

DOCTRINE OF DIVINE DISCIPLINE

- I.** Divine discipline (DD) is punitive action from God in time for the believer. Heb.12:5-13
- A.** The overall context of Heb.12:1-13 deals with the aspect of suffering the believer faces in their race in the CWL.
 - B.** Regarding suffering, which all believers face (1Pet.4:13), it is the author's intent to separate the aspect of suffering into two categories:
 - 1.** Undeserved suffering. Heb.12:1-4
 - 2.** Deserved suffering or DD. Heb.12:5-13
 - C.** While all suffering, permitted or generated by God towards an individual, is designed to enhance the believer's spiritual growth and potential SG₃, undeserved suffering is an indicator of innocence, while DD is an indicator of guilt and STA/OSN failure.
 - D.** Therefore, it is essential for the believer in time to discern which type of suffering they are encountering so as to make the proper adjustments necessary to remain a healthy normal Christian.
 - E.** Vs.5 *"And you have completely forgotten (PF tense of ἐκλανθάνομαι) the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him'"*.
 - 1.** The Hebrew saints in Jerusalem were facing the danger of soul fainting and spiritual collapse in the midst of severe persecution and testing (undeserved suffering).
 - 2.** In the midst of this overt testing brought upon by others, they also faced the sufferings of DD (deserved suffering) brought upon them by God due to their own personal failings.
 - 3.** In light of the writer of Hebrews reminding them that the suffering they have endured still falls short of Christ's suffering in time (vss.3-4), he reminds them that not all of their suffering in fighting the good fight is non-deserved, a principle they have completely forgotten.
 - 4.** He is in part enjoining the principles of deserved and non-deserved suffering together as both being part of the Christian walk.
 - 5.** The fact that they have forgotten (failing to recognize) the principle of DD gives a clue in part as to the Hebrews spiritual regression, since it implies they are not sensitive to God personally dealing with them regarding their own spiritual growth and state.
 - 6.** He reminds them that the principle of DD has been provided for them as believers as a means of exhortation/warning/admonishing.
 - 7.** It is God dealing with believers and their inner struggle with their STA's as a father who deals with his children's disobedience.
 - 8.** The fact that God addresses those to whom discipline applies as "sons/My son" declares these to be believers. Joh.1:12
 - 9.** The exhortation is that believers are not to "regard lightly" DD as it comes from God.

10. The verb “regard lightly/ὀλιγωρέω” means “to think lightly of/regard as of little value/to look down on/to have contempt for/ to despise” and emphasizes that DD is to be taken in a most serious manner as of something of great value.
 11. “Nor faint” indicates that the nature of DD is designed to humble a person even to the degree it may make the believer want to throw in the towel because of their STA failures, but we are not to become discouraged.
 12. DD is God reproving believers with some form of punishment designed to convict them regarding STA activity that they need to deal with to effect/stimulate a positive response from the believer to correct their erroneous/incorrect STA actions whether MA, verbal or overt.
- F. Vs.6 *“For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son, whom He receives.”*
1. Believers are to recognize that DD is not due to any vindictive nature of God, but rather is produced by Divine love/ἀγαπάω.
 2. Though God’s love is available to all men, to receive the full benefits of His love is dependent upon ones +V and adherence to His word. (*See Doctrine of Love*)
 3. Therefore, it is safe to claim that apart from isolating the STA, to the extent one receives the benefits of DD is dependent upon the believer’s attitude towards Bible doctrine and desire to line up with it.
 4. In other words, for those who are +V and truly seek God’s word, they can expect God to help them keep “close tabs” on their Christian lives versus those who have no true desire to line up with His word.
 5. This answers why there may be cold or lukewarm believers who according to their own synopsis, seem to be receiving little DD in their life.
 6. In addition, cold and lukewarm believers regard lightly God’s word and wouldn’t recognize Him jamming them even if He was, such as these Hebrews.
 7. The fact that God “scourges every son” emphasizes that DD is designed to inflict pain upon the believer.
 8. Since God is not limited as to how He may meet out/appropriate corporeal punishment to His children, it may come in the form of health, finances, relationships, etc.
 9. It also reflects that no believer is exempt from DD even if they are cold, lukewarm or +V and adjusted.
 10. “Whom He receives/παραδέξομαι has the force of “accepting that which is correct/true (Mar.4:20; Act.16:21)” and indicates believers in Jesus Christ and implies the corrective nature DD is designed to produce.
 11. DD is tailored to serve believers in time and assist them in keeping their STA activity and any human viewpoint tendencies in check.
- G. Vs.7 *“It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there who his father does not discipline?”*
1. The writer continues by utilizing a father/son illustration.
 2. Literally, vs.7a reads, “into discipline you keep on persevering/enduring/continuing firm/standing fast”.

