

GOD'S DISCIPLINE

Proverbs 3:11-12 ... "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest his correction; for whom the Lord loves he corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights."

I have found in the Filipino culture, that the word "discipline" is automatically defined by most people as punishment. But the most common application of the word is training. So, please put aside your fear about the word as a reference to punishment, and think in terms of training.

Our verse today describes God's relationship with us on two levels, and it implies a third level. In the normal course of your life and your relationship with God, he will lead and guide you into a life that pleases him. That constitutes his discipline or training (level 1). If you stray from that course, he might have to correct you by gently guiding you back to the plan he has for you (level 2). If you stubbornly resist his gentle correction, God may have to punish you (level 3), perhaps by allowing you to get into trouble, hardship, pain or discouragement; all problems that you bring upon yourself by rejecting God's discipline and gentle correction. The hardest lessons in life are the hardships we bring upon ourselves by our own mistakes, because we have to live with the consequences of those mistakes for the rest of our lives.

Our verse also points out the similarity between God's discipline (training) of us, and a human father's discipline of his children: "for whom the Lord loves he corrects," just as a father corrects the children he loves. If God did not love us, he would not discipline, correct or chasten us. He would let us fail and die in our sins. If you are a parent who finds it distasteful, uncomfortable, or too hard to discipline your own child, this verse should force you to question your relationship with that child. The Bible says if you love your child, you will discipline, correct and – if necessary – chasten that child. You do your son or daughter no favor by allowing them to go their own way at a young age. Your role as a parent is to discipline your children to ensure they are introduced to their Savior and that they obtain an education; you guide them away from vices, unhealthy relationships, and irresponsible behavior. Until they reach adulthood, God has established you as the authority in your children's lives, making it your responsibility to make them attend classes and do their homework, do age-appropriate chores to learn the value of work; learn to manage money, respect others, and be good citizens.

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