

Principles of God's Discipline-Wayne Barber

Principles of God's Discipline Dr. Wayne Barber

I. Introduction - Review of Hebrews 12:1-5

A. Challenge

- to run the race with endurance - Hebrews 12:1
- focusing on Jesus - Hebrews 12:2
- considering His character and example - Hebrews 12:3

B . **Encouragement** – “great cloud of witnesses” of Hebrews 11:1-40 who have demonstrated that righteousness is by faith, i.e., taking God at His Word. They endured; you can too.

C. **Reprimand** – Shaming them for premature discouragement. Hebrews 12:4.

Are you tempted to quit before the finish? What does it take to get you to quit running?

Jeremiah 12:5 “If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out, Then how can you compete with horses?”

D. **Reason** – They have forgotten God's word of exhortation to them about His discipline Hebrews 12:5.

Why? Probably because they have focused on their suffering and not on Jesus.

II. Analogy of God's Sovereignty in Suffering: Clay in the Potter's Hand, Jeremiah 18:1-8

Jeremiah 18:1-8 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, 2 “Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will announce My words to you.” 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. 4 But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, 6 “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. 7 “At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; 8 if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it.

God is the Master Potter; you are the clay. He is in control. He puts water on His hands to fashion the clay = molding you with the water of the Word (Eph 5:26+). He knows what He is planning for the clay: to conform perfect in you the image of Christ (Phil 1:6+) and to fashion you for specific works in this life of ministry. See also Isaiah 29:16; 45:9; 64:8.

III. Eight Principles of God's Discipline - Hebrews 12:4-11

1. **It is for your good.** Hebrews 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

a. **Discipline** = [paideia](#) (6v - Eph 6:4; 2Ti 3:16 = correction; Heb 12:5; 12:7; 12:8; 12:11) = child-training, by a parent, with the child's best interests in mind so that the child grows into a mature son. This is the process of sanctification that begins at salvation and ends in glorification.

(NOTE: [Paideia](#) is found most often in [Septuagint of Proverbs and translates "instruction" and "discipline"](#) - [see list below](#) and take a moment to observe these uses of paideia for some wonderful Biblical insights on God's discipline/instruction)

b. **“Hands on” teaching. Teaching** = imparting knowledge of truth vs **Discipline** = molding the will through action designed to develop the child's potential to make good use of knowledge/truth.

Illustration: Wayne's story about his father's most gifted, but also most stubborn bird dog puppy.

c. Occasions for discipline/suffering.

1. For **correction** as you experience the consequence of sin.
2. To **keep** you from something evil (cf Pr 6:23,24).

Ex: Paul had a thorn in his flesh to keep him from exalting himself. God promised grace sufficient for him to endure the trial. 2 Cor 12:7-9+.

3. To **teach** you something—about God, yourself, or others, etc. Ex.: Job.

2. It flows from a Father's heart Heb 12:5,7

Remember it is coming from the hand of a parent who loves you, like the father in Eph 6:4 ([paideia](#)) bringing up his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. God's love does not remove the consequences of sin. God's agape love does what is needed in your life.

3. Avoid extremes. Heb 12:5

- a. Don't regard God's discipline lightly, i.e. don't just laugh it off as inconsequential. Discipline is important to God's purpose to conform us to the image of Christ (Ro 8:28–30+).
- b. Don't faint under it, i.e., take it too hard or become "unglued" by it. God's discipline will not destroy you. (God is disciplining you to "make" you, not to "break" you!)

4. It is not for punishment, but for correction. Heb 12:6

- a. God disciplines those He loves and scourges every son He receives. (Scourge - [mastigoo](#) - keeps on "whipping the hide clean off" until your walk of faith is corrected).
- b. When Jesus was scourged (John 19:1), He took the punishment for your sin. The scourging you experience is for correction.

Don't whine and blame others for the consequences of sin in your life. Take the blame and learn from the consequences; allow your difficult circumstances to correct your walk.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline (Lxx = [paideia](#)) will remove it far from him.

5. It can be endured. Heb 12:7

How? When you have the proper attitude. When you are committed to God's purpose for you, you will have His perspective on the difficult circumstances you are experiencing. It is evidence of God's love for you.

Proverbs 13:24: He who spares his rod hates his son. But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

6. It proves you to be His son. Hebrews 12:5-8

God loves us enough to discipline us. You can resist His love or receive it, even when it hurts.

When you submit to discipline in your life, you will experience the peace of God in your heart.

