

THE BIG IDEA: We can trust God's heart when His hand feels harsh.

The Take-Off

There is one topic that usually makes every parent and child cringe, and it's not, well, THAT one!

It's discipline.

Every parent feels like they don't do it well, but we all feel like we don't do it as poorly as THOSE OTHER parents. Every child and teen is convinced that their parents turn into Satan when it happens, and maybe some parents do. At any rate, whatever you think of when you hear the word discipline, my guess is that you don't feel like you're an expert on it and you probably are even less excited about hearing me teach on it.

In fact, in the hopes of lightening the mood about it, I spent some time this past week trying to find videos of kids throwing tantrums in public to convince us even more why discipline is important, but most of the videos revealed that parents were worse than the kids!

Yikes!

Obviously, we have a lot to learn in this area, and all the ways that we've kind of messed it up are going to make us have to lean in a little bit more to see GOD'S DISCIPLINE as our 5th sign of life.

Most of it see it as a sign of anything but that, but as we'll see this morning in **Hebrews 12**, the discipline of God in our lives is an often misunderstood sign that we belong to God.

Granted, it can be a tough truth to swallow, but look with me at **Hebrews 12:7** -

“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?”

Funny, the answer to that last question is the footage of children having meltdowns in stores that I couldn't bring myself to show you!

And so, whether we like the discipline or not (and we probably don't, which is ok as we'll see), the one thing that we'll see over and over again in **Hebrews 12** is that it is not only a sign of life, but a sign of love.

As hard as it may be to think about God being in control during things that hurt us, the worse alternative is that He isn't!

So there is nothing that we experience that is beyond His hand, and that means there will be times when we don't understand or even like what His hands allow. But that NEVER changes His heart, and the Big idea that I hope you get this morning is that **we can trust God's heart when His hand feels harsh**.

Here's the plan: I'm going to read **Hebrews 12:3-11** and then I'll share 4 truths from the passage. At the end, we'll wrap it up in a way that will help us trust His heart even when what passes through His hand feels harsh.

Ready? Let's read.

Hebrews 12:3-11

1. God's discipline can't be understood without looking at Jesus (vv. 3-4)

- a. If you're in the NIV, the very first word of our passage sets the tone: "CONSIDER"
- b. It's a Greek word used once in the NT - here - and it means "to ponder, think over, to consider by weighing or comparing."
- c. That's important, because our suffering and discipline isn't unique to us - it's something we have in common with Jesus, and we would do well to weigh our discipline against His
- d. His came from sinful men
- e. His didn't stop Him
- f. His cost Him more than we can imagine
- g. **John 16:33** / Jesus said: "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I've overcome the world!"

2. The best discipline comes from a Father and a family who seeks our best (vv. 5-9)

- a. Discipline isn't a solitary event
- b. Satan would love nothing more than to use the suffering in our lives to separate us from a Father and a family who cares for us
- c. **Heb. 12:1** / we're surrounded by the witness of a faith family who believes in us
- d. **Heb. 12:5-9** / we're disciplined by a Father who loves us and calls us His children

- e. Last week I joked about when parents say “this hurts me more than it hurts you”
- f. But the truth is that the first time I disciplined my sons, I had to leave afterwards and go to my room because I was the one crying
- g. No parent takes pleasure in the pain of a child, and the writer of Hebrews is saying that if human fathers discipline us for our good, then how much more does our heavenly Father?

3. God disciplines us for our good, not because of our bad (v. 10)

- a. God is good, and He disciplines us out of that goodness
- b. Parents, all of us already agree with this point because we (usually) discipline our children because we see the greatness of who they are and who they can become
- c. Discipline is a matter of training and correction more than punishment, and God does it in His kindness
- d. **Romans 2:4** / it is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance

4. Understanding the purpose of discipline helps us undergo the process of discipline (v. 11)

- a. At this point, you may be like me and feel a little conflicted
- b. “Am I supposed to LIKE it when I experience God’s discipline?”
- c. No. Verse 11 is clear that discipline never seems pleasant, and always hurts
- d. But God’s discipline ALWAYS has a purpose: righteousness, peace and completion (“have been” trained)

The Landing

[VIDEO / God’s chisel]

[AUDIO / Mercy Me / “Even If”] ***START PLAYING SOFTLY IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE VIDEO AND PLAY AS I CLOSE***

Read **Isaiah 53:5**

**“But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.”**

We equate discipline with punishment because deep down we believe we deserve to be punished, but Isaiah 53:5 says there is no punishment left for us to receive.

There’s just a loving Father who wants to bring the best out in us that He’s already placed in us

When we understand that, we can trust the process even when it’s painful and **we can trust His heart when His hand seems harsh.**

Let’s pray.