3. The writer is exhorting the Hebrews that they need to open their eyes regarding having a normal/sound relationship with God.
 4. As a father who has true concern and love for his son will discipline him, so will God who has perfect love for His children.
 5. The writer is stating that believers are to recognize that DD is a mark of God assisting or helping those who are growing and maturing.
 6. Since DD is a tool of adjustment for the believer, then the believer is to stand firm in the face of DD realizing that it is for their own good and spiritual well being.
 7. As any normal parent wants their child to grow up to be a normal healthy adult and will take the time to apply disciplinary measures to help them, so it is God's desire for all believers to reach spiritual maturity, though most don't.
 8. The adjusted believer then is able to face their DD recognizing that it is a mark that God has true concern and is paying "special attention" to them in their Christian walk.
 9. As an adjusted son matures physically and mentally, they grow to recognize that the disciplinary actions of their father are to groom them to become responsible and honorable citizens within society.
 10. So are maturing believers to recognize that God's DD is designed to produce responsible and honorable citizens of the kingdom of God (God's plan).
 11. The adjusted growing believer then, runs the Christian race expecting correction in the form of DD when necessary, and does so with the right MA.
 12. If we had our way, we would become spoiled brats and useless to God.
- H.** Vs.8 *"But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons."*
1. Verse 8 must be understood in the context of a normal parent/child relationship as established in verse 7.
 2. Another clue in interpreting this verse is the present tenses of the verbs.
 3. The writer begins the verse with a 1st class conditional clause, *"But if you are without discipline.."*, which assumes that this statement is true.
 4. In other words, he is saying "if you are without discipline and you are".
 5. The verb translated "are/εἶμί" is a present active 2nd/pl and literally is translated "you all (ref. Hebrews) keep on being".
 6. The word translated "without" is χωρίς and does not mean that something is totally absent, but means "separately/apart from/not put together".
 7. The writer is not stating that these Jewish believers are without DD in their lives, rather they are not recognizing or putting together the fact that some sufferings they are encountering **is** DD.
 8. This is substantiated by vs.13 where the writer infers that they are experiencing DD and that if they don't start following the straight and narrow of BD and its application, they will experience worse DD rather than deliverance/healing.

9. The writer then compares this premise of failure to recognize DD in the Hebrew's life to the "sons" as depicted in vs. 7 in the next phrase *of which* (ref. discipline) lit. *they keep on becoming* (present active ind.; 3rd /pl – γίνομαι; ref. the sons of a normal parental setting vs.7) *partakers*".
10. Paraphrasing then, the writer is saying, "But if you believing Hebrews are not experiencing DD in your life compared to the normal adjusted believer...then".
11. The writer "then" draws a conclusion regarding these Christians, "*you are illegitimate children and not sons*".
12. The third verb εἰμί again is a present tense active voice 2nd/pl meaning "you all keep on being" and is not translated in the NAS (though implied) and is at the end of the verse in the Greek.
13. The final phrase would literally be translated "and not sons you all keep on being".
14. The writer is **not** saying that these Hebrew believers have ceased to be Christians. (*See Doc. of Eternal Security*)
15. Rather, he is drawing a comparison of Christians with those who are in an abnormal versus a normal parental setting.
16. The words "*illegitimate children/νόθος*" is a hapax only used here and refers to children born out of wedlock or bastard progeny.
17. Most commentaries interpret the bastard progeny as referring to unbelievers or that Christians without DD are like their unbelieving counterparts and that the emphasis here is that DD is a mark of one being a believer.
18. While that is a true premise, further scrutiny of the illustration provides a more comprehensive sense of what the writer is saying.
19. A child that is reared in a normal parental setting has the advantage of two parents, a father and mother, who raise him/her in marital union together as right man/right woman.
20. It is the father who is the authority over the family and the one ultimately responsible to see that disciplinary actions are administered when necessary.
21. In the adjusted parental setting, this obviously would require full cooperation of the mother (who is a lesser authority, but still an authority over the child) with the father.
22. Under normal circumstances, a bastard child is born to the mother and remains with her throughout his/her life, as there is no application or interest of the parties to create or engage in a union of marriage with one another.
23. This does not mean that the child does not have a genetic father, only that since the union of marriage does not exist, the father is absent in the rearing of the child.
24. This places the child in the situation where he/she co-exists with the mother (or a lesser authority) apart from any fatherly authority or intervention.

