

Run with Endurance Part 3

Hebrews 12:5-6

Dusty Burris

November 17, 2024

Well, it is our joy this morning to turn back to Hebrews chapter 12. As we continue our way through this wonderful letter, please turn there with me today.

Specifically, we're studying verses 5 and 6. As you're turning there, I just was thinking this week about the fact that the concept of discipline in our culture and world has fallen on hard times. Discipline in all of its forms is something that the culture used to value as an indispensable tool for training ourselves and training others, but now for many it is at best an unnecessary inconvenience, or at worst, a moral evil. Discipline, of course, is a broad term.

We can use it to refer to several things. It can mean punishment for wrong behavior, or it can mean intentional training that we submit ourselves to for a higher purpose and goal. But discipline on both fronts has gone out of vogue for many in our day and age.

The culture now frowns upon, of course, spanking of children. Many believe now the parent's chief role is not to direct and shape a child, but instead just to affirm that child in whatever their heart desires to do. In the area of bodily discipline, of course, on the one hand, our culture idolizes the body and how we look and trying to stave off the aging process.

But on the other hand, we don't want the discipline that it takes to conform our body in any way, and so we look to products and industries that promise to give us what we want in our body without that pesky encumbrance of discipline.

Financial discipline is no different. Don't worry about learning to save and invest with wisdom. You should have it all, and you should have it now, no matter the cost.

If you stop and think about it, while there are many individual examples that we could point to of those who still value discipline, on the whole, culturally speaking, it is becoming quickly a relic of the past. Ultimately, it reveals a love of comfort, a love of ease, and an anti-authoritarian bent.

Don't tell me what to do. Don't tell me to stop this behavior and start that behavior. Discipline grates against our natural desire in the flesh for self-autonomy.

But is that how the Scriptures teach us to think about discipline? Absolutely not. The Scriptures are clear that discipline is a moral good. God has given us specific instructions regarding the discipline of children, bodily discipline, financial discipline.

Beyond that, the chief area of discipline that the Scriptures exalt, of course, is spiritual discipline. God gives us instructions about all of these different areas of discipline, but the Bible, over and over again, holds out to us that the best form of discipline we can pursue is spiritual discipline, and that God is committed to helping us in that task. Today, as we come

to Hebrews chapter 12, the author of Hebrews is going to teach us and begin a lengthy discussion on the fatherly discipline of God.

What we're going to learn as we look at this topic together is that God's fatherly discipline is not only to be embraced, it's to be cherished, because it's an expression of his loving concern and commitment to our spiritual good as a heavenly father.

Let me just remind us quickly how we got here. The theme of Hebrews, of course, is the superiority of Christ. It's been proven to us time and time again. Now we've been applying that theme for some time as the author has called us to persevere in unwavering faith. We saw that illustrated in chapter 11, and now this ultimate application of the Hall of Faith comes to us at the opening verses of chapter 12.

The ultimate application here is in verses 1 and 2. *"Therefore, since we have so a great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

As we said before, the primary application of the Hall of Faith in chapter 11 is **Run Faith's Race With Endurance**. Even today, as we get into our passage, that theme is propelling us forward. Run with endurance.

Last week, we mentioned that verse 3 serves as a bridge between the first two verses and the rest of this section, which will run down through verse 11. Verses 3 to 11 form this teaching section that we are edging into this morning.

Last week, we looked at verses 3 and 4. Let me just remind us of those verses, and we'll also read our verses today at the same time. Verses 3 to 6:

3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,

"MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

Now, as I said last week, this ushers us into this new theme. It's a theme we'll continue to unpack today. And here is the theme. **Cultivate endurance by considering Christ, battling sin, and embracing God's Fatherly discipline**. Today, we edge into that last part of the theme, one of the key ingredients of enduring in the faith is to embrace God's fatherly discipline.

