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Proverbs
Chapter 3 - A Most Valuable Heritage
Celebratory Correction (vs. 11-12)

Proverbs 33:11-12: My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD
Or loathe His reproof,
For whom the LORD loves He reproves,
Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.

Well, we have a most valuable heritage, don't we? When you look at the beginning of this particular chapter, you begin to realize that God has great blessings in store for us. He goes through an interesting list. If you look at the passage, not only the favor of God upon us, but the direction of God, the divine direction, the healing of God in our lives. Ultimately, the satisfaction that He brings.

If you look in verse 4, you can find good favor and good repute not only in the sight of God, but in the sight of man.

If you look at verse 5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart," and if you don't lean on your own understanding, if you look knowledge Him in all your ways, then what will happen? "He will make your paths straight." (verse 6)

If you'll fear the Lord and turn away from evil, then it will be healing to your body. (verses 7-8)

All these are wonderful blessings that God gives, and as one put it, wisdom provides wonderful benefits and happiness. If you have to suffer in the pursuit of it, don't be discouraged because as we come to this particular verse, we begin to realize that there is a chastening involved. There is a discipline involved. There are hardships that come in our lives. In spite of the fact that we have great and wonderful and valuable treasures and blessings that God gives us, the road to that is not always easy. The perception is, "Well, why do I need all the corrections?" And I would say, "Well, if you were already wise, you wouldn't need it." But it is the process of bringing somebody into wisdom. You read books in the New Testament, the Book of James or the Book of 1 Peter, and both of them have that feel of you're going to have to go through this suffering in order to have the blessings. You realize, according to James, that the blessings that God has given us, in that book, is to transform our words into actions. As you're young and

oftentimes inspired by your own mind, it's easy to begin to think that if you just speak it, it's actually done, but you actually go into the real world and you realize, wow, doing it is pretty difficult. James will tell us that we're going to transform those words and we're going to put them into action. Also, you realize, according to 1 Peter, that God takes us through the sufferings that the trials might lead to testimonies. God has given us these trials, so that not only will it sharpen us and bring excellence in us, but it's through that excellent behavior that we begin to testify to who Jesus Christ is in our lives. How you suffer is just as important as the process of suffering. So, Peter begins to reveal to us the benefits, if you would, of the suffering. One of the great statements in the book of 1 Peter is that if you'll suffer for doing what is right, the glory of God rests upon you. What a great picture that is.

As we come to this passage, he now shifts from the treasures into the realm of the correction. Now, that too is a treasure, but not recognizable right away. So, if you look with me within the passage, he begins to share with us that we need not to reject these corrections that God is going to give. If you read with me, it reads this way within the passage,

(Proverbs 3:11) “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD
Or loathe His reproof.”

You know, that's hard not to do. As Hebrews 12 would say, all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful but sorrowful, which is kind of an understatement. The fact of the matter is that going through difficult times, as we react to those things, it's hard to actually see them as a kind of blessing to us. Our sense and our reaction are that we want to reject, we want to despise. We want to refuse what's happening to us, and in the realm of what is happening to us, our initial response is, “This is uncomfortable. This is painful. I don't like it.” He goes on and says, if you look in the passage, “My son, not only do not reject the discipline of the Lord, but don't loathe His reproof.”

“Reproof” has the connotation of the fact that somebody is correcting you and telling you, “You did something wrong.” It is oftentimes translated in a sense of impeachment, in which it's just silencing you. You've done the wrong thing, and it's an accusation against you. First of all, we don't like the uncomfortableness of going through difficult situations and the correction thereof, but we also don't like the fact that somebody's telling us that we're wrong. I mean, that kind of goes against our ego. So, in the process of somebody telling us that we're wrong, we begin to bristle up and we begin to get upset over the people that are telling us this; not thinking in terms of what we've done wrong or how it affects anybody else.