25. The analogy obviously has its limits in application that must be understood.
26. While an unborn child has no choice or say as to who their genetic parents will be or whether they are married or not at birth, the individual in time does have the choice as to who their spiritual parent will be, whether God the Father or Satan. Joh.8:41-44
27. In addition, the believer in time has a choice of two potential rulers over their souls, the FHS or their STA. Rom.8:6-15
28. Of these two potential authorities over our souls, only God the H.S. is in perfect harmony and union with our ultimate authority, God the Father.
29. While the H.S. is God and co-equal with God, the protocol for the believer in time in order to have fellowship with the Father is they must first be filled with the H.S. Eph.2:18
30. Therefore, the choice the believer makes in time is to “co-exist” with and under the authority of the FHS, who is in perfect union with God, or under the rulership of their STAs, which has no union with the Father. (See *Doctrine of the STA/OSN*)
31. These are the two possible “mothers” of the illustration.
32. What the writer is stating then is that while these Hebrews are believers (God is still their Father), they have chosen to spiritually co-exist with a lesser authority, which the Father refuses to be united with.
33. The lesser authority (the spiritual mother) that these Hebrews are presently choosing to follow is their own STA’s.
34. As the writer of Hebrews has stated earlier, the spiritual digression of these believers was so severe that rather than being able to teach them advance doctrines, they are in need again to be taught basic/milk doctrines, such as rebound. Heb.5:12
35. These Jewish Christians have become so spiritually diluted that they are not utilizing the rebound (R_B) technique and instead are letting their STAs rule their lives. Rom.13:12
36. Since the Hebrews are refusing to isolate their STAs over which Satan rules (Eph.6:12), then they co-exist under the principle of darkness apart from FHS with the Father.
37. Therefore, their illegitimate existence as God’s children comes from their failure to isolate their STAs and they are as a bastard child whose parents refuse to be united since what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 2Cor.6:14-15
38. Again, it is not that God is not inflicting DD upon them (Rom.1:18), but rather because they are failing to isolate their sin natures, they render ineffectual/futile the DD administered by God, since in that state they do not recognize or look for His authority anymore than a bastard child recognizes the authority of his father.
39. It is in that sense that DD is absent in their lives.
40. This interpretation follows the force of this passage since the writer has already said, “*you have completely forgotten*” (read “failure to perceive/recognize”) vs.5.

41. In other words, because the Jewish saints are not isolating their STAs and recognizing DD in the midst of their undeserved suffering, they are like bastard children who do not have the advantage of a normal parental upbringing and father who is there to provide nurturing and discipline when needed.
 42. Rather, they are choosing to adhere to a “mother” that the “father” has refused to enjoin in union with.
 43. Therefore, they are not “sons” such as in vs.7 that have the advantage of “fatherly guidance and regiment” and if they do not start adhering to the principle of DD, their outcome will be a less than wholesome Christian.
 44. And that is because failure to maintain FHS and keeping in step with God’s directive will, they are minus the essential ingredient necessary to become normal growing believers.
 45. Another way of stating it is, that because these believers are rejecting divine viewpoint, they do not have the advantage of the +V adjusted believers who recognize DD in their lives stimulating better control of their STAs and producing a healthier and higher spiritual advancement.
 46. The principle taught then is that believers who fail to apply 1Joh.1:9 (R_B) and adequately isolate their STAs, will not recognize DD brought upon them by God **due to** STA failures, since they are constantly under their STAs, and are in God’s eyes rendered spiritual “bastards”.
 47. The present tense of the verbs emphasizes that as long as these believers remain in this spiritual condition, this illustration will remain apropos/befitting.
- I. Vss.9-10 *“Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.*
1. The author now refocuses his reader’s back to the reality of a normal child rearing and in so doing employs a fortiori argument (lesser to the greater).
 2. He reminds the readers the benefit of discipline as received from our physical fathers and the resulted effect was a return of respect from the child.
 3. We accepted the discipline because it was in their province to impose it.
 4. The argument is, if we submitted to their authority in administering discipline as they thought best for us, even more so we should willingly submit to the perfect Father.
 5. While our earthly fathers employed disciplinary measures to enhance our temporal life, even more so will God possessing the perfect attributes of deity, do what’s necessary to produce maximum good for the believer and that with eternal ramifications.
 6. The believer is to recognize that as our earthly fathers beget our flesh, so God is the author of our spiritual life.
 7. The author is now emphasizing the value as to why the Hebrews need to start isolating their STAs and recognizing when God is correcting them,

since it is the supreme goal of DD to enhance the potential of the believer in sharing God's holiness.

