Disciplined as Sons

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[0:00] Today we come to a topic in our study of the book of Hebrews chapter 12.

! We're going to look at verses 4-11. And this is a topic that has practically disappeared in the American landscape.
Within the American church, it is only infrequently preached on or taught. Even among believers, there is much ignorance and disregard for this topic.
And I'm speaking of the discipline of God. Although this topic is a little discussed in Christian circles, God has much to say about it.
Let's listen to these words of Hebrews chapter 12, verses 4-11. Verse 5-11. Verse 6-11. Verse 6-11.
[1:11] In your striving against sin, 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.

For those whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you endure.
God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which you 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.
[2:23] 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.

We're again reminded that we are studying the words of God sent to a Hebrew congregation. Somewhere outside of Israel, because they were making a break with traditional Judaism, they were undergoing persecution.
This persecution was coming from friends, and actually from relatives, who were resentful of these people turning their backs on their Jewish roots, and the traditions of their fathers.
I know thus far from our study that the congregation was made up of some believers, but also some who had not yet committed themselves to following Christ.
Even those not yet Christian were feeling the sting of persecution. That is what happens when you hang out with true believers. I've used this analogy before, but in China, if you go to the underground church and say, I've been saved, I want to join, they say, we'll see, let's give it a year.
[4:03] And after you've been arrested and persecuted and maybe sentenced to a few months in prison and family ostracized, you lost your job, we'll see if you're going to hang around.

Some do, some don't. Some members of the church had been in prison, but most of the pressure being exerted was socially and economically.
Many questioned their commitment to Christ when there is a price to pay. That's when it becomes tough. And when the price is considered too high, a lot return from whence they came.
We say that even now, around the world, different cultures. If you really want to purify a church, let persecution come in.
It has that effect. The genuinely committed remain genuinely committed. The uncommitted, one of two things will happen.
[5:20] The uncommitted will either get committed or they'll leave. And the best explanation for that, and we've seen this a lot in VOM and across America, a phony has no incentive for hanging

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around and being persecuted for something they don't believe in.

Why hang around? I really don't believe this anyway. I'm here because if I don't, my wife will nag me. The greatest biblical example of this in my view is the church at Smyrna, second chapter of the book of Revelation.
We know they were a pure church because God reserved no condemnation for them. The fires of persecution had purified them. The Lord talked about them being a pure nugget of gold.
So this Hebrew congregation was going through the fires of persecution. But the Holy Spirit reminds them that they had not suffered to the extent that the Lord Jesus had suffered.
Verse 4, you have not resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin. I would submit that no one, there's been a lot of horrible examples of persecution, even death.
[6:50] But no one has ever suffered as Jesus suffered. Many have been tortured, crucified, but no one except Jesus has ever taken upon themselves the sins of the world and become a reproach even to His heavenly Father as a result.

That's suffering. 2 Corinthians 5.21, For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
Now the Father didn't make Jesus a sinner. He was never a sinner. But He took our sins. He became sin. So today we want to talk about discipline.
The Greek word padia meaning to train up a child. It is used in the Greek language both for parents and for teachers and the methods by which they interact with children.
And our Heavenly Father uses padia to train us to be like Jesus. That's what He does. So what are the purposes of discipline?
[8:17] Godly discipline. To answer that we must come up with the realization that there is a difference between discipline and God's judgmental punishment.

Whole different venue. When genuine believers sin there are consequences that can be very painful but true believers underline those two words true believers never come into eternal judgment for their sin.
That is the punishment that Christ endured and removed by the cross by the atonement. Though we deserve eternal wrath and no one will argue against that Christ has by His sacrifice removed that as one of the disciplines we face for sin.
Our judge has become our advocate. Let me put that another way in our modern language. Our judge is our defense attorney.
I hope you never have to go to criminal court but if you ever do and you look up and the judge is your defense lawyer that's a pretty good deal. One of the purposes of God's discipline is punishment and that usually comes as quite a shock to people so that I have to quickly add that the punishment I'm speaking of is corrective not judgmental.
[9:56] there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Put another way the punishment we receive is not the same as that that the unbeliever receives.