7. Your willingness to endure proves your respect for God. Hebrews 12:9

Obedience = respect/obedience (John 14:21+)

Your walk of faith in obedience to God shows you respect the authority of God's leadership in your life.

Talk is cheap, i.e., saying "I love You" can come from mixed motives. However, obedience is real evidence of love and respect.

Your love for God is measured by the degree of your obedience to Him. (Read that one again, then read Jn 14:15+)

8. The ultimate goal of God's discipline is righteousness. Hebrews 12:10

God disciplines you for your good, i.e., for your profit or advantage, that you may share His holiness personally, experientially.

God's discipline never feels good at the moment (it seems not joyful, but sorrowful) but afterwards it yields (repays) the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

The Logic of Suffering

Righteousness comes by faith.

Faith comes by hearing. Hearing comes by the Word of God.

Suffering can get your attention and get you into God's Word.

P.S. We are always praying for people to be healed when they are ill. While it is not wrong to pray for healing, we're asking less from the Lord than He wants to give.

***Would you trade sickness and suffering
for knowing God in a deeper, more intimate way?***

Below is material added to Dr Barber's lecture to give an illustration of his very last sentence:

ILLUSTRATION OF A SAINT IN WHOM A ROOT OF BITTERNESS COULD EASILY HAVE ARISEN BUT DID NOT - I received the following email from Rhonda who has stage IV neuroendocrine tumors in the liver. She wrote:

The last six months have been ugly - physically - but I think we're turning the corner. Cancer stable; osteoporosis and degenerative disc disease under scrutiny for a more comprehensive treatment plan, though the CORE institute folks keep my right-side joints comfortable and mobile by chasing me around with cortisone hypos; and I pray the worst of the three ailments - my GI turmoil - will be much improved when my gall bladder is removed this Tuesday. The nausea, pain, old-fashioned "hurt" - sorry - have worn me out. I fantasize, verily lust, over the idea of food. Yet food hardly appeals because my innards say "no", and I fear the consequences of eating anything other than white pabulum fodder. To my delight, vanilla ice cream - for which I've had no particular yearning over the years - feels good, tastes good (upper brands), and soothes my stomach. But the all-too-frequent episodes of nausea and pain remain unpredictable. Ondansetron does help; I take 3 daily. And the cancer surgeon prescribed pantoprazole once daily for acid, though I hardly touch anything acidic that I know of. Oh for a blood-red-rare prime rib and a fresh salad! But I'll wait a week or so until I ease back into any real food. Last week I experienced an outright attack so painful I walked at a 45-degree angle until I hurled a vile pile of bile - so bitter my throat burned the rest of the day. **Thank You, Lord Jesus, You continue to bring me through! And the silver lining of the last 6 months? I'm walking in the joy of His presence continually as never before!** (ED: YOU MAY WANT TO READ THAT LAST LINE AGAIN!!!) I keep watching for 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon to come so I can begin my Bible study (Hosea)....Over Thanksgiving I will make a trip East to see [the Ark](#). For me, **this is my last hurrah**. (cf Paul in 2Ti 4:6+) I feel quite certain the Lord will take me home this next year (2026), and **I'm joyful about that prospect.**

And then Rhonda signed off with these words

"The Lord is soooooo very good to us, isn't He?"

Beloved, are you as convicted as I am? In Acts 14:22+ Paul declared "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." Rhonda will step into an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, for she is viewing her "**discipline**" with eternal, not temporal, vision. (2Co 4:17,18+)

Would you dare to pray this prayer?

Lord, by Your Spirit and Your Word please give us all a heart like this wonderful saint, a heart that willingly receives from Your loving hand whatever you deem is best for our eternal good and Your eternal glory. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

ADDENDUM: And I seriously doubt that Rhonda would trade sickness and suffering for her knowing God in a deeper, more intimate way!

SUMMARY OF THE BENEFITS OF DIVINE DISCIPLINE

1. God's Discipline Comes From His Love

Hebrews 12:6 — "For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines."
God's discipline is never driven by anger or irritation.

It is the expression of perfect love, aimed at our highest good.

2. God's Discipline Confirms Our Sonship

Hebrews 12:7–8 — “If you are without discipline... then you are illegitimate children.”

Discipline is proof you belong to God.

No discipline = no relationship.

His correction is a sign we are truly His children.

3. God's Discipline Has a Clear Purpose: Holiness

Hebrews 12:10 — “He disciplines us... that we may share His holiness.”