8. The believer who is positive and on track spiritually will also succumb to their STA and that requires DD to help them overrule the flesh.
 9. But if believers refuse to learn to isolate their STAs, they will not discern deserved from undeserved suffering.
 10. Even with +V adjusted believers who constantly utilize the RB technique, succumbing to the STA is a given hazard in the CWL.
 11. But only those believers who are truly fighting the good fight will be in tune to God's perfect disciplinary actions in their life.
 12. The author is emphasizing to the Hebrews why it is important to maintain a normal/healthy relationship with God and tuned in to His actions on their behalf, and that is DD is an essential element in Ph2 sanctification, apart from which none will share His holiness.
- J.** Vs.11 *"All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*
1. The author now denotes another reality behind discipline.
 2. Every kind of discipline whether human or divine does not seem enjoyable.
 3. The present or the time one is under DD refers to the necessary time one is under DD.
 4. Authorities determine the nature and extent of the discipline (ranging from verbal rebuke to much more severe actions).
 5. DD is designed to produce lupe in our lives, which fact stabilizes you when under it ("nor faint" vs.5).
 6. Lupe is a part of the Christian experience.
 7. The experience of DD is profitable to those who are trained by it.
 8. When we "take our lumps" and acknowledge the discipline as a correcting procedure, we are trained to curtail the STA activity.
 9. This is in contrast to the believer who sluffs off all suffering as undeserved or "bad luck".
 10. The result is righteous activity that produces the fruit of inner peace.
 11. When you follow the dictates of IHS and resident BD (such as R_B) you enjoy inner peace.
 12. When you violate the good conscience and opt for STA lusts, you do not have inner peace.
 13. The irony is, when a believer does not heed the WOG, DD follows, but those who don't heed BD, don't recognize DD.
- K.** Vss.12-13 *"Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed."*
1. The author's final exhortation is designed to reorient these believers back to the reality of God's plan.

2. He is encouraging them to pull out of their discouragement from their overt sufferings, get back in line with BD and re-establish a solid spiritual course.
3. These believers were lacking the resolve to apply as they once had and now they need to “buck up” and get back with it.
4. Rather than not applying BD, not isolating their STAs and running around as spiritual bastards, they are to get back into rebounding, applying doctrine, realizing when suffering is deserved or non-deserved and continue their spiritual advancement.
5. This adjustment in and of itself is a prescription that will help eliminate any self-pity or “poor me’s” they may be experiencing due to their rough niche.
6. By focusing on their own actions and trying to determine if it is God dealing with them for their own personal failures or not, will get their eyes off of others and back onto God and their own spiritual lives.
7. He explicitly tells them that some of their suffering now is due to DD that they have ignored.
8. If they will get back with it spiritually, they will recognize these areas and God will lift the pains of DD from them.
9. The alternative is, God will place even worse DD on them, which if eventually is not checked, can lead into sin unto death (SUD).
10. This verse further insinuates that DD often is directed to the body. Cp.1Cor.11:29-30; Jam.5:14-16.
11. While DD may be minimal if any with fastidious R_B, continued perpetuation of sin can bring about more serious DD.

II. Divine discipline, no matter how severe, does not mean loss of salvation. Gal.3:26; Ti.3:5; Joh.1:12; 3:16

III. All discipline is confined to time. Rev.21:4

IV. DD is attached to all believers in reversionism.

A. Reversionism is that doctrine that answers the questions that arise with regard to those who do not continue the Ph₂ advance in Bible doctrine, after salvation.

