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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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PARENTS, DISCIPLINE AND A CARING GOD

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 123
HEBREWS 12:10-12

Dr. W. O. Vaught
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

Let's get a corrected translation of verses 7-9.

Verse 7

"Because of corrective discipline, endure! The God deals with you as sons, for what one in the Royal Family is a son, whom the Father does not discipline?"

Verse 8

"But if you are without discipline, of which all believers are become participators, then are you bastards and not sons."

Verse 9

"Another point is this: We used to have our human parents for corrective discipline and we respected them; to a greater degree, you will become subordinated to the Father of our human spirit and continue living in this life."

Hebrews 12:10 "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." We begin with the explanatory use of gar translated "for." Then we have the attic greek formula which we find so many times and the use of the word men and it should be translated "For they, on the one hand." Next we have an idiom translated "for a few days" and this comes from pros plus the accusative of olegos hemera and it really means "For a short time." Childhood is actually a short time. Parents really have a rather short time in which to discipline children, and if they don't do it, then the years will quickly flow by and the chance for discipline will be over. (I would like to interject a personal testimony right here. The most shocking experience I had as Mrs. Vaught and I tried to rear our son was this: One day he was just a small child, and before I almost turned around, he was out of high school and gone to college and our opportunity for directive discipline was over. It shocked me when I realized how rapidly this period flew past.) Parents need to grab the opportunity they have for disciplining their children, because once the chance is gone, it never comes again. Next we have the imperfect, active, indicative of paideuo and it means discipline, train, correct, educate. So, this idiom means, "They, our human parents, on the one hand, disciplined us for a short time." The next phrase is not correct. "After their own pleasure" is not a correct translation. It comes from kata to dokoun. This is a prepositional phrase with the present, active, participle of dokeo plus autos. This is a classical greek idiom and should be translated "according to what seemed best to them." Many parents don't do all you think they should, but most of them do the best they can. And remember this, when they do the best they can, then God will step in and make up for what the parents failed to do.

Parents Use Their Own Standards

Unsaved parents use the standards they have and know. Sometimes these standards are passed down for generations. Sometimes traditional standards are the best and sometime not. Quite often traditions are

good standards that have been proven and they are for our good. Sometimes this discipline is brutal and builds up resentment. But no matter how you were reared, you remember this: Never go back and run down your parents, even if they didn't measure up to the standard you think was right. NEVER RUN DOWN YOUR PARENTS. You can't correct their faults by talking about them. But remember this, God is our perfect parent, and his discipline is always perfect and accurate and best. Now we come to the word *de* and this means "On the other hand." The word "he" refers to God the Father. Remember this: no one can rear children without being able to think. I thank God that I not only had loving parents, but I had thinking parents. (Another personal testimony. I am very thankful that my wife gave a great deal of thinking in rearing our son. She was always there when he came home from school in the evening. He would hit the door saying, "Mother" and she was always there to respond. I believe our son would tell you today that there was never a day in his life when he felt insecure because his Mother failed to care for him. He is a successful father today largely because of the faithfulness of his Mother in caring for him through his formative years.)

Parents Who Fail

When children go wrong, their parents never get over it and many times, blame themselves for the rest of their lives and say, "Where did I go wrong?" I have talked with dozens of parents who carry pain in their souls because they believe they failed their children. (This is turning out to be a sentimental study for me. I stood at my Mother's grave and my Father's grave not long ago and gave thanks for the rugged discipline they forced upon me in my young years. I was forced to work hard, to study hard, and was not permitted to go to many things where the gang went. But I look back now and call them blessed because they knew better than I did what was good for me and my sister.)

Parents And Money

One of the things that happens in this country is this: So many parents are wild over making money they have little time to think about rearing their children. In contrast to that, you remember this: God the Father concentrates on you, thinks about you, and gives his undivided attention to you. You are his child and he loves you with a perfect love. Then we have the words "For our profit." This is from epi plus the present, active, participle of sumphero. When a participle is not accompanied by a noun, it often becomes a noun, just as it does here. So, "For our profit" is the principle here. DISCIPLINE FROM GOD IS FOR OUR PROFIT. It is also for our blessing here on this earth. There will be no discipline in heaven, for when we get there, we will be perfect and no discipline is needed.

