

DISCIPLINE IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

(Hebrews 12)

(Part1) Attitudes toward Discipline in the Household of God

Hebrews 12:1-13

- I. Christ Is the Model of Enduring God's Discipline (12:1-2)
 - A. Believers' Life Is Like a Track Race (12:1)
 - 1. The Many OT Heroes of Faith Are Witnesses (12:1a)
 - a. They Are Watching and Cheering for Us
 - b. They Are "Hall of Famer Athletes"
Greek "Witness" => Martyr (Willing to Die for Faith)
 - 2. Believers Need to Live a Disciplined Life (12:1b)
 - a. They Need to Remove Unnecessary Weights—Some Niceties
 - b. They Need to Remove Easy Snares—All Sins
 - 3. Believers Need to Have Endurance (12:1c)
 - a. Pilgrimage to Heaven Is a Long Distance Run
 - b. It is Set before Us by God as a Test of Faith
 - B. Believers Need to Focus on Christ, the Goal and Winner of the Race (12:2)
 - 1. Christ Is the Pioneer (*archeigos*) and Perfecter (*teleoteis*) of Faith (12:2a)
 - a. Christ Enabled the OT Heroes of Faith (e.g. Jude 5)
 - b. Christ Exemplified the Life of Faith (e.g. Mark 14:36)
 - c. Christ Ensures the Success of Our Faith (e.g. John 6:39)
 - 2. Christ Endured the Discipline from God (12:2b)
 - a. Christ Endured for the Joy Set before Him (e.g. John 17:24)
 - b. Christ Endured the Cross, Rejection and Shame
 - c. Christ Is the Winner of the Race
- II. Christians Mature from Enduring God's Discipline (12:3-11)
 - A. Believers Cannot Out-Endure God's Discipline than Christ (12:3-4)
 - 1. Christ Endured Great Hostility from All Sinners (12:3a)
 - 2. Christians May Be Discouraged by Their Suffering (12:3b)
 - 3. The Recipients Had Not Yet Suffered Bloodshed for Faith (12:4)
 - B. Discipline Is God's Way of Maturing His Sons (12:5-11)
 - 1. God's Discipline Is the Evidence of God's Love (12:5-8)
 - a. Discipline (*paideia*) Is Training and Correcting of Sons (12:5-6)
 - i. God Encouraged His Sons (12:5a; Prov 3:11-12)
 - ii. Sons Respect Father's Training (12:5b)
 - iii. Sons Accept Father's Reproof (12:5c)
 - iv. God Loves Those Whom He Disciplines (12:5d)
 - b. Discipline Is Proof of Sonship to a Loving Father (12:7-8)
 - i. Recipients Suffer due to God's Discipline (12:7a)
 - ii. Recipients Are Sons of God (12:7b)
 - iii. All Sons of God Are Disciplined, even Jesus (12:7c; 5:8)
 - iv. No-Discipline Means No-Sonship (12:8)
 - 2. God's Discipline Is Making His Character in Us (12:9-10)
 - a. God's Discipline Should be Respected (12:9)
 - i. Sons Respect Disciplining Fathers on Earth

- ii. Believers Should Submit to God to Gain Life
 - b. God's Discipline Is for Our Long Term Benefit (12:10)
 - i. Human Fathers Discipline for Earthly Benefits
 - ii. God Disciplines Us to Install His Holiness in Us
- 3. God's Discipline Produces Peaceable (Solomonic) Result (12:11)
 - a. All Disciplines Are Painful at the Moment
 - b. God's Disciplines Produce Peace and Righteousness
- C. Believers Can Be Strengthened by God's Discipline (12:12-13)
 - 1. Getting Hurt Is Normal in Athlete's Life (12:12)
 - 2. Getting Healed is by Obedience to Truth (12:13)

Central Ideas

Christian life is like a track race; Christians need to live a disciplines life. The OT heroes of faith are witnesses in our race, and Jesus is the pioneer and already finished the race. God is our father, coach and trainer. His discipline shows his love and our sonship. Submission to God's discipline leads to strength and victory.

Study Questions

1. Likening Christian life to a track race is not unique here in NT. Who else likened Christian life to athletic life? Where? What does that add to the arguments of the possible authorship of the book of Hebrews?
2. What does "witness" mean here?
3. Why should believers focus on Jesus?
4. What difference does the translation of "author and finisher of our faith" (KJV), and ours "pioneer and perfecter of faith" make?
5. Did Christ endure God's discipline? Does discipline necessarily mean that the disciplined has done something wrong?
6. What does a father's discipline show of his relationship to the son? Should we discipline our neighbor's boys? Do we? Why?
7. What is the purpose of God's disciplining of us? How good is it for us?
8. Why does God's discipline produce "peaceable result"? Whose name is alluded to?

Septuagint in Hebrews 12

Verse	Masoretic Text (MT)	Septuagint (LXX)	(NT) Hebrews
Prov 3:11-12 Heb 12:5-6	11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: 2 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son <i>in whom</i> he delighteth. (KJV)	11 My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 12 for whom the Lord loves, he rebukes, and scourges every son whom he receives. (Brenton)	5 ... My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. (NIV)
Exod 19:12-13 Heb 12:20	12 ... Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13 No hand shall touch him, but <u>he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man</u> , he shall not live ... (NAS)	12 ... Take heed to yourselves that ye go not up into the mountain, nor touch any part of it: everyone that touched the mountain shall surely die. 13 A hand shall not touch it, for <u>every one that touches it shall be stoned with stones or shot through with a dart, whether beast or whether man</u> , it shall not live ... (Brenton)	20 ... If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned. (NAS)
Deut 9:19 Heb 12:21	<u>For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure</u> with which the LORD was wrathful against you in order to destroy you, but the LORD listened to me that time also. (NAS)	<u>And I was greatly terrified because of the wrath and anger</u> , because the Lord was provoked with you utterly to destroy you; yet the Lord harkened to me at this time also. (Brenton)	And so terrible was the sight, <i>that</i> Moses said, " <u>I am full of fear and trembling</u> ." (NAS)
Hag 2:6 LXX Hag 2:7 Heb 12:26	For thus says the LORD of hosts, " <u>Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth</u> , the sea also and the dry land." (NAS)	For thus saith the Lord Almighty; Yet once I will shake the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. (Brenton)	And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." (NAS)

- Heb 12:5-6 almost literally copies the LXX Prov 3:11-12. LXX changes the “son in whom he delights/favors” in to the “son whom he receives/acknowledges,” which added the idea of adoption. NT utilized the idea that Christians are adopted sons of God.
- Heb 12:20 alludes to LXX Exod 19:13, which is a literal translation of MT. Hebrews used a different verbs for “touching;” and omitted the options of man and arrow.
- Heb 12:21 alludes to LXX Deut 9:19, which is a literal translation of MT. Hebrews shifted the focus from the object of fear (God’s wrath) to the subject of fear (Moses’ emotion).
- Heb 12:26 alludes to LXX Hag 2:7, which is a literal translation of MT Hag 2:6. Hebrews reversed the order of the things to be shaken (heaven to earth in LXX; earth to heaven in NT), emphasizing the mightiness of God and the awfulness of the act to men.