An interesting point, and if you would look within the passage as it says, “My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe His reproof,” the action seems to be pointed to the person that is being corrected within the text. In other words, don't reject and don't loathe, but what's

interesting, in the Hebrew, it's what is called in the Jussive, which is actually focusing on the person that is not in the limelight. That is to say, not the one being corrected. The point of the matter is Scripture is telling us, "Have you thought about the one who has to correct you?" When you go through difficulty and somebody has to take a stand, somebody has to do something corrective, and as our parents would oftentimes say, "This hurts me more than it hurts you," which we never really fully believed, but the point is that we don't consider how it affects the person that is having to correct. Our focus is on how this is embarrassing me and the shame that it brings.

There's a number of Scriptures that we can spot in Proverbs that will remind us that you don't want to disregard this reproof, not only because of the one who is giving it, but because of the fact that it's for your good. Let me give you some of them.

One of them is Proverbs 9:8,

"Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you,
Reprove a wise man and he will love you."

That's an interesting dichotomy within the passage, isn't it?

Proverbs 12:1 says, "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge..."

And you're going to think this is my translation, but it's not,

"...But he who hates reproof is stupid."

It's actually NAS translation. "He who hates reproof is stupid."

"I hate when somebody corrects me." Ok, you're just showing your hand; you're showing who you are.

Proverbs 13:1 reads this way,

"A wise son accepts his father's discipline,
But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."

(Proverbs 15:5) "A fool rejects his father's discipline..."

(Proverbs 15:10) "...He who hates reproof will die."

That's an interesting way of putting it, isn't it?

(Proverbs 15:32) "He who neglects discipline despises himself..."

(Proverbs 16:5) "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD;
Assuredly, he will not be unpunished."

That's one of the guarantees of Scripture, by the way.

Proverbs 15:12 reads this way,

“A scoffer does not love one who reproves him,
He will not go to the wise.”

One of the reasons why he doesn't go to the wise is he doesn't want somebody telling him he's wrong. The Scripture is telling us you don't want to get into that mindset because your initial reaction is to shun this. Your initial reaction is to loathe this and to perceive it as something that is bad. Scripture is telling us what it really is, and the interesting thing is the description of the word here, the “discipline” of the Lord, is really conveying a sense of warning and restraint. The purpose of the discipline is to warn you and to restrain you from doing something that is hurtful. To get upset about that, to get angry about that is just plain stupid.

Now, the passage not only tells us how we should respond and how we should not react to these things, but it tells us literally why. In the first statement, I would probably say the first reason why you shouldn't reject and why you shouldn't loathe is because it's the discipline of the Lord. It is an interesting point, and I think sometimes people get a little confused when they go through difficulties and they go, “How do I know this is God and how do I know this isn't just somebody being mean in my life?” So, Scripture gives you those wonderful pictures.

One of the first things that we see within the text is that we realize God works through authority. It's one of the reasons why in like Proverbs 6:20, and all of these passages you can really sense a father talking to a son. So, obviously there's an authority figure that has been given over the son. It is important to note that it does not say, “Children discipline your parents.” I know that a lot of kids feel like they're quite a bit smarter, but regardless of whether you are smarter or not, you do not have the luxury of doing this and this would not be of the Lord.

If you look in Proverbs 6:20,

“My son, observe the commandment of your father
And do not forsake the teaching of your mother.”

The passage is telling us that there's authority figures within our life, and God works through those authority figures. As it's so clear in Romans 13 that God has ordained all authority, and He works through that. Now look, the fact of the matter is that we don't necessarily agree with everything that authority does and says. Nevertheless, God is correcting us, God is warning us, God is restraining us through the power of this authority; that all authority is ordained by God. Just to clarify, God can use anything, but God will use that which is more powerful than you to do this. Why? Because He's humbling you. Why? To restrain you. Why? Because you're going

the wrong way and you're doing the wrong things, and God is going to use these things in your life.

There's a passage in Job 37, if you'll turn there with me. Well, I don't know if you heard some thunder yesterday or not, but the thunder is really described here in Job 37, and you begin to see that God is using the rumbling of the thunder to speak to us.

(Job 37:1) ““At this also my heart trembles,
And leaps from its place.

(Job 37:2) “Listen closely to the thunder of His voice,
And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth.

(Job 37:3) “Under the whole heaven He lets it loose,
And His lightning to the ends of the earth.