It's a whole different thing. Now when David was king over Israel he committed one of the most serious sins ever committed.
I go there frequently and read read that and I'll tell you what it'll bring tears to your eyes. I mean it really will. He committed a whole host of sins.
I taught on that one time and there were like 14 in a row. I mean it starts out with in the spring when kings went to battle for the Lord David was in Jerusalem.
There's sin number one he stayed back in Jerusalem. but he committed adultery. We know the story he he he looked down from his rooftop and smaller house next to the palace and beautiful woman down there getting in a bathtub.
[11:10] They do a lot on the rooftops in the Middle East. When I was over there we had barbecues up there and cool of the evening and you strive for that because we're in the desert. And it gets cold in the desert at night.

But here David committed adultery and he tried and tried and tried to weasel out of him and he couldn't do it. So he committed murder to hide his sin.
And I can get so aggravated with movie makers who want to depict that and they show that Uriah the Hittite the husband of Bathsheba well he sort of kind of was abusive to her and he might have deserved it.

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That's nowhere in scripture. He was an audible guy. He was fighting for the king. He was fighting for the Lord. Now no one can doubt that his sin with Bathsheba was very costly.
I mean let's start this way. It cost Uriah the Hittite his life. He was killed. It cost David and Bathsheba the life of the child with which she was impregnated.
[12:28] It cost David the rape of a daughter by another son. It cost David the murder of sons to atone for the rape of their sister.

And he lost the honor of building God's temple. And I always remember when Nathan went to him and he wanted to talk to him privately he dismissed everybody.
David put his crown on now he's going to take the king position. and he says there's a wealthy man in your kingdom. He doesn't lack for anything.
Amazing wealth. He's got cattle. He's got camels, goats, oxen. He had a trusted servant who had one little ewe lamb raise it like a daughter.
And a visitor came and rather than kill one of his own animals from these flocks. And he took that servant's little ewe lamb had it killed and barbecued and served.
[13:46] Said David's anger seethed. He said that man's going to die. But before I do that he's going to pay him back four fold.

Now in my mind when I read that I think there was a pregnant pause I think Nathan stared him down.
David getting a little curious what's going on here. And finally Nathan said you are the man. Those words are chilling.
You are the man. And at some point David realized that's when he got on his face before the Lord. And Nathan told him he said Nathan was a southern Baptist he said you're saved but and then he butted him Billy Goat religion Ed Saucy used to say but and he butted him everywhere and he had fourfold judgment but he was a better man on the other end for the discipline he was even at one point toward the end declared as a man after God's own heart.
He drew closer to the Lord. Now other kings were literally killed for their blasphemy but David's kingdom endures forever through his descendant the Lord Jesus Christ.
[15:34] He was disciplined severely but it was corrective. When God chastises his children he is not rejecting them he is correcting them and making us better.

Another reason God disciplines his children is to prevent sin. we put barriers up for our children to keep them from wandering too far from us usually those barriers have to do we don't want them hurt.
We don't want them to stick their fingers in those electric sockets. And we don't want them hurt and God does the same with us. It may humble us because we want to go further than God knows it's safe.
no you don't want to go there. Well I really kind of do. No you don't want to go there. But the inconvenience is often actually more protective.
It's the protective hand of God. Even the apostle Paul was given a thorn in the flesh to keep pride from overtaking him and harming the cause of Christ.
[16:49] So God can discipline for punishment and for prevention but he can also discipline for education. He's teaching us something.

