can endure these trials. (Heb.12.5a)

You can't blame them for having questions like "Why?" "How come?" And "Where is God is all of this?" These types of questions are normal and expected. As I shared with you in the first sermon of this series, "it is difficult to trust God in times of adversity. We want to be strong, we want to be spiritual, but we feel weak, disabled, and paralyzed. And then we feel guilty that we aren't stronger, that we are not more spiritual, which drives us even deeper into despair." Many times we feel like we are in a downward spiral into the abyss.

Their circumstances had begun to encumber their faith. Their calamity had become like a rope tied around their ankles getting tighter and tighter as they sought to run the race with endurance. (Heb.12.1) They were beginning to lose heart and to grow weary (Heb.12.3), so the Lord writes them a letter as says,

And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

*"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline,
and do not lose heart when He rebukes you,
because the Lord disciplines the one He loves,
and He chastens everyone he accepts as his son." (Heb.12.5-6)*

These Christians had forgotten that our loving heavenly Father desires to speak words of instruction to us during times of hardship. They had forgotten that these words of instruction would increase virtue, cultivate our soul, correct our mistakes, and curb our emotions so that we will mature as His children in the most positive way.

The Lord continues, *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons.* (Heb.12.7a)

Let's do some translation now that we know the meaning of the words.

It is for instruction that you endure. You endure so that you can receive the Father's loving instruction. Why? Because *God deals with you as* a father would with a son. The Lord encourages these Christians to seek God's instruction as they endure these hardships. The Lord reminds them that He is their heavenly Father who loves them and accepts us as His children. He assures them that they are legitimate sons and daughters of God. (Heb.12.7b-8)

As I have said before, I can't tell you why certain things happen. I can't tell you why these Christians were being persecuted while other Christians at the same time were living in peace and prosperity. But I can tell you that the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; but Jesus came that you would life, and have *it* abundantly. (Jn.10.10) I can tell you that the thief seeks to steal your assurance of the Father's love. I can tell you that the thief seeks to steal your confidence that you are a child of God. I can tell you that Jesus came to bind the thief and destroy his tactics to attempts to distract you from God's love.

The Lord continues in Hebrews twelve to list a series of promises for those who seek God's instruction as they endure hardship. (Heb.12.9-11) The Lord tells us He that if we embrace the Lord's instruction, especially during difficult times, that we will live. (Heb.12.9) He promises that if we humbly receive His engrafted Word that we will save our lives from despair, discouragement, and darkness. (Js.1.21b) He promises that if we embrace God's instruction we will grow in holiness. (Heb.12.10) He promises that if we embrace God's instruction we will train our hearts and emotions. (Heb.12.11a) He promises that those who embrace His instruction will yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness. (Heb.12.11b)

Four promises: life, holiness, peace, and righteousness. These are the gifts our loving heavenly Father gives for those who do not reject His instruction or loathe His rebuke. If we seek Him, if we embrace His Word, if we welcome His love, He will blessed us in the midst of our calamity.

The Lord concludes in Hebrews twelve:

Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. (Heb.12.12-13)

These are remarkable verses. Our heavenly Father knows that there will be times when of arms will be feeble and knees will be weak. Our heavenly Father knows that some experiences in our lives will cause us to become lame but if we seek His instruction we will not become disabled but rather we will be healed.

Thanks be the God!

Conclusion:

The Apostle Paul wrote, *When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.* (1Cor.13.11)

This morning I am asking for you to do away with childish things and stop despising the Lord instruction. I remember all the murmuring and complaining our kids would caused when it come time to go on summer vacation. "I don't want to go! You're taking me away from my friends! You're ruining my summer! You don't care about my feelings! You are a dictator!" Only for them to become adults and say, "Thank You all taking us on all those vacations! All the places you took me during the summer. Most of my friends have never experienced what I've experience. They don't know our country and the world like I know it." What happened? Did an alien take over my son's body? No, my son gave up childish things and became a man. He realized the "father knows best."

The Father knows you need a Savior, forgiveness, and reconciliation and that can only come through Christ Jesus.

The Father knows that you need help and assistance in this world.

The Father knows that you are weak and in need of strength.

*My son, do not reject the instruction of the Lord
Or loathe His corrections,
For whom the Lord loves He reproveth,
Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.*