Now, what we have in verses 3 to 6, I'll just remind you of the structure. Last time, we saw in verse 3 an opening command, and I told you it would be followed by two reminders. We got into reminder number 1 last week. Today, we'll be in reminder number 2. That opening command in verse 3 was **Consider Christ's Enduring Faith**. A call again to look to Christ. And

then a reminder of truth, **Battle Sin Unto Death** in verse 4. We were reminded that God has proven faithful to help his people persevere even to the point of death and martyrdom. And he argued from the greater to the lesser that if God is able to keep us and hold us fast even to the point of death, surely he can hold us fast in our battle with sin today that is much lesser than those things that other Christians have experienced in the past. So that motivates us then to get up, keep fighting. God is not done. God is still faithful.

But now as we come to verse 5, we are introduced to a second reminder. Verses 5 and 6 outline this for us.

5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,
“MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;
6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

So not only are we to consider Christ, verse 3, and keep battling our sin, verse 4, but now we see a second reminder. Reminder number 2, **Embrace God's Fatherly Discipline**. Embrace God's fatherly discipline. This will be verses 5 through verse 11.

Notice in the opening words of verse 5, it begins with the word “and.” And you have forgotten. This is why I said this is a second reminder.

He gave us the first phrase, *“you have not yet resisted”* in verse 4. Now he says and in addition to that, secondly, *“you have forgotten.”* This is our second reminder. These Christians are so weary in their faith, they're struggling in their faith, that the author is clued in to the fact that they must have forgotten a very crucial exhortation that all of us have to keep in mind in the midst of the trials of life.

This exhortation comes as a direct quote from Proverbs chapter 3. But before he gets into that direct quote, he really sets us up for the key point that he's going to make in verses 3 through 11. What is the point? Why is he even talking to us about God's discipline? It is this reason right here. Look back at verse 5. He says *“and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons.”*

That's the point. This is going to be the emphasis that we'll see played out in the weeks ahead. Now I'll warn you ahead of time, you'll likely have some questions today about God's discipline and how we think about that and apply it to our own lives after we're done today. That's because we're not done. We've got to get through verse 11. So hang with me.

We're going to introduce the topic today and we'll answer some questions and stir up others. But Lord willing, by the time we're through verse 11, we'll all clearly see how we're to think rightly about the discipline of God. But understand, the point here is that we are to take this instruction in the sense of a familial relationship from a father to his son or to a daughter.

He says here that this Proverb is written this way, from a father to his son, and because the Scriptures are timeless, it's appropriate and right for us to receive it the same way. In our case, as if God the Father, who inspired these words, is speaking to us, if you're in Christ, as His children, father to son and daughter. He's giving us permission to apply it this way.

So that means this is not just a personal address, it is familial, it's intimate. And that familial connection between us and God in which he operates as our father is going to play a key role in how the author explains this passage and applies it to us in our personal lives. So keep that concept firmly in mind as we walk through the passage. God is our father speaking to us as his children.

Now throughout Hebrews so far, the author has followed a consistent pattern. Where he often quotes directly from the Old Testament and then explains and applies that passage. He's a very good expositional preacher in that regard. He's just taken us from passage to passage to passage.

Today, the passage before us is Proverbs 3, verses 11 and 12. That's verses 5 and 6 in Hebrews 12. But in Proverbs, verses 11 and 12 of chapter 3. And he just gives us a direct quote from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. It's just a direct quote.

*"MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;
6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."*

Now to begin to dissect this proverb, I need to put it in its original context just for a moment. And I promise this will be profitable. When you look at Proverbs chapter 3 and the first 12 verses, what you find is the verses are broken into pairs. And each pair of verses, one and two, three and four, five and six, so on and so forth, brings up a new point, a new proverb that is to be highlighted.

Here we have verses 11 and 12 of Proverbs chapter 3. This is the sixth pair of verses in Proverbs chapter 3. And each one of those proverbs follows the pattern of a proverb, which usually employs Hebrew poetry. Now remember, we've talked about Hebrew poetry before. In English, when we write poetry, we typically think about the rhyming of words, usually at the end of a phrase or a sentence.