We can learn by the refiner's fire. Through discipline we come face to face with the power of God and the sufficiency of God to care for his children even when they're wrong.
Even when we're erring. And probably the greatest example of discipline was not punishment or prevention but the education of Job.
Just you know reading those chapters are just amazing. I love when you get to the end and God starts and says where were you when I made all this?
Tell me if you know. Wow. I want to go to Harvard or MIT and read that. God had already declared Job to be blameless.
[18:03] Said he's upright, not sinless. Blameless, upright, fearful of God in the right way. And a man who turned from evil.

But God allowed Job to suffer pain, loss, grief, sickness, even ridicule. And through all of that, Job developed this tremendous respect for God.
He had a view of God that few have. Job, we can say, learned much in the school of discipline. And then we have a verse here on forgetting God's word.

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Hebrews 12, 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, not faint when you are reproved by Him.
Forgetting God's word or not knowing it in the first place can cause all kinds of problems and heartaches. We do not need new light from God.
[19:19] We need to be exposed daily to the light we have. He's already made that light available to us. As this passage points out, there are two dangers.

One danger is regarding lightly the discipline of God and the other is just fainting from it. I can't handle this discipline. Boom. pass out.
We must develop spiritually to the point where we can see the hand of God as He disciplines us for our good. I have to say, I've been disciplined.
I know I've been disciplined. But for some reason, I don't realize it until I'm down the road. And then I look back on it and say, that was God's discipline.
discipline. For what I did. I wish I was better adept at realizing I'm undergoing discipline now.
[20:22] I mean, maybe I'm the only one that's ever experienced that. Um, so when we walk through that valley of discipline, it can become easy to become callous to the Lord's discipline.

We can become complainers. We gripe and complain about the situation we are in. We may not overtly blame God, but deep down, that is what we are doing even if we don't want to put it into words.
we don't want to voice it. I'm trying to think of a situation I was aware of where this guy had been in a horrendous problem and he was under severe discipline.
and he said, I'm really being disciplined in all this and you know, I'm mad at God over this.
I'm really mad at God over this. And this guy said, well, I'll tell you what it was. He'd lost his family, his wife and children in a car wreck. And he went to his pastor, Chuck Swindoll, and he said, I'm really mad about this.
[21:41] I'm mad at God over this. He said, and Chuck says, have you talked to God about it? He said, no, I don't want him to know. And Chuck just sat there, you know, the way he can do, and he just smiled.

And after a bit, the guy said, he already knows, doesn't he? And Dr. Swindoll said, yeah, and let me tell you something about God. He's got broad shoulders.
shoulders. You can go to him and talk to him about anything you want to. And the guy worked through it. It was tough, but he worked through it.
But we can become complainers. We gripe and complain about the situation we're in. I love what Arthur Pink says, A.W. Pink. Remind yourself of how much dross there is yet among the gold and view the corruption of your own heart and marvel that God has not smitten you more severely. Form the habit of heeding his taps and you will be less likely to receive his wraps. Only A.W. Pink can come up with that. Great man. Another way to inhibit the discipline of the Lord is to question it.
[23:07] Because questioning can be a form of lack of faith. I remember when we were kids we sometimes asked our parents why.

Hopefully you developed a technique to know when, okay, that's the last time I'm going to say that. I'm not going to do that one more time. But deep down we meant it as a challenge to their authority. Again, our former pastor, Ed Saucier, told us at the time that he questioned his parents because they refused to allow him to go with older kids and dive off a local bridge, which is a real popular spot.
There'd been a flood. Never mind that logs and trees were either just under the surface or floating down the top of this river and never mind that he was only six years old and he couldn't swim a stroke.
He still questioned them because he thought the discipline was far too great. He wasn't going to have any fun by not being able to go and jump into the river. Now we become callous when we become complainers and we can become questioners.
[24:27] But the greatest danger is when we become careless. When we do not see our sovereign God in the midst of the storms of life, and he's there, we will not profit from them.