(Job 37:4) “After it, a voice roars;
He thunders with His majestic voice,
And He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard.

(Job 37:5) “God thunders with His voice wondrously,
Doing great things which we cannot comprehend.””

He talks about the snow, and he talks about the rain that falls, but then it states this, if you look with me in verse 12,

“It changes direction, turning around by His guidance...”

So, obviously He's the one that does the guiding of it.

“... That it may do whatever He commands it
On the face of the inhabited earth.

(Job 37:13) “Whether for correction, or for His world,
Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.”

There are forces that are far more powerful than us, and God is directing us through those forces. It is His authority, and God is saying submit to those authorities. Rejoice in that. Even as Christ submitted to the crucifixion of the cross, God was working through that authority to bring about salvation. Little did they know, right? As they were working things that were nefarious and malevolent towards Christ, nevertheless, God was causing it for good. The same thing is true in David's life, and you go through the different ones in which God begins to use authority. So, the initial point is that we realize that God is at work and therefore, we don't resist it. To resist it, you begin to resist against God. As Romans 13 says, if you oppose this

authority, you're opposing God, and you don't want to do that. You also begin to realize that in the fact that God is doing the work, that everything that He does and the things that He brings into our life to correct us will ultimately keep us from evil. In other words, one of the ways that you know which His correction is, it's that which keeps you from doing wrong.

Psalm 141 If you look there with me, it's an interesting passage in which the psalmist begins to describe and really cry out to God and ask Him for His discipline.

The passage reads this way in Psalm 141,

(Psalm 141:1) "O LORD, I call upon You; hasten to me!
Give ear to my voice when I call to You!

(Psalm 141:2) May my prayer be counted as incense before You;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

(Psalm 141:3) Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth..."

When's the last time you asked God to do that for you?

"... Keep watch over the door of my lips.

(Psalm 141:4) Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,
To practice deeds of wickedness
With men who do iniquity..."

How do you know it's God disciplining you? He shut your mouth. He doesn't allow you to go places. He doesn't allow you to do things. I've often reflected upon my life as a teenager and all the things that I wanted to do and how frustrated I often was in the fact that I just couldn't seem to get there. I couldn't seem to do it, then, to come home to see my parents praying for me. That just really upset me even more.

(Psalm 141:5) "Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me;
It is oil upon the head;
Do not let my head refuse it..."

When it's of the Lord, He is stopping you and you can see, "Oh, God's keeping me from offending this person. He's keeping me from hurting this person. He's keeping me from causing more damage. He is keeping me from hurting myself." It's one of the reasons why the psalmist in Psalm 139, as he begins the Psalm, says, "You know everything about me. There's nothing that I do that You don't know about." But the end of the Psalm is really the point of the Psalm, "Lord, you've got to keep me from things that are hurtful in my life. You've got to reveal these things to me because I wouldn't naturally see them. You have a better view of who I am than

me. So, keep me from hurtful ways, see if there be any hurtful way in me.” That’s a thankful heart, because the realization that God is revealing things.

You read a passage like Deuteronomy 8, and God says, “Ok, I’ll let you be hungry, but it was to test you to see what was on your heart, that it might humble you.” So, there are going to be times where it’s going to be very uncomfortable, but God is revealing things in our lives to demonstrate the very things that would cause us to be really robbed of blessing. Because as the passage goes on, He says, “You’re going to go into the promised land. You’re going to have all the blessings, but you’re not going to be able to enjoy them if you don’t realize where they come from, and you begin to think that it’s all you. So, let’s deal with this now, so that you can enjoy it when you get there.” And God is doing a great work, but obviously that’s one of the great signs that God is doing something. Romans 5 demonstrates this as well.

If you look there in Romans chapter 5, you begin to see that through the difficulties God is strengthening; He’s building character. That was always kind of a dirty phrase in my household. “Well, God is building character in you.” Well, gee, I think He’s done enough for the week.”

(Romans 5:3) “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations...”

Who would do that? It sounds like James 1, doesn’t it?

“... knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

(Romans 5:4) and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope.”