But in Hebrew, when they wanted to rhyme, they would use the rhyming of ideas or the rhyming of truths, not so much based around the rhyming of the words. And that's what we have here. In Proverbs 3, verse 11, you have two statements that make the same basic point, just stated differently.

And then in verse 12, you have two statements that make the same basic point, just stated differently. This is Hebrew poetry. It serves to magnify that truth and to present it in a way that really makes us think, that really grasps our attention. That's the point of this proverbial way of speaking.

So in this case, stay with me here, in our text, it's verse 5, Hebrews 12, verse 5. What we have here are two statements that give the truth he wants us to think on. And in verse 6, we have two statements that tell us why. So, verse 5, this is what you should do or not do. Verse 6, this is why you should do it.

That's what we'll see together as we break this apart. Now notice it begins, this quote in verse 5, with the words, "my son", "my son." That's why he said, this is addressed to you as sons. To read it from a father to a son. In our case, from God the Father to us as sons and daughters. And that is important, because I want you to think about for a moment a biblical home in which the father-son relationship is functioning in the way that God designed.

When a son hears the voice of his father speaking in the context of that kind of relationship, the father's voice should impact him in a way that no other voice does. Just as you can hear your dad's voice, your mom's voice across the room and know it's them, and you better stop and listen. That's the idea here.

"My son," an intimate address. Hear the words of your heavenly Father. And even if you did not have an earthly father in your home that was a biblical father, you have a heavenly Father who is perfect and has never done you anything but good. And so hear the voice of that father, your heavenly father, as he says, my son or my daughter.

Well, what is it that he's communicating to us in these verses? Well, first of all, we've got to look at these parallel statements in verse 5. And this will reveal the truth that we're to consider. So let's look at them side by side.

Here's statement number 1. **Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord.** That's statement 1. Here's the rhyming statement that makes the same truth. **Nor faint when you are reproved by him.** It's doubling down on this idea. There are some differences between them, but they make the same basic idea. Notice that the phrases "do not regard lightly" and the words "nor faint" go together. Those are rhyming phrases. And the word "discipline" and the word "reproved" go together. Those are rhyming words in the sense of their meaning.

So let's break this apart. Here's the big picture. Before we get into the weeds, here's the point. There are improper responses to divine discipline. The idea is don't respond in the wrong way to divine discipline. And there are two of them that are mentioned here for us.

Now as we consider this, let's start with the two words "discipline" and "reproved." Because the word "discipline" is the key word that runs through this whole section. If we miss that, then we miss the whole meaning. If we don't understand what the word discipline means.

So what does the word discipline mean? Well, the word is a varied word. It's a rich word. And we have to consider the fact that it's coming to us in our Bible in its third language. That is, it's written in Hebrew originally in Proverbs 3, then translated into Greek in the Septuagint, which is given to us, which is what this New Testament book's written in, and now we've translated it into English. So in order to really grasp it, I want to show you both the Hebrew and the Greek definition of the words that are represented here.

So here's the Hebrew definition of the word discipline. "Discipline in the sense of chastisement, training in the sense of instruction, or exhortation and warning." Three different meanings depending on the context in which it's used. Discipline in the sense of chastisement, training in the sense of instruction, or exhortation and warning.

Now, when the Greek translators looked at that word in Hebrew, they tried to find a Greek word that would capture the variety of meanings in that word. So here's the Greek word that was chosen that really is the word behind our text here in Hebrews 12. It means this, "the act of providing guidance for responsible living, upbringing, training, instruction, or in our literature, (that is the Scriptures), chiefly as it is attained by discipline and correction."

So it is the use of discipline and correction, but for the purpose of giving guidance for responsible living, upbringing, training, instruction. It's the same Greek word that's used in the passage Ephesians 6:4, which all of us parents should have memorized. *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline, (that's the word) and instruction of the Lord."*

So now when the English translators come to put it in our Bible, they chose a great word, the word discipline, because as you know, we use that term in lots of different ways. And that represents well both the Hebrew word and the Greek word.

