**Loving Our Neighbors**

**A Love Only God Could Inspire**

**God’s Loving Discipline**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** - *Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*

**Psalm 7:17** - *I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.*

**Proverbs 3:11** - *My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe His reproof,*

**Proverbs 12:1** - *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.*

**Proverbs 13:18** - *Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored.*

**Proverbs 19:20** - *Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.*

3 principles to help us value God’s disciplining love

**I. God Loves Us by Providing Instructive Discipline**

A. The beauty and order of creation

**Genesis 1:31** - *God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

**Psalm 65:8-9** - *They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy. You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; the stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth.*

B. The joy and honor that could have come through fulfilling our creation mandate

**Genesis 1:26, 28** - *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”…God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

C. The clarity of His commands

**Deuteronomy 6:1** - *Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it,*

D. The power of His covenants

**Galatians 6:7-8** - *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*

**II. God Loves Us by Practicing, if Necessary, Corrective Discipline**

A. The choices of God’s people

1. Believed the Lord was unaware of their choices – 7:1-2

2. Broke the covenant and rebelled against God’s law – 8:1-2

3. Made crucial life choices with no consideration of God’s will – 8:4ff

4. Used their wealth to find their joy and prosperity in their gods – 8:8

B. The loving, correctively disciplinary consequences

1. Their lover (Assyria) would become their destroyer – 8:9-10

**Proverbs 13:18** - *Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored.*

2. The impotence of their idols would be revealed – 8:6-7

3. Their purpose would be eradicated – 8:8

**Hosea 8:8** - *Israel is swallowed up; they are now among the nations like a vessel in which no one delights.*

4. Their attempts at being free from what they viewed as “God’s overly restrictive law” has resulted in greater bondage to their own sin, misery, and inevitable consequences – v. 13.

**v. 13** – *they will return to Egypt.*

**Proverbs 5:21-23** - *For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He watches all his paths. His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin. He will die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he will go astray.*

**III. God Loves Us in Amazingly Similar Ways Today**

A. Making the joy of a self-disciplined life possible

Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms. C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: HarperCollins, 1952/2001), 56.

1. In salvation, Christ frees us from the penalty and the power of our rebellion

**Isaiah 53:5-6** - *But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.*

**Romans 6:6-7** - *knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.*

2. In sanctification, Christ empowers us to develop the Spirit’s fruit of self-control

**Galatians 5:22-24** - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

B. Being willing to exercise corrective discipline as our Heavenly Father

**Hebrews 12:5-17** - *…You have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.”…He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 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. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 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. Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.*

**Proverbs 13:18** - *Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline…*

**Hebrews 10:31** - *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

**2 Corinthians 5:11** - *Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men…*