Next we have the words "that we might be partakers" and this is eis plus the aorist, active, infinitive of metalambano. This is a very unusual prepositional phrase. This is what we call a purpose prepositional phrase. This is a culminative aorist, giving emphasis to the final results. The result of discipline is to move us to doctrine and to maturity. This is saying that this corrective discipline from God is "that we might receive a share of his holiness." This word for holiness is hagiotes. Now just think of that! God wants to share his perfect holiness with me.

Get a corrected translation of this great verse--

"For they (parents) on the one hand, disciplined us for a short time, according to what seemed best to them, but He (God the Father) on the other hand, disciplined us (and it was perfect discipline) for our profit in order that we might receive a share of his holiness."

Summary

1. The share of his holiness includes the road to glory. Super grace, dying grace, surpassing grace. God's discipline always brought you back to doctrine. Every blessing you will ever have is courtesy of divine discipline.
2. God the Father is perfect, therefore, the happiness he provides is perfect. It is his own happiness.
3. God the Father is perfect and his blessing for you is perfect. How does he steer you to these blessings? Doctrine does that. It just doesn't pay to get off the main road.
4. Discipline is a source of blessing and a source of glorifying God. Grace has found a way to bless a believer at the same time glorify God. God receives glory to be able to give us that blessing.
5. This is called "sharing in God's holiness." Sharing in the blessing of God is having doctrine resident in the soul.

In verses 11 and 12 we will discover the purpose of divine discipline. VERSE 11 "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." You will notice the words "now" and "but" in this first sentence and it means "Now, on the one hand" and then "but on the other hand." So here we have a contrast. Next we have pas paideia and it means "all discipline." So, this verse begins "On the one hand, all discipline." The negative has been placed in the wrong place here in the translation. Next we have the words pros plus the present, active, participle of pareimi and it means "while in progress, or while it is occurring." Next we have the present, active, indicative of dokeo plus the negative ouk and should be translated "seemeth not." Next we have the present, active infinitive of eimi plus the genitive singular of chara and it means "It is not an occasion for happiness." This is strictly an attic greek passage and the translator tried to make it conform to the koine greek. Thus far we have this in this sentence--"On the one hand, all discipline while in progress, appears to be not an occasion for happiness."

All Discipline Is Somewhat Painful

This is true when children are being punished by their parents. This is true when God punishes members of the Royal Family for either carnality or reversionism or both. Discipline is unpleasant or it would not be any good. It must hurt, it must restrain, it must bring suffering, or it wouldn't fulfill its mission. Thinking parents know how to punish their children. A real smart child may be punished most by

some kind of restriction. With a more stubborn type, it may take a rather severe beating. Whatever the discipline is, a wise parent has figured out how to get the attention of the child. Now God does the same thing with us. Only his omniscience gives him a wider range in which to operate. It is the discomfort of discipline that makes it effective. This is the direct method of correcting believers. Now we have the alternative which is introduced by the word "alla" plus lupe and it means "but grievous." God is perfect and his discipline is perfect. God knows how to discipline every believer so the discipline will be beneficial.