We can mean discipline in the sense of a spanking, we can mean discipline in the sense of a corrective conversation, we can mean discipline in the sense of training and guidance, moral training, physical training. So, in this proverb, what we need to see is that our heavenly Father disciplines us in every sense of that word. In every sense.

Now we're going to see in different places, different aspects of discipline highlighted in this passage. But especially as we get into the application and explanation in the weeks to come, we will see that it's appropriate to think of this in the full variety of the word discipline. This is how God interacts with us. He gives correction. He instructs in the truth and warns us of error. He disciplines us in the sense of putting us through intentional circumstances designed to burn away spiritual fat and build spiritual muscle.

God does all of those things in the life of His children. So in this proverb, we will see that broad meaning come to life. So, if you want to think of one definition, take the Greek definition. "The act of providing guidance for responsible living, upbringing, training, instruction attained by discipline and correction." So when I say discipline, when we say discipline in Hebrews 12, that's the definition you ought to have in mind.

Now remember the parallel word reproves. He disciplines and he reproves. The word reproves focuses on the corrective aspect of fatherly discipline. The word means "to penalize, for wrongdoing, to punish, to discipline."

Now the word reprove might come as a bit of a shock to us in the New Testament church. Many Christians have made the unfortunate mistake of thinking that God operated one way in the Old Testament and now He operates differently in the New Testament. The reality is God is God.

He has always been a God of grace, mercy, love and compassion and a God of justice and a God of wrath who takes sin seriously. He's holy and He's been holy in the Old Testament and the New Testament and He's been gracious in the Old Testament and the New Testament. He has not changed.

And so what we have to understand is that these aspects of God's character, His grace, His kindness, His long-suffering and His justice and His discipline even are not in competition but they're in harmony with one another. God is all of these things all the time at the same time. He's a God who gives discipline and reprobates His children but He's also a God who is full of grace and mercy and those two things go hand in hand.

So, those are the two rhyming words, so to speak, discipline and reproved, but now let's back up and look at the two rhyming phrases that precede those words that really help us understand the meaning. What is it that we are not to do? Two incorrect responses to the discipline of the Lord. Number one, "*DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD.*" Do not regard lightly.

We're not to think lightly of God's discipline. The meaning is we're not to be flippant about God's discipline, to brush it aside in all of its forms. The discipline of the Lord is to be taken seriously and soberly. We're not to allow the fact that God is exceedingly gracious to lull us to sleep in our response to the discipline of our faithful God.

And there are several ways that we can do this, to take it lightly. We regard the discipline of the Lord lightly when we either act or blatantly say something like, I know this is sinful, but God will forgive me. That is to take the discipline of the Lord lightly. It is to show a dangerous lack of the fear of God. It's downplaying His loving discipline, which is designed for our good, our spiritual good, to mold us and sanctify us and grow us in the truth.

Another way that we can take the discipline of the Lord lightly is by not giving serious consideration to what it is that God is seeking to teach us in our circumstance. That is, not looking at our lives through the lens of Scripture so that we may know God more and obey God more and trust God more.

If you have children, then you have a living illustration of this concept. As loving parents, we often give our children chores that they need to do around the house. And as they age, those chores grow both in number and complexity.

Now, what's the primary point of chores in a Christian household? It's to train our children in life skills and character. A loving, wise parent knows that they're ultimately raising that child to leave the home, and they want that child to be able to function in society as an adult. And so they begin to design chores that simulate real-life scenarios that that child's going to have to live out one day when they're on their own.

But does a child always show gratitude and serious consideration of the deep life principle that you're hoping to teach them through those chores? No. With rarity. Their temptation is to do the least amount of work that you will find acceptable as quickly as possible and as mindlessly as possible.

