

Discipline is Grace – Heb 12:3-11

Children of the Conquest #4

Introduction – Often, parents withhold needed discipline because they are “giving grace.” But this begs the question. What is discipline and what is discipline specifically in the promises and presence of our heavenly Father? The scriptures teach clearly that discipline is grace. Refusing to discipline your children (according to God’s ways) is not giving grace and love; it is withholding the means God uses to give grace and love to His children. As Christian parents, we are to imitate our heavenly Father.

The Discipline of our Heavenly Father (Heb 12:3-11) – The Hebrew Christians found themselves under trials and persecutions and this book was written to them to exhort them not to abandon faith in Jesus alone for their salvation. They were to run the race with endurance, fixing their eyes on the prize: Jesus Himself (vv1-2). God is not calling Christians to endure more than what Jesus Himself endured on our behalf (vv3-4). They were to see their trials and persecutions, not as evidence of the abandonment of their heavenly Father, but rather as the good discipline of their heavenly Father. They were to not despise it but rather receive it as evidence of His powerful love (vv5-6). God’s discipline is illustrated to Christians by looking at the discipline a godly father brings upon his own children. This is the way fathers deal with legitimate sons (vv7-8). While earthly fathers’ discipline is imperfect, it still remains a great example to us of God’s perfect discipline, because when they did “what seemed best to them...” it yielded peaceable fruit (vv9-11). Even more so, the perfect discipline of our heavenly Father accomplishes His perfect plan. Of course, this has broad application for all Christians in every situation of life.

Consider – The use of this example simply *does not work* unless the Christians *had seen* the effects of faithful discipline from a human father upon his children. Those Hebrew Christians, saturated in the covenant promises of the scriptures, understood the efficacy of discipline in the promises of God.

The Discipline of Godly Parents – It is important to make a disclaimer here. We are not teaching the general effects of discipline upon children like a behaviorist. Well-behaved children are certainly a good thing to have, and many of these principles applied can have an impact on the behavior of your children. But that is not our goal; far from it. We are teaching the sanctifying work of discipline, a grace of God, which God has instructed parents to use in the context of the promises for their children. This is part of the reason “scientific studies” have no place in this discussion. We are not talking about spanking; we are talking about Spirit-filled spanking. Behaviorists discipline by works; Christians discipline by faith. The difference is the distance between heaven and hell.

Sanctifying Grace of Discipline (Heb 12:11) – Discipline doesn’t look like what it is when it is occurring. It requires faith by the parents and the work of God in the child, but for both it isn’t joyful for the present and it should be painful for the child. But notice what we are to hold to by faith: “*nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*”

Let Wisdom Speak (the Book of Proverbs) – Proverbs are not simply “the way the world works” but more importantly, “the way the Lord works in the world.” Faith in the grace of God allows us to see and “*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*”

Prov 3:11-12 – Discipline proves they are your children and they are loved. Teach this.

Prov 13:1 – Based on 3:11-12, teach your children to accept discipline as a grace.

Prov 13:24 – Discipline is love; if you refuse to spank your children, you hate them.

Prov 15:5 – Discipline is not punishment (simple justice); it seeks to accomplish a change.

Prov 19:18 – There is hope when discipline is swift; chasten him now with the long-view in mind.

Prov 20:30 – The sanctifying work of spankings cleanses the heart and the home; it produces a cheerful home.

Prov 22:6 – Your child has a soul, and God is using your faithful discipline for their future. It is worth the interruption.

Prov 22:15 – Your child is a son of Adam, not a clean slate at all. The debate must stop: Spanking works.

Prov 23:13-14 – Someone once called these verses “Rod Evangelism.” But only in light of the promises in Christ

Prov 29:17 – Children can be very delightful people, standing with you in the gates.

Discipline is Grace: Give Them Wisdom – “*The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother*” (Prov 29:15). Do you want wise children? Education alone does not produce wisdom. How many of our nation’s (and our church’s) leaders were not faithfully spanked as children with an eye to the promises? Is it no wonder we are such a foolish and immoral people? Think long-term. Mold your mind to the scriptures and the promises of God. Stand on those promises and pick up the rod.