Hope – a confident expectation in the future. All these things began to be built in me and the fortitude, I think, is one of the great signs. How do I know this is God working in my life? I can see it building character in my life. I can see God changing me into the image of His Son.

We won’t necessarily turn there, but in 2 Corinthians 7, you realize that there is a sorrow that brings about a sense of zeal for God. I have found that when God begins to discipline me in my life, I have a greater zeal for His cause, have a greater zeal for God than ever before. It’s one of the tell-tale signs this was God. This wasn’t just a mishap or something that somebody did, just to be mean. This was God bringing it into my life for that particular sake, and you begin to realize that God is doing a great work.

Isaiah 28, we won’t necessarily turn there, but that wonderful picture of the fact that God knows exactly what is needed to bring about produce and He’s not going to crush the seed that doesn’t need to be crushed. He’s going to do what is perfectly right for every situation. You see the fact that God is not really in the business of breaking us, God is in the business of humbling us so that we might be productive, and it’s a wonderful truth. You can see that when God’s

hand is in the mix, when God is doing the work. So, why is it that we should not resist? Well, obviously, because the Lord is doing the work.

Once again, I just want to remind you that it is the Lord working through authority. So, if authority is doing something that you don't like, stop. God's doing the work, and you know this to be true.

The second thing that he states and is probably the very focus of the text is that God loves you, and He's demonstrating His love to you. Now, the thing that often does doesn't jump into our heads is that while we're going through the trials and the tribulation and the hardship and the pain that is warning us, that is moving us into a different direction, keeping us from hurting ourselves or others; in the process, we tend to get very frustrated over the fact that something's moving us or pushing us away from doing what we want to do, but the passage is telling us that the sign that God is doing this in your life is a clear indication that He loves you. The thing I love about the whole picture of discipline is that it gives you this marvelous sense of God is present and involved intimately in your life. So, it is a very personal thing. Whereas, you know blessings, the rain falls on the godly and the ungodly; the sun shines on the godly and the ungodly. Ok, we all kind of reap those wonderful blessings, but how do I know that God loves me? The passage is saying because He disciplines you. Now, Hebrews will jump on this and actually quote this particular passage in Hebrews 12, and we'll look at that in just a second, but the emphasis of this passage is that this is a sign of God's intimate relationship with you, if in fact you're disciplined.

You go through Scripture, and you see interesting pictures throughout, especially the Old Testament, but even into the New Testament, of God dealing with certain individuals, and I can go through a plethora, but we'll just go through a couple. One is Jacob. Now, Jacob is called of God. Now, what do we know about Jacob? Well, Jacob is a supplanter, he's a manipulator, a cheat, a liar, and those are his good points. No, not really. He has faults, there's no doubt about it. Nevertheless, God calls him and it's through the process of God loving him that we see God begin to discipline him. So, what is one of the first things that He does? Well, he puts him with Laban, a father-in-law that cheats, that steals, that lies, and interestingly enough, if you've read the Old Testament, Laban seems to get away with it, but not Jacob. We watch the life of Jacob and as we follow the life of Jacob, we have to walk away going he wasn't worse for the discipline, he was better. God was directing his steps, and He was changing him into the man of God that He wanted him to be. Jacob ultimately ends up being really the great poster boy of change, and as you go through many of the prophetic books, you begin to hear throughout the prophetic books, He is the God of Jacob, which is telling us that God is not looking for perfection. He is looking for those that will be pliable and that will listen and that will give their

lives to Him; that they will not resist reproof or correction but will embrace that in their lives. Jacob clearly did that, but Laban seems to be unscathed, untouched.