And this is what it looks like to take discipline lightly. That is, to not consider, what is it I'm supposed to be learning? What is the point of this? That's one way that we can take discipline lightly.

Now, we need to consider a second incorrect response to the discipline of the Lord that's given to us here. This specifically is an incorrect response to God's reproof. He says, "*NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM*" So don't take discipline lightly, and don't faint when you are reproved by Him.

Now, this is the temptation that all of us have when we receive corrective discipline. It describes our tendency to lose heart, to fall into a woe-is-me mentality. It's a temptation to just want to throw in the towel and quit. Just forget it. It comes when we don't see the loving, fatherly heart of God behind the discipline.

It also comes as a result of not wanting to do the thing we are required to do. And now, we've been disciplined, and so we not only don't want to do the thing we have to do, but we have a sore bottom to boot, so to speak. And in our flesh, we just want to pout, and we want to quit. We want to faint, instead of humbling ourselves and obeying.

So, the wisdom in this proverb is instruction on how not to respond to fatherly discipline. Don't brush it aside flippantly, and don't throw in the towel. Those are the main ideas here.

So, now we understand the principle, but why? What's the point of this, and why is he saying that we shouldn't respond in these two incorrect ways? Well, verse 6 tells us why. Why shouldn't we take the Lord's discipline lightly? Why shouldn't we faint at His reproof? Here again, in verse 6, we have parallel statements. Here are the two statements in verse 6. "*FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES*," Statement 1. "*AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES*." So, notice the parallel statements. We have in verse 1, or the first half of the verse, "those whom the Lord loves." That is parallel to the statement, "every son whom He receives." And then we have the word, "He disciplines," and the words, "He scourges." So, we're going to do the exact same thing we did with verse 5. We're going to look at each of these parallel groups.

First of all, starting with the words, "disciplines" and "scourges." The good news is, we've already looked at the word, discipline. We're not going to spend a lot of time here. The only difference between the word here and the word in verse 5 is this is the verbal form of the same root Greek word. And the definition is very similar. Here's the definition.

"To assist in the development of a person's ability to make appropriate choices. To practice discipline." So, in this context, the focus is going to be on corrective discipline, but with the intention of instruction.

Which is a good reminder for us as parents even, that when we even give corrective discipline to our children, the goal of that is not just punishment, but it is teaching. It's instruction to teach them what it is to flee from evil and to cling to what is good. So, this first term focuses on the intention behind corrective discipline.

Now, the second word is the word, "scourges." Not a word we use often in our common language. The word "scourges," in its most literal sense, is a legal form of punishment. It was used by the Jews and the Romans. And literally, the word means to "beat with a whip or lash. To whip, flog, or scourge."

But, of course, we're not to think about God beating us with a lash. That's not the idea. Instead, when it's used in this sense of divine discipline, Fatherly discipline, it means to punish with discipline in mind. To punish or to chastise.

Now, again, this may be a confusing and difficult concept for us to grasp as New Testament Christians. So, let me really dig in here for a moment.

I think it's important that we begin by explaining what this does not mean when we talk about the corrective discipline of God. What it does not mean. Now, the first thing you have to understand, the biggest thing you have to understand is that it is not a reference to judgment for our sin.

When we talk about God giving corrective discipline to a true Christian, it is not judgment for sin. And that's a crucial distinction to make because that gets at the gospel and the implications of the gospel. The Bible is clear that if you are a true Christian, you have been justified. You've been declared righteous in the courtroom of God, never to be put back in that courtroom again. That decision has been made on the basis of Christ and His righteousness, and it is done.

This is why we have verses like Romans 8:1. *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* And he goes on in that same chapter to continue along those same lines in verses 31 to 35. He says, *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all? How will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who's at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

So, as believers who have repented of sin, put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, we have been justified. No condemnation, and that decision will never be revisited. So, what is the meaning then of this idea of the Father punishing a Christian for sin? Well, to answer that question of what it does mean, we only need to look at the next set of parallel phrases in verse 6. Look back at verse 6. He says, *"THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES,"* in the first half, and secondly, *"EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."* In the Hebrew, literally, it is "every son in whom He delights."

