

PROVERBS

Repent, and Join God in Song!

It is a hard thing to bring someone that you love under discipline, especially if they don't seem to respond to your efforts. For three years, I experienced the pain of pursuing an unrepentant friend at my college. Three years may seem like a lot of time, but as the other staff and I pursued this person, our goal was to model God's grace in our dealings with him while we tried to persuade him that what he was involved in was displeasing to God. We went before God in prayer and pleaded with my friend to repent and not be made to face God's Fatherly correction. It was a grief to see our pursuit of him fail, it seemed, when he was unwilling to change and had to be dismissed from attending our school. I remember the late nights that I would sit with him trying to paint a picture of God in all His glory, and describe the joys of following Him, and convey the devastating consequences that he would face before our great God should he continue to disregard His will.

This semester I learned that he had been given another chance to return to our college, and it has been exciting to see the change that God had worked in him during his time away. I know that even though we felt as though we had failed, God was ultimately using us and other means to bring an unrepentant son back to confessing a heart of love for his Father.

Proverbs 3:11-12 encourages the one who senses that he has come under discipline by the Father to guard against resentment or weariness of this act of love that God is working on his behalf. Verse twelve says that the Lord corrects His loved ones "just as a father the son *in*

whom he delights." Is it not an amazing thought that God the Father delights in His children?

Consider the account of Israel's rebellion, repentance, and rejoicing in Zephaniah 3. In this account, we read God's words concerning the rebellion of Jerusalem, His city. He describes their wicked rebellion and His severe disciplinary action towards them (verses 1-8). He says that he will remove those who refuse to submit to their God and save only those who humble themselves in repentance (verses 9-13). What a joyful scene, when in the final verses of the chapter, not only is Israel invited by their God to rejoice and sing and exult in their restored relationship with Him, but God declares, "The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing" (Zeph. 3:17)!

Within our own congregation, we have seen the pursuit of various brothers and sisters who were straying from the Lord result in God's grace in their repentance. Some were made to endure difficult times of correction at the Father's hand but were receptive and now stand firm, praising Him in the assembly of saints at Countryside (Psalm 111:1) – and as they do, their Father rejoices over them with His own voice in song!

Never let yourself come to despise or detest the Lord's discipline, for it is a gift. It is an act of God delighting in you. Repent, and join God in song! Likewise, never grow weary in pursuing those who wander for their repentance will be a return from grief to gladness and mutual rejoicing of God in heaven and his children on earth.



LOOK CLOSELY

observation

Proverbs 3:11-12

¹¹ My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; ¹² For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights.

Mark the action words commanded of the son in v 11.

Mark the words “chastening” and “correction” in v 11.

Mark the words “LORD” and “as a father” in v 12.

Mark the word for the demonstration of the LORD’s love in v 12.

Identification Key

Develop your own key for identifying the various words and phrases in the text provided. Use different colored pencils, circles, boxes, underlining, etc., but be consistent from week-to-week.



THINK CAREFULLY

interpretation

The word **despise** means to reject or take lightly. It “refers to the action of pushing away...” walking away from [chastening] refusing to learn anything from it.” (John A. Kitchen, *Proverbs*, Mentor, 81.).

To **detest** is an emotional response to God’s correction. The father is counseling his son to check his attitude toward God’s instruction for his life.

The word for **chastening** can also be translated as discipline or instruction and the word for **correction** can be translated as reproof. “While reproof is distasteful, it can be liberating if embraced. What we turn from is surpassed by what we receive as we turn to God.” (John A. Kitchen, *Proverbs*, Mentor, 49.).

Read Hebrews 12:5-8. What does correction or discipline from God reveal about our relationship to Him?

Make a list of the ways a child would feel unloved without discipline?

Read Hebrews 12:9-11. What are the goals of God's discipline?

Is the discipline of God different from pain and suffering in general? If so, how?

In what ways have you experienced God's discipline?

What does God reveal about Himself through His discipline of us?

What is the difference between punishment and discipline?



RESPOND WISELY

application

Evaluate your responses to God's discipline? Have you been able to embrace his discipline and thank Him for it? If not, will you do that now?

Parents share with your children a time that the Lord's discipline brought growth to you.

Memorize Hebrews 12:11.