

Hebrews 12:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

Analysis

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: The author quotes Proverbs 3:11-12, reminding readers of Scripture's teaching on divine discipline. 'Ye have forgotten' (ἐκλέλησθε, 'you have completely forgotten') suggests they once knew this truth but lost sight of it under pressure. The exhortation 'speaketh unto you as unto children' emphasizes their filial relationship with God—He disciplines them as beloved sons, not enemies.

Two opposite errors are warned against: 'despise not the chastening' (treating discipline lightly, ignoring correction) and 'nor faint when rebuked' (becoming discouraged or despairing under correction). The Greek *paideia* (παιδεία, 'chastening') encompasses both education and corrective discipline—training that includes correction, reproof, and sometimes painful consequences designed to shape character toward maturity.

This introduces a critical perspective shift: their persecution wasn't merely satanic opposition or random suffering, but could include God's fatherly discipline, refining and purifying them. This doesn't mean all suffering is disciplinary—some is spiritual warfare, some proves faith—but reframing hardship as potential divine training transforms response from resentment to submission, from despair to hope that God is working character development through difficulty.

Historical Context

Proverbs 3:11-12, written by Solomon approximately 950 BC, taught that divine discipline evidences sonship rather than rejection. Ancient Israelites understood fathers' responsibility to discipline children for their good. Hebrews applies this wisdom literature to New Covenant believers, showing Old Testament Scripture remains relevant for Christian formation. First-century readers, tempted to interpret persecution as God's abandonment, needed reminding that difficulty could indicate God's active fathering rather than His absence. This would reshape their emotional and spiritual response to trials from victimization to formation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How might reframing your current hardships as potential divine discipline transform your response to them?
2. In what ways are you tempted either to 'despise' God's chastening (ignore correction) or 'faint' (become discouraged)?
3. What might God be teaching or correcting in your character through current difficulties?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐκλέλησθε τῆς παρακλήσεως ἣτις ὑμῖν ὡς Υἱέ
And ye have forgotten ^{G2532} ^{G1585} ^{G3588} **the exhortation** ^{G3874} **which** ^{G3748} **unto you** ^{G5213} **as** ^{G5613} **son** ^{G5207}
διαλέγεται Υἱέ μου μὴ ὀλιγώρει παιδείας κυρίου
speakeeth ^{G1256} **son** ^{G5207} **My** ^{G3450} **not** ^{G3361} **despise** ^{G3643} **the chastening** ^{G3809} **of the Lord** ^{G2962}
μηδὲ ἐκλύου ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐλεγχόμενος·
nor ^{G3366} **faint** ^{G1590} **of** ^{G5259} **him** ^{G846} **when thou art rebuked** ^{G1651}

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 3:19 (Parallel theme): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

1 Corinthians 11:32 (References Lord): But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Psalms 94:12 (References Lord): Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

James 1:12 (References Lord): Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Psalms 119:109 (Parallel theme): My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

Psalms 119:75 (References Lord): I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

Jeremiah 31:18 (References Lord): I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.

Psalms 118:18 (References Lord): The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

Hebrews 12:7 (Parallel theme): If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

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