Think about this. It puts the whole concept in a new light. The reason that we should not treat God's discipline lightly, nor faint at His reproof, listen to this, is because His discipline is a special privilege reserved only for those who are the recipients of His love and adoption. This is why. The first phrase highlights the fact that God's divine discipline is not to be seen as an expression of His judgment, but of His love for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines.

God's judgment is reserved for unbelievers, those who are rebels against Him, who have therefore earned His just wrath. Unbelievers receive judgment for their sin. When God brings trials into the lives of unbelievers, it only serves to magnify their rebellion and hatred for God, which only further shows God's justice in judging them.

If you want to see a picture, a proverbial picture of how an unbeliever responds to the difficulties in their life, Proverbs 19:3 is a good description. It says, *“The foolishness of man ruins his way, and his heart rages against the LORD.”* The fool ruins his life, but who does he point his finger at? Not himself, but God. You did this to me.

Not so the believer. God continually trains His people in righteousness. He even gives divine correction when they temporarily harden their hearts in sin as an expression of His eternal love. It's an expression of the love of God. You may say, is this really what God teaches in Scripture? Well, just listen to a few verses.

Psalm 119:71 “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn your statutes.” Psalm 119:75. *“I know, O LORD, that your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.”* What about His words to the church in Laodicea in Revelation 3:19? *“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent.”*

So, as we put this together, the judgment of God is reserved for the lost, but the discipline of God is a special privilege of those on whom God has set His love. But it gets even better than that, because in the second half, in the second half of the parallel statement, it says He scourges every son whom He receives, or in whom He delights. The reason that the discipline of God is reserved for those He loves is because it is the privilege of those He has adopted as His own children.

To be disciplined by God is to be treated as a son, or as a daughter. It's an immense privilege in the sense that, because while discipline can be painful in the moment, it is at the same time a comforting reminder that I am His. This work that He's doing in me is hard, and it's stretching me to my core, but it's a reminder He's at work in me because I'm His.

It's an expression of His love, His adoption. Let's think for a moment about the adoption that we have in Christ. Listen to Ephesians 1, 3-6. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.* (What are some of those spiritual blessings? Verse 4.) *“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him, in love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”*

Paul goes on to mention the same thing to the Romans. Romans 8:14-17 *“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you've not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you've received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, heirs also, heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, so that we may also be glorified with Him.”*

Christian, don't you see that God has committed Himself to you for eternity, and He will never let you go? Even to the extent that He has set His love on you to the point that you, who were once an enemy and a rebel against God, are now not only called friend, but son or daughter.

Don't you see the great love of God? Don't you see how it changes the way we think about the way God disciplines us in all of its forms? He says you are His child and you bear the family name, so to speak, and so He must make you what you must be to be with Him forever, in the same way that often our children reflect the way we look physically so that others can see them walking around and even without knowing for sure say that's so-and-so's child because of their nose or their ears or their eyes in the same way, spiritually speaking God is molding us more and more to His character and His image that we look like our heavenly Father in that sense.

Therefore, He must be busy about the work of training and equipping and maturing and transforming us into His own image. And one day that will culminate into bringing us to Himself spotless, perfect that we may share in His glory and see Him face-to-face.

So that is why He so graciously disciplines you as a Christian and me in every sense of the word. He instructs you, He trains you, He corrects you, even reproves you but He does it all as an overflow of His perfect love as a Father. It changes everything.

You see, the author of Hebrews is reminding us of this proverb because he knows the situation of the original audience. Just imagine for a moment your possessions have been unlawfully taken from you. You've lost your home because the government seized it unlawfully.

Imagine that your spouse is in prison, unlawfully, simply because they're in Christ. These are the kinds of things that these Christians are going through. And He's desperate to remind them of these truths because when we walk through trials, it's very easy for us to become jaded in our view of God.