We need to see him in the storm. he disciplines us for our benefit. He disciplines us for his glory. And if we use the discipline, it can be for either.
We thwart the purpose by our spiritual indifference. That's probably the greatest sin we can commit. Thus we regard the discipline of the Lord lightly. We should never do that.

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Probably before you turn out the light and say, okay Lord, let's assess today what went on today in my life that we need to talk about.
And what about this fainting from it? We can become so overcome by our problems that we faint from them, we can become spiritually unresponsive to what God is doing through the process.
[25:48] So what does the discipline of the Lord prove? Again, Hebrews 12, for those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines. And He scourges every son whom He receives.

It is for discipline that you endure. God deals with you as with sons, but for what son is there whom the Father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline of which you become partakers, then you're illegitimate children and not sons.
What a stinging rebuke. If you or I have been disciplined by the Lord, it proves two things. First, it proves that He has fixed His love on us.
And second, it proves we're His child. Discipline isn't fun, but that's a pretty good thing to know.
When you suffer, do you turn to the love of the Father?
The only way that can happen is by faith. There's no other way to do that. We ultimately are disciplined because of God's love for us, and the world cannot grasp that truth.
[27:00] The world can't figure that out. Only genuine believers know that to be so. Now, the Lord has a plan for our life.

His plan for us is that we be righteous, mature, obedient, responsible, trusting, and faithful. No believer questions the fact that by love God has predestined us.
By love He has redeemed us. But it is more difficult to say by God's love I'm being disciplined by the refiner's fire. How are you doing? Well, I'm being disciplined right now.
Wow. I haven't said that in 76 years. Maybe I need to. When you are suffering for the Lord, remember what Isaiah said, in all their affliction, God was afflicted.
Isaiah 63, 9. If God is willing to suffer for our good, we should be willing to endure it gladly and even thankfully.
[28:09] So our discipline is proof of God's love and a proof of our sonship. And He scourges every son whom He receives.

It is for discipline that you endure. God deals with us as sons. And what son is there whom the Father does not discipline?
But if you are without discipline of which you become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. All people are subject to the punishment of God, but only His children receive His discipline.
Because of His love for us, He scourges us. That's a Greek word, by the way, refers to a whipping. He gives us a whipping. Sometimes God's discipline can be severe.
Ask David, but remember that your discipline is not in spite of your relationship to God. It is because of your relationship to God. One of the church fathers said this, the greatest anger of all is when God is no longer angry with us.
[29:22] I really had to chew on that. When we are disciplined, we need to thank God for His electing love that He has placed upon us.

Well, there's two products of discipline, verses 9-11. 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 in 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. That's Hebrews 12, 9-11.
So we close with the two products of discipline. They are life and holiness. holiness. The discipline of God is intended to produce life and holiness.
[30:32] Now under the Old Testament law, the rebellious son was to be taken outside the city gate and stoned to death. That's how serious God takes his obedient children.

We don't have time to develop a theme, but the Bible teaches that our disobedience can cost us our life if God's discipline is not working on earth.
He may bring us home and go to the woodshed. That's not losing your salvation, but it's definitely loss of rewards and godly discipline even in heaven.

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So by adhering to the discipline of the Lord, he gives us life with him on earth. The other thing that discipline does is it develops holiness. 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 in his holiness.
I'm not pretending that discipline is pleasant. It's not. If it was pleasant, it wouldn't be corrective, would it? But as difficult as discipline is, the intent is that we'll be better children of God on the other side of discipline.
[31:49] God tells us that after it's over, it yields righteousness. Through godly discipline, the Lord is building Christian character in us.

One of the richest blessings of God is the discipline of his children. I found this from an unknown author. And so what do I say?
I say let the rains of disappointment come if they water the plants of spiritual grace. Let the winds of adversity blow if they serve to root more securely in the trees that God has planted.
I say let the sun of prosperity be eclipsed if that brings me closer to the true light of life. Welcome sweet discipline, discipline designed for my joy.
discipline designed to make me what God wants me to be.

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