Next we have the word de and it is to be translated "On the other hand." The next word is the adverb husteron and it means "afterwards" meaning after reversion recovery. Then we have the present, active, indicative of apodidomi and it means "it refunds" or "it pays back with interest." Discipline from God always pays back with interest grace blessings. Discipline from God always pays back with spiritual blessings, such as occupation with Christ. Next we have the accusative singular of the adjective eirenikos and it means "prosperous." Next is the accusative singular of harpos and it means "profit or advantage." Put together these words mean "prosperous gain or advantage." Then we have dikaiosune meaning "from righteousness." Next is the perfect, passive, participle of gumnazo and it means "to train, to exercise." Any beneficial exercise hurts if you do it to the extent that it will help you. Your muscles will get sore and it hurts. Every advance you make in physical strength is agony. The word is agonizo and it means to exercise, to agonize. This word gumnazo has exactly the same meaning. It takes tremendous self-discipline to keep your body strong and under control. The person who builds up a good body is usually building self-discipline in his soul. People who take exercise can usually concentrate better. People who exercise all their lives finds that it carries over into their spiritual health. This perfect, passive, participle of gumnazo "to those who have been trained." Then we have dia autos and this means "through it." So this is what we have in this verse--"On the one hand, all discipline, while in progress, appears to be an occasion not for happiness, but for sorrow (the same as exercise). On the other hand, afterwards, it pays back with interest prosperous gain from righteousness to those who are trained by it."

Summary

1. When you are under divine discipline, you have the encouragement that you belong to God. It is a sign of sonship. It is an encouragement in the area of eternal security. No matter how much the discipline hurts it gives you encouragement to know your heavenly father is thinking about your welfare and training you directly. No matter how it hurts, keep telling yourself that you are very special to God. God only spans his own children. He does not spank the Devil's children, he leaves that to circumstances, and the inevitable way things turn out when we live outside the plan and will of God.
2. It is a sign of reversionism and lets you know that you are on a detour and not on the main road to glory. You are off the royal highway and are off in the swamp where you ought not to be.
3. Discipline is a teacher, a hard teacher and a corrector. The growing believer is taught and corrected indirectly and this comes from Bible teaching and doctrine. The reversionist is taught and corrected directly and this is by discipline.

4. Discipline is a motivator for us to turn and take in Bible doctrine. God clobbers you this way and reminds you that you ought to get back into the doctrine route.
5. Divine discipline is the hard way for you to attain spiritual maturity. Most every believer has discovered this in his spiritual pilgrimage.

In this next verse we begin a new paragraph. This is the result of divine discipline amplified. Recovery is the result of divine discipline.

Verse 12 "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;" This is a quotation from Isaiah 35:3. This first word comes from dio and is better translated "Therefore." This is a self-evident inferential conjunction and it means "therefore we have learned that discipline hurts." It means that we are to get with it and rebound. "The hands that hang down" is a picture of a shot down person. "Lift up" is the aorist, active, imperative of anorthoo and it means to rebound, to restore to straightness. (This is the word we get orthodox from, and it means one who straightens the teeth.) Rebound plus repentance plus the taking in of doctrine every day. "Hands that hang down" are weak hands. It involves repentance, provided you know what repentance means. It means to change your mind about taking in doctrine. (In salvation it means to change your mind about Christ.) To be filled with the Holy Spirit minus doctrine makes you into some kind of a real weirdo. The filling of the Holy Spirit goes hand in hand with doctrine. The word for "hands" is cheir. Next we have the perfect, passive, participle of pariemi and it means to be weakened, to be useless. The hand has to be attached to something that has strength. Muscle in the soul is Bible Doctrine in the soul. So hands that hang down is the person in reversionism.

Hands That Hang Down Compared With Reversionism

1. The reaction stage--This is boredom, discouragement, frustration, mental attitude sins.
2. Next comes the frantic search for happiness.
3. Then we have operation boomerang.
4. The emotional revolt of the soul.

Next we have the words "feeble knees." This is the perfect, passive, participle paraluo. The word for knees is gonu. It means disabled knees. In running or weight lifting the knees are most important.

1. It means negative volition toward doctrine.
2. It means a vacuum has developed in the soul.
3. It means reverse process reversionism.

Summary

1. Quite obviously, this is a command to reversion recovery.
2. Reversion recovery begins the process of moving toward the ground of super grace.
3. Note the fact that the feeble knees keep the believer from advancing on the run, as he is commanded to do in the first part of this chapter.
4. Reversionism hinders seeking the high ground, super grace, and maturity.