When you read chapters such as, and we've oftentimes gone to these chapters of Psalm 37, and you reverse that number into Psalm 73, and both of those psalms talk about the fact that "Why is it the ungodly scene to prosper?" And God would answer, I think, through the text, "Because I don't love them. That's the reason why they're prospering. That's the reason why they seem to be untouched." The psalmist will say they seem to be fat. They seem to have no cares. They seem to have no problems. Of course, all of that is hyperbole, basically by the one that is sitting on the other side. Grass is always greener, but the point is that they're not disciplined by God. They're allowed to go beyond what is good for them, and in both of those psalms, God says to the one crying out, "Wait. Everything will be ok. Watch how it turns out. I'm going to bless you greater, but you'll be able to handle it, and the blessings will be greater." Of course, the blessings of God make rich, and He adds no sorrow to it. The point of those two psalms in particular is to help you and I realize what really is important and to value the things that God values, and to then ultimately enjoy the things that God gives you. It's very obvious that people like Laban don't know how to enjoy good because he not only made himself miserable, but he made his whole family miserable. His own daughters say, "He sees us as slaves. We're nobodies to him." So, we know there's no wonderful relationship that he has. The point of the passage, of course, obviously is that God is loving us by virtue of correcting us. You see somebody like David and not only is David not perfect, but David goes through a whole life of correction, but David is not the lesser for it. David is not only remembered, but he's elevated because he humbled himself under the mighty hand of God. One of the very distinctions between David and Saul is Saul wouldn't take correction. I mean, Saul, basically, if you were to list sins, I would have to say didn't sin as much as David did, but when corrected, he rejected it. The very thing that you see in David is when ultimately confronted, he breaks down and he humbles himself, and he cries unto God. Of course, Psalm 51 is one of the great Psalms of David, admitting the sin that he had, saying, "God, You've got to purify me. You've got to purge me" and that willingness to be corrected.

In fact, you go into Psalm 119: 65-75, and what is the psalmist saying within those particular verses? He's saying, "It was good that I was afflicted because had I not been afflicted, I would have gone astray." You see a heart that is crying for this and it's one of the things that really separate him from others.

Peter, if you look in the New Testament, is corrected by Christ a number of times. I don't see one correction of Judas, do you? Who the Lord loves, He corrects. As Peter is corrected, not only does he grow stronger, but he really becomes bold in his faith by virtue of God using the correction in his life. God is doing this for our good. I mean, Paul is probably the one corrected

most; talk about going the wrong way. So, you as you read these things, you begin to see just what correction looks like, but also the love of God that you begin to realize through this.

Psalms 103, if you look there with me, talks about the love of God in this. In this particular Psalm, you realize that he starts off with all the blessings of God. So, if God has given us all these blessings, does He want bad for us?

(Psalm 103:1) “Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.

(Psalm 103:2) Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget none of His benefits;

(Psalm 103:3) Who pardons all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases;

(Psalm 103:4) Who redeems your life from the pit,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;

(Psalm 103:5) Who satisfies your years with good things...”

“Oh, God doesn't love me.” Yeah, He loves you and He does give you wonderful things, but He's not going to withhold discipline. Who the Lord loves He disciplines, too.

(Psalm 103:6) “The LORD performs righteous deeds...”

(Psalm 103:8) “The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

(Psalm 103:9) He will not always strive with us,
Nor will He keep His anger forever.

(Psalm 103:10) He has not dealt with us according to our sins...”

This is a wonderful picture that when God corrects us, He doesn't punish us. Punishment is giving you what you deserve, but correction and discipline are giving you training.

So, the passage reads this way,

“He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

(Psalm 103:11) For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.

(Psalm 103:12) As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

He wants to get those things out, not hover them over us.

Watch how it describes Him in verse 13,

“Just as a father has compassion on his children,
So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.”

Even in the discipline, even in the direction, even in the correction, God is demonstrating His lovingkindness by not giving us what we want, but by sitting down and saying, “Son, do you see how this is hurting you? Do you see how this is hurting somebody else? Let's correct this.” And you begin to realize the blessings of God.

Hebrews 12 literally quotes this text and takes it out of Proverbs 3. As we've been reading this and had a wonderful time in which the Book of Hebrews begins to reveal the difference between walking by faith and walking by our flesh and the world. In Hebrews 12, we realize that there are witnesses that show us what it looks like to walk by faith.

(Hebrews 21:1) “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses...”

The “therefore” is in direct correlation to Chapter 11. In Chapter 11, he begins to talk to us about Abel, Noah, Abraham, and all the those that had gone before and walked by faith. By faith, he begins to describe this is what they did. So, they just obeyed God.