His goal is not punishment but transformation—to make us more like Jesus.

God's discipline is sanctifying.

4. God's Discipline Trains Us to Walk in Righteousness

Hebrews 12:11 — “It yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Trials, correction, and testing act like spiritual exercise.

They develop endurance, humility, obedience, and wisdom.

5. God's Discipline Protects Us From Sin's Destruction

Proverbs 6:23–24 — discipline keeps you “from the evil woman.”

Discipline is a guardrail, preventing us from wandering into paths that would destroy us.

It is for our safety, not our restriction.

6. God's Discipline Is Often Painful but Always Profitable

Hebrews 12:11 — “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful.”

Discipline hurts—but it heals.

It is painful but productive.

The pain is temporary; the gain is eternal.

7. God's Discipline Is Tailored to Each Child

Psalms 103:13–14 — “He knows our frame.”

God corrects, tests, and trains each of us according to what we need.

He never disciplines too harshly or too lightly.

His discipline is perfectly measured.

8. God's Discipline Calls Us to Submission, Not Resistance

Hebrews 12:9 — “Shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits and live?”

Life and blessing come through yielding to His hand.

Resistance produces bitterness, but submission produces life, peace, and maturity.

THE FRUIT OF DISCIPLINE IN Titus 2:11-14+

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 (GRACE) **INSTRUCTING** ([paideuo](#) - present tense continually **training**) us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

THE WORD OF GOD AND DISCIPLINE 2 Timothy 3:16-17+

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for **TRAINING** ([paideia](#)) in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Righteousness means doing what God says is right.

Righteousness is obeying God even when it's hard.

Righteousness means doing the right thing even when no is watching.

Righteousness is choosing God's way instead of your own way.

Righteousness is walking straight when the world walks crooked.

Righteousness is reflecting the character of Jesus in daily life.

Righteousness is treating people the way God treats you.

Righteousness is alignment with God's will.

God's DISCIPLINE trains us to live in a way that consistently reflects the character, will, and ways of God.

THE PROS AND CONS OF DISCIPLINE, PAIDEIA, IN PROVERBS

THOUGHT: Take a few moments to read the Bible's most concentrated teaching on discipline, and make a simple list of the pros and cons. See if these eternal truths don't motivate you even more to welcome our Father's good hand of discipline!

Proverbs 1:2

To know wisdom and **instruction** ([paideia](#)) ,
To discern the sayings of understanding.

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
Fools despise wisdom and **instruction** ([paideia](#)) .

Proverbs 1:8

Hear, my son, your father's **instruction** ([paideia](#))
And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

Proverbs 3:11

My son, do not reject the **discipline** ([paideia](#)) of the LORD
Or loathe His reproof,

Proverbs 4:1

Hear, O sons, the **instruction** ([paideia](#)) of a father,
And give attention that you may gain understanding,

Proverbs 4:13

Take hold of **instruction** ([paideia](#)) ; do not let go.
Guard her, for she is your life.

Proverbs 5:12

And you say, "How I have hated **instruction** ([paideia](#)) !
And my heart spurned reproof!"

Proverbs 6:23

For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light;
And reproofs for **discipline** ([paideia](#)) are the way of life
(see purpose of discipline in Pr 6:24)

Proverbs 8:10

Take my **instruction** ([paideia](#)) and not silver,
And knowledge rather than choicest gold.

Proverbs 10:17

He is on the path of life who heeds **instruction** ([paideia](#)) ,
But he who ignores reproof goes astray.

Proverbs 12:1

Whoever loves **discipline** ([paideia](#)) loves knowledge,
But he who hates reproof is stupid.

Proverbs 13:18

Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects **discipline** ([paideia](#)) ,
But he who regards reproof will be honored.

Proverbs 15:5

A fool rejects his father's **discipline** ([paideia](#)) ,
But he who regards reproof is sensible.

Proverbs 15:10

Grievous **punishment** ([paideia](#)) is for him who forsakes the way;
He who hates reproof will die.

Proverbs 15:32

He who neglects **discipline** ([paideia](#)) despises himself,
But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.

Proverbs 15:33

The fear of the LORD is the **instruction** ([paideia](#)) for wisdom,
And before honor comes humility.

Proverbs 16:17 - The **Greek Septuagint** is quite different from the Hebrew.

The highway of the upright is to depart from evil;
He who watches his way preserves his life.

