

## **Sermon or Lesson: Hebrews 12:4-11** (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Accepting The Lord's Discipline

INTRO: When you are commencing to administer discipline to your child, what is the biggest challenge in that process? Answer: Getting the child to accept the discipline.

TRANSITION: According to the passage we are going to study, the Lord disciplines each of us from time to time. Let's see how we should appropriately respond to His disciplining activities and accept them in our lives.

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READ: Hebrews 12:4-11

[Lesson Question: What steps and dynamics of those steps can be derived from this passage for accepting the Lord's discipline?]

From this passage, steps and their dynamics to accepting the Lord's discipline are:

SECTION POINT: **1. Self-evaluate to determine if the Lord is disciplining you.**

v.5 "when he rebukes you":

"rebuked" = "corrected or admonished", "given counsel against; cautioned; reminded of something forgotten or disregarded, as an obligation or a responsibility"; "shown or proven to be wrong, false, or in error"; "criticized for a fault or offense"; "reproved sharply; refuted decisively; discredited; reprimanded". (from Strong's #1651 'rebuke' and (AHD) 'admonish', 'confute', 'rebuke')

- - Are you being "rebuked"?

v.7 "endure hardship as discipline":

"hardship" = "discipline containing educational training designed to bring correction". (from Strong's #3809)

- - Are you going through "hardship" because the Lord is disciplining you?

v.4 "in your struggle against sin" you resist:

- - One form of hardship that the Lord can use as discipline of us is the sin perpetrated upon us by other persons. (v.4 with v.7)

- - We naturally view sin perpetrated upon us as hardship, but we do not naturally recognize or view sin perpetrated upon us as being a form of discipline from God.

- - Depending on the situation then, this kind of sin-perpetrated hardship discipline may be for corrective purposes (v.5) or it may be for cultivating spiritual growth purposes (vv.3-4).

- - Are you being disciplined by the Lord for the purpose of cultivating your spiritual growth, perhaps in areas such as building your perseverance, long-suffering, patience, or determination? (v.3)

v.6 "he punishes everyone he accepts as a son":

"punishes" = "figuratively whipped or flogged", presumably for sinning. (from Strong's #3146)

- - Are you being "punished"?
  - - Are there sin areas in your life that need to be cleaned up, cleaned out? (vv.6,10)
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SECTION POINT: **2. Accept the discipline.**

v.5 "do not make light of the Lord's discipline":

- - Readily accept the Lord's discipline right away, and with a proper attitude.
- - "Respect" God for disciplining you, just like you are to respect your human father for disciplining you. (v.9)

v.6 "the Lord disciplines those he loves":

- - He is disciplining you out of His "love" for you.
  - - And He is disciplining you out of His concern for your improvement towards better well-being. (implied in v.9)
  - - Because of the Lord's love and concern for you, readily accept His discipline as being beneficial for you.
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SECTION POINT: **3. Endure the discipline.**

v.7 "endure hardship as discipline":

"endure" = Strong's #5278 "you endure; to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; figuratively, to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere".

- - "Endure hardship as discipline" is a directive from the Lord to be followed; it is not a suggestion.
  - - Are you successfully enduring hardship as discipline from God?
  - - Or do you try to escape it, quit, avoid it?
  - - Realize that within enduring hardship and within enduring discipline is where God accomplishes His refining work in your life. (v.10)
  - - Expect and accept that the discipline, and its correlating hardship, will not "seem pleasant at the time but [will be] painful" (v.11) - bringing "sadness and grief" (Strong's #3077 'painful' v.11).
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SECTION POINT: **4. Be encouraged by the discipline.**

v.5 "that word of encouragement":

- - Be encouraged that the Lord is disciplining you, and consider yourself blessed.

v.5 God is "addressing you as sons"

- - He speaks to you in the relational regard as a son.
- - He communicates His thoughts thoroughly to you as a father to his son. (Strong's #1256 'addresses')

v.7 "God is treating you as sons":

- - Within God's treatment of you as sons, there is an inherent regard and extending of honor, prestige, esteem, recognition, prominence, distinction, and importance by God to you.
- - Also, this treatment as sons contains a position of God that denotes ownership and heirship towards you.
- - Further, this treatment as sons is an action containing worthiness, that you are worth giving His attention to and you are worth having a father-son relationship with.

v.8 "if you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are... not true sons":

- - God disciplines all of His true sons.
- - God does not discipline those persons who technically and authentically are not His true sons, and eternal severe punishment accumulates and awaits them.
- - Logically, then, if God has not been disciplining you during your life, then you should pause and immediately do some serious soul-searching to determine why you are not a true son.

v.5 "do not lose heart when He rebukes you":

- - For those of you who are true sons, if God's discipline is understood properly, then there is no valid reason to get discouraged, hopeless, depressed, or anxiety-filled - to "lose heart".
  - - God's rebuke to discipline you should be a significant source of encouragement because you know God's intent is to correct you positively (v.10), as a son, so you will "live" and experience a much better life (v.9) and son-to-father relationship with Him.
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SECTION POINT: **5. Make the corrections.**

v.9 "submit to the Father":

- - The main purpose of being disciplined is to incite a corrective response of submitting to the Lord, obeying what He directs.

v.10 "that we may share in His holiness":

- - Submitting to the Lord means to take distinct action steps to move away from sinfulness and towards holiness - in thinking, and in words, and in behaviors.

v.11 "it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace":

- - Taking distinct steps towards holiness will produce a result of peaceful and righteous living.
  - - Therefore, it is important to establish contentment and enjoyment in the new holy and righteous and peaceful living and thinking.
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SECTION POINT: **6. Be teachable.**

v.11 “for those who have been trained by” discipline:

- - If you respond agreeably and cooperatively to disciplinary training from the Lord, you will come to appreciate that this disciplinary training is useful and helpful for situations you encounter in the future.

- - Therefore, a wise choice is to be flexible and ready to change as the Lord implements disciplinary training to move you into comprehensive holiness. (v.10)

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BIG IDEA: God wants you and I to readily accept His discipline, which is for our good.

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APPLICATIONS:

- - Historically, what has been your attitude and reaction to discipline from God?

- - You cannot discern or do not regard the hardships you experience as being discipline from God?

- - Or, perhaps you cuss at God and question why He has cursed you?

- - Or, maybe you grumble against God and wonder why He is not doing anything to end your hardship and painful suffering?

- - During the study of this passage, have you determined whether you are currently under the Lord's discipline right now?

- - If so, are there ways you can henceforth act and react differently to His discipline as it continues on through today and thereafter?

- - What steps are you going to make, starting right now, that will move you towards more fully accepting His discipline that is currently upon you?

- - For those of you who, for whatever reasons, essentially reject God's discipline upon you, what do you think you will gain long-term by resisting and rejecting the intentions of His discipline upon you?

- - Is it wise for you to reject God's discipline?

- - Do you realize that because God disciplines everyone who is His true son, His discipline will continue upon you if you are a true son, even if you persist in rejecting His discipline?

- - And by continuing to reject His discipline, you may be inviting Him to increase His discipline in frequency and in "unpleasant" or even "painful" intensity? (v.11)

- - Maybe some of you are “not [His] true sons” (v.8), with no official connection to God. You have not placed your faith in Jesus Christ, perfect God in the flesh, that He died on the cross for your sins and that He rose from the dead.

- - Have you stopped to realize that if God disciplines with painful suffering those who are His true sons, how much more worse will He punish with eternal torment those like yourself who are not His true sons (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)? How does that eternal future look to you?

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