We misinterpret the trial He brings into our life. We misinterpret His delay in answering our prayers. We misinterpret when He says no to the prayer that we're asking for.

And the author is seeking to reorient us to truth. He says the truth is God is not against you, Christian. He's not glaring down from heaven with an angry face.

He looks at you with the eyes of perfect love that can only come from the heart of a divine, heavenly Father and then He goes to work on you, training you, molding you into what you must become. And only when we understand the discipline of God in this fatherly, loving context will we see Him as we should and understand it as the benefit that He means for it to be.

This reminded me of a story that I heard from one of my professors in seminary years ago. He and his wife had had the privilege of adopting many children. They were also foster parents and on one occasion they were given the privilege of caring for a foster child four or five years old and this was a foster child as is often the case that unfortunately come from a very difficult background which included, among other things, physical abuse. Now part of their agreement with the foster care system is that they would not spank the foster child in their home and they abided by that rule.

But when it came to their other children who were theirs, they continued to treat them as they always had. They raised them in the discipline and fear of the Lord and so it was their habit that if a child disobeyed in a way that warranted it, they would take them into a private room calmly, discuss the issue with them, affirm their love to them and then give them a calm spanking. This went on for months as this foster child watched this happening, the other children being treated this way.

But one day they received the wonderful news that they would not only be able to foster this child but bring this child into their family officially and adopt this little boy. They were overjoyed. So they went through the process and after the boy had been adopted, they realized now the situation has changed and he is now our son which means we're going to have to treat him as we do all of our children.

But they wanted to handle this carefully knowing his past and because of the abuse that he had received, they sat him down to have a loving conversation and explain how overjoyed they were that he was now their son, but that would mean that they would need to treat him how the Bible says that they ought to treat the rest of their children which would include spanking when he disobeyed. And this sweet little boy who had been so badly abused in his previous home looked at them with excitement in his voice and said, oh I've never been spanked before. Now you see that sweet response that just by observing the difference between the loving discipline of a father and a mother intended for the good of that child and the difference that was from the hateful abuse that came from those who did not act towards him in love, no one had to teach him the difference.

This is what the author of Hebrews wants us to see. Don't misread what God is doing in your life. He loves you. He's intended it for your good. He does not treat you like the rest of the world but as His sons and as His daughters and all that He designs for your life, He means only to use it for your good, for your instruction, for your growth, for your sanctification.

And so Christian the application this morning is simple. Embrace God's fatherly discipline. Embrace God's fatherly discipline. Let me ask you, have you allowed your trials to produce a jaded view of God? The scriptures are clear.

If you're a believer, He has providential trials for you that He means to use as an expression of His love to sanctify you and grow you in the truth. I want to encourage you this week to seriously consider the way that this proverb should affect the way you view those trials. Do you view the trials and difficulties that God brings into your life as a means of lovingly sanctifying you? Do you respond lightly to the discipline of the Lord? Do you faint at the discipline of the Lord just throwing in the towel, just forget it? Both of those responses are incorrect.

When we understand that these trials are from a heavenly Father from a disposition of love for our good, it helps us proactively seek to grow and learn in the midst of our trials and to double down in our faith. The point here, remember, is endure in the faith. And one of the ways we do that is by embracing the fatherly discipline of God.

But understand, all of this assumes that you are a son or daughter of the King. Let me ask you this morning before we close, have you personally come to the place in which you've

repented of your sins and put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? What we've read this morning is a description only of how God operates towards his true children, those who have humbled themselves in repentance and faith. Have you personally understood your sin and that it separates you from a holy God? Have you understood that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again on your place, taking your sin on himself on that cross to pay the penalty that your sins deserved? Will you humble yourself even now and turn to Christ in repentance and faith? If you do, you'll not only be forgiven of your sins, but as we learned today, you'll be adopted into His family as a true son or daughter of your heavenly Father.

Don't leave today without being reconciled to a good and holy God.