English of the Septuagint - The paths of life turn aside from evil; and the ways of righteousness are length of life. He that receives **instruction** ([paideia](#)) shall be in prosperity; and he that regards reproofs shall be made wise. He that keeps his ways, preserves his own soul; and he that loves his life will spare his mouth.

Proverbs 16:22

Understanding is a fountain of life to one who has it,
But the **discipline** ([paideia](#)) of fools is folly.

Proverbs 17:8 The **Greek Septuagint** is quite different from the Hebrew.

A bribe is a charm in the sight of its owner;
Wherever he turns, he prospers.

English of the Septuagint - Instruction ([paideia](#)) is to them that use it a gracious reward; and whithersoever it may turn, it shall prosper.

Proverbs 19:20

Listen to counsel and accept **discipline** ([paideia](#)) ,

That you may be wise the rest of your days.

Proverbs 19:27

Cease listening, my son, to **discipline** ([paideia](#)) ,
And you will stray from the words of knowledge.

Proverbs 22:15

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of **discipline** ([paideia](#)) will remove it far from him.

Proverbs 23:12

Apply your heart to **discipline** ([paideia](#))
And your ears to words of knowledge.

Proverbs 24:32

When I saw, I reflected upon it;
I looked, and received **instruction** ([paideia](#)).

Proverbs 25:1

These also are **proverbs** ([paideia](#)) of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, transcribed.

A HYMN ABOUT DISCIPLINE

Father of mercies, strong and kind,
Your rod and staff my path refine;
Through darkest trials, Your love I trace,
For discipline flows out of grace.

Refrain:

***O train my heart, O shape my will,
To trust Your hand in every hill;
Through fire and storm, Your love I see—
Your discipline is life to me.***

When sorrow's winds around me blow,
You teach me truths I could not know;
The painful path, by wisdom planned,
Becomes a garden in Your hand.

Refrain:

Your chastening is a healing balm,
A call to holiness and calm;
You prune the branch that it may bear
More fruit to show Your tender care.

Refrain:

So keep me close, though trials press,
Within Your school of righteousness;
Until the peaceful fruit appears,
And faith stands strong through all my years.

Refrain:

"The Father's Loving Hand" Hebrews 12:5–11

Most of us do not naturally welcome discipline. Our first instinct is to avoid what is painful, uncomfortable, or humbling. Yet the Scriptures tell us that discipline is one of the clearest proofs of God's love. If you belong to God, then every trial, rebuke, correction,

and hardship comes through the hands of a Father who knows you perfectly and loves you completely.

“For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines.” —Hebrews 12:6

“He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.” —Hebrews 12:10

These verses remind us of a truth we easily forget: Discipline is not God’s rejection—it is His embrace. It is His way of shaping us, purifying us, and preparing us for greater joy.

1. Discipline Reveals God’s Heart

When God disciplines you, He is not acting as a harsh judge but as a tender Father. He corrects because He loves. He reproves because He cares. He trains because He desires your best.

If you feel His discipline, you are not abandoned—you are adopted.

2. Discipline Leads to Holiness

God sees what we cannot. He knows where our hearts drift, where sin lurks, and where compromise threatens. Discipline is His tool to uproot what is deadly and plant what is life-giving.

He desires that you “share His holiness” (Heb 12:10).

Holiness is not a burden—it is freedom. It is life as God intended it to be.

3. Discipline Produces Endurance

The Christian life is not a sprint but a marathon.

Trials, resistance, and correction build spiritual stamina.

When life presses hard, God is enlarging your capacity to trust Him.

He is strengthening your soul for battles you have not yet fought and blessings you have not yet received.

4. Discipline Bears Beautiful Fruit

Hebrews describes the outcome:

“The peaceful fruit of righteousness.” —Hebrews 12:11

The fruit is not immediate. Often we do not understand the purpose of God’s discipline until later. Yet those who submit to His training discover:

- deeper peace
- stronger faith
- clearer vision
- greater humility
- richer fellowship with God
- and a heart more conformed to Christ

The pain passes; the fruit remains.

5. Discipline Invites Our Cooperation

We can resist God’s discipline—or we can receive it.

The Lord invites us to “be subject to the Father of spirits and live” (Heb 12:9).

Submission is not passive resignation—it is active trust.

It is saying: “Father, I don’t fully understand, but I know You are good.”

***The discipline of God is...
the pathway to the likeness of Christ,
the peace of holiness,
and the joy of spiritual maturity.***