

God's Chastenings

- I. Definitions.
- A. chasten: *trans.* To inflict disciplinary or corrective punishment on; to visit with affliction for the purpose of moral improvement; to correct, discipline, chastise. (Usually of Divine chastisement.)
 - B. chastise: To correct (authoritatively) the faults of; to amend, reform, improve (a person or thing). *Obs.* 3. To inflict punishment or suffering upon, with a view to amendment; also simply, to punish, to inflict punishment (esp. corporal punishment) on. [OED here cites 1Kings 12:11]
 - C. affliction: The action of inflicting grievous pain or trouble. *spec.* in its earliest use, Self-infliction of religious discipline; mortification, humiliation. *Obs.* 2. The state of being afflicted; sore pain of body or trouble of mind; misery, distress.
 - D. afflict: *trans.* To dash down, overthrow, cast down, deject, humble, in mind, body, or estate. *Obs.* [OED here cites Leviticus 16:29]
 - E. infirmity: Weakness or want of strength; lack of power to do something; inability. Also with pl. an instance or case of this.
- II. Paul reproved the Hebrew Christians concerning their discontent with how God was dealing with them as they strove against sin. **HEB 12:4-7, 12-13.**
- A. They had forgotten such things as were in their scriptures concerning God's loving chastening of His own people. **HEB 10:30; PRO 3:11-12; DEU 8:5; JOB 5:17.**
 - 1. Some forget by human frailty. We all need reminders. **2PE 1:12-15.**
 - 2. Some forget deliberately, a dangerous amnesia. **HOS 4:6.**
 - B. Beware of assuming injustice or rigor upon God's part when chastened. **LAM 3:32-36; JOB 34:23.**
 - C. What you see as "unfair" dealing on God's part may be respectfully addressed to Him, and His scripture will give an answer. **JER 12:1 c/w PSA 73:1-5, 13-24.**
 - D. Paul's instruction would have no merit if it were not expected that fathers should lovingly correct their children by chastenings. **PRO 13:24; 19:18.**
- III. God's chastisement is a good sign. **HEB 12:8.**
- A. This argument proceeds from a general rule that bastard children are neglected by their fathers, who care not to properly train them or educate them.
 - B. The bastard child is commonly without inheritance and left to himself. c/w **JDG 11:1-3.**
 - C. Children left to themselves tend to bring shame. **PRO 29:15.**
 - D. NOTE: There are two great evils of bastardy in society: those who are born out of wedlock and abandoned by fathers, and those who are born in wedlock but are treated as bastards without proper "rod and reproof" fatherly oversight.
- IV. God's chastisement is not for His children's destruction but their correction/perfection. **HEB 12:9-11; 1CO 11:31-32.**
- A. The assumption here is that earthly fathers should be revered, not in spite of their chastenings, but because of them. So, we should *revere* (hold in, regard with, deep respect or veneration) our heavenly Father in all seasons, even the "hot" ones.
 - B. "...and live" (v. 10). Earthly fathers may chasten sorely, but not take life.
 - 1. But our heavenly Father has power to do both. **1CO 11:29-30 c/w ACT 5:1-11.**
 - 2. Learn quickly, repent quickly, and experience **PSA 118:18.**
 - C. Earthly fathers chasten their children "...after their own pleasure..." (v. 10), i.e., as seems

good unto them.

1. Earthly fathers have imperfect discernment and judgment but not God.
2. Earthly fathers with imperfect discernment and judgment are still obliged to chasten and their children are still obliged to revere them.
3. Earthly fathers may have self-serving, emotion-based reasons for chastening but God's chastenings are always "...for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (v. 10).
4. There is no perfection without pain. Even the Son of God was thus perfected for our sakes. **HEB 5:8-9 c/w ISA 53:5.**

D. "For they verily for a few days chastened us..." (v. 10).

1. Generally, earthly fathers only have a short time to train their children by chastenings, and thus should start early. **PRO 13:24; 19:18.**
 - a. betimes: At an early time, period, or season; early in the year; early in life.
 - b. NOTE: do not buy into the error that children should never be spanked until they can intelligently converse so you can help them understand by speech why they are in trouble.
 - c. Would you withhold love, nutrition and tenderness from a child until they are old enough to understand by speech why they need those things?
 - d. The command is first to *train* children. **PRO 22:6.**
 - (1) train: To treat or manipulate so as to bring to the proper or desired form;... To subject to discipline and instruction for the purpose of forming the character.
 - (2) Little children can be manipulated by feel and by restraint before they have the gift of dialogue. Make sure the child is not the one doing the manipulating.
 - (3) Do not expect God to wait until you as a saint are intelligently conversant with Him before He begins to chasten.
2. There is a time of emancipation from an earthly father's oversight, voluntarily or otherwise. **LUK 15:11-12 c/w DEU 21:18-21.**
3. As sons of God, our time on earth is but a few days and we will not be emancipated from our Father's loving chastisement until death or Christ's return. **PHIL 3:20-21.**

E. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous..." (v. 11).

1. If the chastening were enjoyable, this would be a rewarding of evil with good, a dangerous concept. c/w **1PE 2:13-14.**
2. Basic rule of parenting: Reward good behavior; punish bad behavior. Do not take the weak approach of "trick or treat" parenting where you yield to a child's unruly demands.
3. It is guaranteed that God does not parent us by rewarding bad behavior. **HEB 10:26-27.**
4. Learn to avoid the rod but love its comfort. **PHIL 2:14-15; PSA 23:4.**