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Take Heart in Discipline

“It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” (Hebrews 12:7 NASB).

Who can honestly say that they enjoy discipline? As children, we tried to get out of it as much as possible, because it was painful and “unpleasant.” People universally shun discipline because it is the result of doing something perceived as bad, wrong, or shameful. When we are not being disciplined, we think we are “good,” and if we deny the authority’s right to discipline us, then we are never “wrong.” This breeds self-righteousness and pride because we perceive ourselves as “not guilty” and “in the right.” This is why mankind has a tendency to hate discipline because it contradicts the self-serving impulses of the flesh and the boastful pride of life: *“To the wicked God says, ‘What right have you to tell of My statutes And to take My covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline, And you cast My words behind you’”* (Psalm 50:16-17).

Opposing God’s discipline appeals to man’s pride because they don’t want to acknowledge that they answer to His judgment. The truth, however, is *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23) *“as it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one’”* (Romans 3:10-12), *“and we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things”* (Romans 2:2). The only way out from under God’s judgment is through Jesus Christ, who said, *“he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life,*

and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (John 5:24) —*“to them He gave the right to become children of God”* (John 1:12a). The redeeming blood of Jesus adopts us into God’s family as His Children, but just like in parenting, it is His correction daily that matures us ever more to be like Him: *“For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification”* (Romans 6:19).

Unfortunately, we Believers tend to prefer appearing “good” over enduring God’s correction to make us more like His good Son. So often, we shun the discipline of the Lord because it “tortures” our flesh, reminding us that we are not righteous in ourselves. But when we do this, we are really hiding from His love: *“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives”* (Hebrews 12:5b-6). This correction is between you and God the Father, not for us Children to “dish” out to one another.

Now, *“if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness”* (Hebrews 12:8-11). A Body disciplined in God’s holiness gives glory to Him because it imitates Him rather than seeking its own desires. Amen.

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