

Sunday, July 9, 2023  
UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLINE

Hebrews 12:5-11 (NIV)

Let's have a biblical talk about discipline today. First, let's define discipline so there is no mistake as to what we are talking about.

*paideía* (from /*paideúō*, see there) – properly, *instruction that trains someone to reach full development (maturity)*.

Notice that discipline is instruction intended to lead to maturity. And what is our measure of maturity as believers?

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV)

Jesus is our measure of maturity. Notice that the five-fold ministry gifting/office is used in the maturation process. Here's where we encounter issues/problems in the church.

**We don't know the difference between discipline and punishment.**

The reason that we don't know the difference is because we cannot discern the difference between discipline and rejection. We live in such a "rejection based" culture. Many of us have experiences in which instances of correction were done in an unloving manner. When this repeatedly occurs, it is easy to believe that all correction is a rejection of my behavior and painfully - my "self." It causes us to believe something like this:

**"Those who don't do well are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished."**

Therefore, every instance brought to my attention in which my behavior, attitude, motives, etc. need to change are nothing more than rejection of me as a person and very painful. This makes discipline in the church challenging because we take correction as rejection.

**Because we don't know the difference between discipline and punishment, we react negatively to instances of correction.**

Rather than opportunities for growth into maturity, moments of correction become outbreaks of division. Since we take correction as rejection of our “self”, our pain and anger drive us to separate ourselves from the object that we perceive rejected us. Here are some facts regarding discipline and we are done:

1. Where you have righteousness and flesh together, you will have discipline.
2. Where God is present, you will have discipline because His ways are higher than ours (Isa.55:9).
3. Where you have love, you have discipline.

Some expect the church to be different from any place else they have ever experienced. You are right, it is. But it is not realistic to expect those who are called to be a part of your spiritual maturation process to never say anything to you that doesn't challenge or correct. Remember our scripture from Ephesians? The ministry offices are used in spiritual maturation. With that in mind, what tools do they use?

#### Ephesians 4:14-15 (NIV)

Everyone say: “Correction is not rejection!” Now say: “Discipline done in love is a part of my maturation process in Christ!” One more declaration: “I welcome loving input into my life as part of being a disciple of Christ!”

Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they correct me, it is soothing medicine. Don't let me refuse it. /// Psalm 141:5 (NLT)

Today's Scriptures:

- Hebrews 12:5-11 (NIV)
- Ephesians 4:11-15 (NIV)
- Psalm 141:5 (NLT)