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance...”

Now, he's talking about every kind of burden, every kind of weight that would weigh us down, from what? Well, the passage is telling us that we have a race to win.

If you look at the end,

“...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

You might want to underline the word “race” because it's actually “*agōn*,” which is not as much focused on the running itself but focused on the assembly. The word itself actually makes reference to an assembly of national games in which the Greeks would come together, like the Olympics. His point is that we have a game to win. We have something that will ultimately bring us to the place and the path of victory, but in order to get to the path of victory, we're going to have to be willing to be disciplined. I mean, you're not going to win if you're not disciplined. It's not going to happen. So, the way it reads is you've got to take off all the weights, anything that would weigh you down, anything that would slow you down, and the “sin,” that would be the

missteps of things that could so easily come in and entangle us. Now, you might want to underline the word “entangle”. We oftentimes think of the fact that maybe something's twisting us up, but actually the word is used of another runner and other runners that come beside you and, in the games, they were allowed to push you off the path. They could force you off the path. So, he's saying that there's a lot of things that are going to come into your life that are going to try to push you off the focus of running this race. There's a lot of things that could easily cause you to stumble or to trip up and to cause a misstep to the path of victory. God has victory in sight for you.

“...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

(Hebrews 12:2) fixing our eyes on Jesus...”

You oftentimes see a runner fall down and he gets back up, and you go, “Wow, the fortitude of somebody like that, the tenacity.”

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

What is he talking about? Victory. The picture that he's wanting to give you is that God is fighting for victory and wants you in the process, to join the race that God has for you.

It goes on and says,

(Hebrews 12:3) “For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners...”

You go, “Well, you don't know how rough I have it.” God goes, “Ok, let's take it to the extremity.” Let's look at Jesus. Did He give up? Did He say, “This is too much for Me”? Now, don't forget, He won. Remember, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that He would exalt you.

“For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

(Hebrews 12:4) You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

(Hebrews 12:5) and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons...”

And he quotes Proverbs 3 in the passage,

“... “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD,
NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

(Hebrews 12:6) FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES,
AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

(Hebrews 12:7) It is for discipline that you endure...."

Don't misunderstand what he's saying here. It is for training, it is for instruction, it is for correction of you going off the wrong path that you endure. In other words, you're thankful every time God points out those problems in your life so that you can run a better race; so, you can finish the course; so that you can do well. So, it's the training that we love so much. I mean, what Olympian doesn't have a trainer or somebody that's directing them? If you were to ask him, "Don't you despise your trainer?" They'd say, "No. I love my trainer." Because that's the person that's going to help them on the path of success.

"It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?"

What father wants least for his son; is happy that his son is complacent and does nothing with his life? What father would be that way?

(Hebrews 12:8) "But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

(Hebrews 12:9) Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?"

That's a wonderful text because it really is revealing the fact that our heavenly Father is correcting our spirits, or actually, the way that it's probably correctly translated, "of our spirits, and live." God is correcting our spirit. That's a wonderful thing, isn't it? Because if you think about it, it's my spirit that throws me off. My spirit causes me anxiety. My spirit causes me to be angry and to be bitter, which he's going to talk about within the passage.

(Hebrews 12:10) "For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them..."

Why? Because they were disciplining according to the flesh and of course, what they saw. For every kid that didn't do something wrong, but the father thought he saw you do something wrong by virtue of what he saw. Have you ever had a brother or sister push you and your parents aren't looking, then you push back, and that's when they look? So, you know what I'm talking about, but the point is that your father's disciplined you according to what they saw in the flesh. They couldn't judge your heart. They couldn't see what was in your heart, but God sees those things and He judges accordingly. It says they did it "as seemed best to them."

