

## The Father's Loving Discipline

### Hebrews 12:3-11

The struggle is real! Anyone who teaches that the Christian life is “cupcakes and lollipops” is not being truthful or biblical. We must persevere as followers of Christ; the Christian race will not be won by the faint of heart.

- **The way of the cross is not \_\_\_\_\_ . (3-4)** These first-century believers were experiencing suffering and persecution. Persecution may come from the hand of our enemy, while suffering may come from the hand of our heavenly Father, but our God uses both for His divine purposes. (Example: Acts 8:1-4)

He reminds them that it is not as bad as it could be. “Not yet” indicates a future possibility, but not a present reality. They were experiencing some persecution for being Christians, (10:32-39) but as of yet they were not being put to death.

- **The way of the cross involves divine \_\_\_\_\_ . (5-8)** The author reminds his audience of their position within the family of God. We are not outsiders, foreigners, or aliens; we are family. We have a place in the family of God; we are His dear children.

As imperfect, rebellious children, we have much to learn. We are a work in the process of sanctification. God's will is for each of us to be conformed into the image of Christ! How is that possible apart from suffering? The writer of Hebrews has reminded us of the sufferings of Christ and the use of that suffering in the divine plan of God. (Heb 2:9-10 & Heb 5:7-8)

- **Divine discipline indicates a \_\_\_\_\_ with our Father in heaven. (9)** It is part of the role of all parents to train, instruct, and discipline their children. It is part of being in the family. We have experienced this in the natural realm resulting in respect; how much more should we expect it in the spiritual realm leading to greater respect?
- **Divine discipline is always right and always \_\_\_\_\_ . (10-11)** As an earthly father, I may have had good intentions, but I fear, on some occasions, I may have disciplined out of frustration or even worse, out of anger. God's discipline is always perfect, for He is perfect!

**There are various forms of discipline that God may employ. Two that we need to recognize are:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **discipline.** Some of the painful chastening I have experienced has been due to my stubborn, rebellious, and sinful behavior. These are storms of my own making. The story of Jonah comes to mind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **discipline.** Other times, our afflictions may serve to teach us truths about God or truths about ourselves. The story of Job comes to mind.

**All of God's discipline is for our good and His glory.** The purpose of God's work in our chastening/discipline is for holiness and righteousness.

**Application: If you have been born again, you are a child of God.**

**If you are a child of God, He loves you too much to allow you to continue in sinful behavior.**

**If you are a child of God, even the painful chastening you endure is for your good.**