B. While there is no specific or technical term for reversionism in scripture, its concept is revealed in such terms and phrases as:

1. Turned aside. Job 23:11; 34:27; Mal.2:8; 3:7; 1Tim.1:6; 5:15
2. Turned away. 1Kgs.11:9; 2Chr.25:27; Isa.1:4; Jer.8:5
3. Turned back. 1Sam.15:11; Psa.44:18; 78:57; Jer.11:10; Zeph.1:6; Act.7:39
4. Abandoned. 2Chr.24:18; Isa.1:4
5. Departed. Job 23:12; Psa.18:21; Jer.5:23
6. Forsake the Lord. Josh.24:16,20; Isa.1:28; Jer.2:19
7. Fall away. Psa.101:3; Mar.4:17; 1Tim.4:1; Rev.2:5
8. Wandered away. 1Tim.6:10

9. Fallen from grace. Gal.5:4
 10. Comes short of grace. Heb.12:15
 11. Lukewarm. Rev.3:16
 12. Enemies. Phi.3:18
 13. Strays from the truth. Jam.5:19-20
- C.** Reversionism is defined as simply a return to a former state.
- D.** For the believer this does not teach or imply a loss of salvation.
- E.** What it does proclaim is that the believer is no longer advancing spiritually, but in fact is in a state of spiritual regression and denotes a Christian walk that smacks of a pre-salvation approach to life. Eph.5:8
- F.** While this does not affect salvation Ph₁, it does affect their Ph₂ and ultimately their Ph₃ status.
- G.** Reverting to the pre-salvation way of life involves:
1. A rejection of the truth of BD. Heb.3:17-19; Jam.5:19
 2. Allowing the STA to consistently occupy the position of rulership. Heb.3:12
 3. Placing oneself on the retribution/vengeance side of God's justice instead of the remuneration/rewarding side. Heb.10:26-27
- H.** Therefore, a reversionist is a believer who rejects the truth of doctrine and perpetuates this rejection in time and so places himself in a position of God's judgment. Joh.3:19-21
- I.** Reversionism is carnality perpetuated and not incidental sinning. Jms.1:13-15 cp. Eccl.7:20
- J.** Carnality is not limited to physical sins (MA, S/T and overt), but includes distortion of and infidelity to BD. 2Cor.4:2
- K.** Legalism is a form of reversionism as seen in the example of Judaism at the time of Christ and that God removed Israel as custodians of His plan and gave it to the Church.
- L.** God imposes 3 stages of discipline upon the reversionist:
1. A warning stage that is designed to get the believers attention immediately. Heb.12:12-13
 2. An intensifying stage in which the discipline will continue for an undetermined amount of time for the believer who will not acknowledge his sins, repent from his previous actions and move back to the doctrinal approach to life. Hos.2:6; Joh.5:5 cp.14; 2Thess.3:14; Rev.2:21-22 cf. Lev.26:14-39
 3. The final stage of discipline is the dying stage (SUD). Mic.2:3; 1Joh.5:17
 4. The SUD occurs when God kills the offending believer because they will not recover. Gen.35:16-20; 1Chr.10:13-14; Jer.44:11-12; Rev.2:23
- V.** National discipline eventuates into the 5th cycle of discipline or national SUD. Lev.26
- A.** The warning stage is seen in God jamming the health, economics and military abilities of the nation. Lev.26:15-17

- B.** The intensifying stage is the multiplying of His warning actions resulting in mass failure of health, economy, environmental catastrophes and continued military failures. Lev.26:18-26
 - C.** The final act is culminated into destruction of the nation. Lev.26:19-33

- VI.** The key to God recalling His DD and turning cursing into blessing for individuals as well as nationally is through R_B (implying repentance with adjustment).
 - A.** As seen with Israel (Lev.26:40-42)
 - B.** As seen in the example of David in operation Bathsheba (Psa.32:3-5; 2Sam.12:13).

- VII.** Concluding observations.
 - A.** DD is part of the Christian experience.
 - B.** It is God's way of helping us deal with our STAs in areas we may be weak.
 - C.** It demands discernment recognizing the difference between undeserved and deserved suffering.
 - D.** It demands intellectual honesty to admit DD when it occurs.
 - E.** The believer's life will be an admixture of DD with undeserved suffering.
 - F.** Acknowledgment of sin with attached DD produces happiness in the believer. Job 5:17
 - G.** R_B is key to discern DD in the life and to minimize its acceleration.
 - H.** Often DD is directed to the body.
 - I.** Partaking of the Eucharist out of fellowship is a direct path to DD. 1Cor.11:27-32
 - J.** Reversionism can lead to severe health DD demanding an official intervention by Church leadership. Jam.5:14-15
 - K.** Believers are exhorted to recognize when DD is occurring and solicit intercessory prayers by other adjusted believers on their behalf. Jam.5:16