

Wisdom of the Bible ~ Discipline ~ Leader's Guide

2. For discipline to be effective in correcting or molding character and behavior, what is also necessary: A) severity, B) judgment, C) fairness, D) suffering, E) love, F) repentance, G) Other _____ . (Judges 8:16, Jeremiah 30:11)

In general, all these factors are necessary to some degree. You might think that love should come first, although there may be instances when it is pretty far down the list.

For example, when Gideon returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres, he wanted to teach the people of Succoth a lesson because they had been unwilling to give any food to his exhausted men when they passed through earlier, so “he took the elders of the town and taught the men of Succoth a lesson by punishing them with desert thorns and briars.” – Judges 8:16

Other factors also come into play such as severity, judgment, and fairness. In Jeremiah's prophecy (30:11) about the scattering of Israel for their disobedience, especially that of King Manasseh, Jeremiah writes, ‘I am with you and will save you,’ declares the Lord. ‘Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.’

3. To train and mold us and get us to listen and repent, God shows love, mercy, understanding, and compassion. He will use deep conviction, the rebuke of friends, coincident sermons, messages in Scripture, and every other means before disciplining us. But if we do not respond to these positive factors, the Lord does not hold back on discipline. When God disciplines, the punishment fits the crime. He wants us to realize that we cannot get away with unrepentant sin. God is sculpting us into holy vessels, and the process can be painful.

Amos 3:1-2 – ²“You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins.”

Jeremiah 31:18-20 – ¹⁸“I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: ‘You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God. ¹⁹ After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth.’

²⁰Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him,” declares the Lord.

In Psalm 89:30-33, Ethan the Ezrahite writes about the Lord's promises to his people (Israel) about David. ³⁰“If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my

statutes,³¹ if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands,³² I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging;³³ but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.

1 Cor 11:32 – But when the Lord judges and punishes us, he does it to keep us from being condemned with the rest of the world. [CEV]

4. Proverbs 3:11-12 – My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Proverbs 13:1 – A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 15:5 – A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.

Job 5:17-18 – “Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.”

Hebrews 12:5-11 – ⁵ And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “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.”

⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?⁸ If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!¹⁰ Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Revelation 3:19 – Jesus speaking: “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.”

What do we learn from the above passages? In response to his discipline, the Lord wants us to: 1) listen and accept it, 2) heed and apply his correction, 3) do not take it lightly, 4) do not resent it, 5) do not be discouraged, 6) repent.

5. Proverbs 13:24 – He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is

careful to discipline him.

Proverbs 19:18 – Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.

Proverbs 29:15 – The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.

Ephesians 6:4 – Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

6. God's views of disciplining children couldn't be much further from the views of parents in the world today. In "Around the World With One Question" in Reader's Digest, May 2010, the first choice for discipline was "Talk it out" (72%). Second was "Take away a privilege" (37%). Third was "Send them to their rooms" (12%) and last was "Physical punishment" (7% in Germany, Russia, UK; 0% in China; 0% among US women and 7% among US men).

[Complete results at readersdigest.com/worldquestions]

8. 1 Timothy 4:7-8 – ⁷ Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. ⁸ For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

9. Do what God commands through His instruction. Job 36:10 – "He also opens their ears to instruction and discipline, and commands that they return from iniquity." [Amplified Bible] In other words, knowledge is very much a part of discipline. God desires that we learn about his ways and plans and follow them.

Although the term "discipline" is not used, it is implied in John 15:10-11 where Jesus says, ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

10. Never give up in the pursuit of your faith. Always keep going! "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith." – Hebrews 12: 1-2a [NLT] While the word self-discipline does not appear here, it is quite evident that it takes much discipline to "run with endurance." Have you ever run a race when you couldn't finish because you were tired out?