Now, the wonderful thing about this is that when you grow up in a household and your father disciplines you and wrongly so, perhaps or rightly so, that God is still using that to train you and

correct you because God has brought those people in your life. I've known people that grew up with a terrible and horrible rough background in their family, and their parents were just horrible people, but as I began to watch their life, I began to realize they needed that because that's what pushed them into the arms of God. Whereas some people in the process, if they have a household where it's very congenial and very wonderful, they needed that, but God knows exactly what we need because He disciplines the spirit, and He knows what we need in that. So, He brings these things in our lives, and though a father may do something wrong just simply because he's going off what seemed best to him, what we understand is that God disciplines us for our, look at the passage, "good".

Now, he will not use the normal word for "good" within the passage, he uses "*sympherō*" which talks about "together bearing up." The passage is conveying He disciplines us so that He would work together for our benefit in this. There's a sense of God coming alongside of us, and He goes, "Now, we're going to go through some rough time, but I'm going to be there, and I'm going to give you strength through it. We're going to make it through this together." It's a wonderful picture of God coming alongside of you, just like a trainer would come alongside, "We're going to win. We're going to win. We're going to finish this."

"... so that we may share His holiness."

That we may be like Him, sharing His distinction and His holiness, that we might be different; that we might have the character and nature of Christ.

(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.

(Hebrews 12:12) Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,

(Hebrews 12:13) and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed."

It's very easy, if you look in verse 15, to cause the difficulties in your life to make you bitter. He gives the example of Esau, who the discipline made him bitter. The problem with Esau was he disregarded what was valuable. Now, in his particular setting, it was the birthright. What is it in your setting? It's the discipline. When you begin to disregard what is most valuable, it's not long before a bitterness comes in.

The whole passage, as you go through Chapter 12, he goes, "We come to God and the assembly of God, we come to a mount not like Moses, but something far greater. The mount of God in heaven, and God is telling us He loves us and He's doing this for our good."

Watch what he says in verse 25,

“See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking...”

Now, if you understand the text, the point is He's talking to you through discipline because the discipline is a very personal way of communicating. You're looking around, you're going, “Why isn't it happening to them?” God goes, “Because I'm talking to you.” And the very fact that He's talking to us right that moment, we're connecting with Him and we're seeing that God is intimately involved in all of our ways.

I've got to end in this passage in Hosea 6, but in this wonderful passage, we begin to see that throughout the book of Hosea, God is declaring that He loves His people. How could He let them go? He's crying out. So, He ultimately says, “I'm going to have to discipline you.” And here again, when we're going through the discipline, the last person we're thinking about is the person that is disciplining us, but the passage wants us to consider just how we're hurting the one that is having to do this. The promise here in Hosea 6 is this,

(Hosea 6:1) “Come, let us return to the LORD.
For He has torn us, but He will heal us;
He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.

(Hosea 6:2) “He will revive us after two days;
He will raise us up on the third day,
That we may live before Him.

(Hosea 6:3) “So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD...”

Isn't that what He's doing? I can't think of a better way to know Him than when He begins to work in my life. There are many times that I've gone through difficulty, and I go, “You got my attention.” And those have been some of the sweetest times in my life because I've felt His presence, I have felt the genuineness of Him talking to just me. God loves you.

Closing Prayer:

We give You thanks, Father, for the wonderful way in which You work in our life and the difficult things that You bring; that You would not hold back because You love us so much. Because you want more of us, you have greater things in store. You don't want us living in selfishness and misery and bitterness. You want us having fullness of joy. It is by virtue of Your

wonderful training, Your correcting, Your moving us back on path, and sometimes pushing us, we thank you for that. You sometimes taking things away, we thank you for that; sometimes not allowing us to have certain things, sometimes giving us things that we wouldn't have thought we needed. We thank you for that because we know that all of these things are out of Your love for us.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, dearly beloved, what I'm asking you to do is to reflect upon the things that God has been doing in your life, and I'm asking you to see them differently than perhaps you have been. It is true that the natural response is to reject, to despise, to loathe, to push back. I mean, we by nature don't like people correcting us, anyone correcting us, but think differently about this. God is talking to you individually. He's telling you that you're important to Him, that you're a child that He's invested in. He's doing something wonderful. Open your eyes. Ask Him to open the eyes of your heart that you would be enlightened, that you would see all the wonderful things that He's doing in this. He will raise you up. The third day He will resurrect you.