

This text only concerns members of God's family, those who have been born again (**John 3:3**) and have become children of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (**Galatians 3:26**). Much teaching in Scripture is for the true child of God only; it has no reference to the unbeliever.

Hebrews 12:6: "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

- **Grammatical Usage:** "**disciplines**" or in the Greek, "paideuei" meaning, "correct; instruct; educate"; "**chastises**" or "mastigoi" meaning, "punishes".
- **Literal Interpretation:** For the Lord corrects, instructs and educates the one He loves, punishing every son whom He receives (for his and His good).
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. The Father's discipline is not to be feared as it is His loving child-training. Christians fear this subject because they don't understand it to be a glorious truth because "**the Lord disciplines those he loves.**" **Psalm 94:12** sates, "**Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord.**" As disciples, we must accept discipline which includes instruction, correction and that form of punishment, lovingly administered, which will prevent us from doing the wrong but training us to be righteous. Discipline is not always in the form of punishment, nor does mean we must have displeased Him. In a good school all pupils are disciplined, whatever their behavior. In God's school all His disciples are subjected to His loving discipline and this matter is dealt with in **Hebrews 12:5-12**.

1. Discipline is experienced by all the true children of God

We need to underline "**everyone**" in **v. 6**, for if we're Christians then God is exercising this ministry in us; this is something we must expect. Look at four words in **v. 8**: "**and everyone undergoes discipline**", that is, all Christians. We must expect this for two reasons:

- Because God is our Father and it is evidence of His love (**v. 7**). If He is not administering love's discipline, then He is not our Father at all.
- Because we are His sons, and discipline is a mark of sonship (**v. 8**). If we're not experiencing love's discipline, then we are not His children at all.

2. We are not to despise our Heavenly Father's discipline

We are not to regard it lightly and be insensitive to its purpose; this is what **v. 5** tells us. But we often despise it and as a result we find ourselves entertaining wrong thoughts about God and begin to question His love and His wisdom. Beware of treating the discipline of the Lord lightly and of failing to learn the lesson He is trying to teach us by permitting it.

3. We are not to lose heart when our heavenly Father disciplines us

V. 5 simply means “**Don’t collapse!**” – as in **v. 12!** In the closing months of his life Hudson Taylor, the well-known missionary to China, was so weak and feeble in his body that he said to a friend, ‘I’m so weak that I cannot work, I cannot read my Bible, I cannot pray – I can only lie still in God’s arms like a little child and trust Him.’ As a matter of fact, that is all God asks of us at the best of times. Incidentally, the remedy for losing heart is mentioned in **Hebrews 12:3**.

4. Our Father’s discipline is always profitable

Sometimes an earthly father chastens his son arbitrarily and in a fit of passion, but our heavenly Father never does this. It is always for our profit, as **v. 10** assures us. We often think that discipline in the form of illness, sorrow, bereavement or some other trial spells loss, but God tells us that it is always intended for our gain, “**that we may share in his holiness**” (**v. 10**). His obligation is to make us holy, more like the Lord Jesus (**Romans 8:29**).

5. We are not expected to enjoy discipline

V. 11 reads, “**No discipline seems pleasant at the time**”; it is not intended to be. Notice in **v. 5** the word ‘**rebukes**’ and in **v. 6** ‘**punishes**’, which convey to us the different aspects of God’s discipline. Do we like it when the Lord rebukes or punishes us? We do not, and the Lord does not expect us to! – but He exercises these ministries in love, for our and His good.

6. There is always a “later on” to discipline

We read this in **v. 11**. Discipline (or chastening) is fruit-producing. Have you ever noticed the kind of branch that the Lord purges and why He purges it? (**John 15:2**). What is the fruit that discipline produces? We find the answer to this question in **v. 11**: the fruit of chastening is righteousness and peace. Righteousness means being right with God and being right in our daily living, therefore in the deepest sense it means being at peace with God and having the peace of God filling our hearts. In other words, God desires us to live in conformity to His will, and only when we are brought there can we know real peace. It is very comforting to hear the Lord saying to us, “**What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand**” (**John 13:7**). Never consider the “now” apart from “the later on”.

7. We must be exercised by all our loving Father’s dealings with us

The last words of **v. 11** assure us this is the condition of blessing, the secret of present and of future reward.

There are four words in **Hebrews 12:9** that reveal to us what our attitude should be when the Lord’s hand is resting upon us in discipline. Notice them carefully. They are the words “**submit to the Father**”; not to a tyrant, but to our loving heavenly Father, who because He loves us so much wants the very best for us. So, in response to our understanding of **Hebrews 12**, look up and consider **Matthew 11:26** and pray the psalmist’s prayer, recorded in **Psalms 86:11-13**.

➤ **Conclusion:** Will I accept the discipline of the Lord in my life?