MAKING LIFE WORK: Discerning God's Discipline 10.12.08

"My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights." Prov. 3:11-12 ESV

"God's discipline is His loving correction of His children intended to bring about their growth and His glory."

Understanding the "Lord's Discipline:"

1. An important distinction needs to be made between judgment and discipline.
    a. God's judgment/wrath is *already* against those who don't follow Jesus. All of us either, have been or, are, there. We should repent and believe and become a friend of God instead of an enemy.
    b. God's judgment/wrath has been completely satisfied in Christ for all those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus. God's discipline is what we experience when we live in rebellion against God in areas of our lives.
    c. God's discipline can come to us through a variety of mediums.
        i. Circumstances, conversations, illness, teaching, shepherding
2. We need a **THOUGHTFUL** perspective when it comes to God's discipline.
    a. Always *"God is disciplining me."* Never *"God is disciplining me."*
    b. Not all suffering in the lives of Christians is God's discipline. (Jesus)
        i. Fallen world. Natural consequences/law. Spiritual warfare.
    c. Typically, *most* situations seem to be a mixture of all possibilities.
    d. "God, what are you trying to say to me through this difficulty?"
3. We need to grow in **DISCERNMENT** to be able to sort things out.
    a. Pray, recognizing that it is unlikely that we will have absolute clarity about any situation.
    b. Ask the right questions:
        i. *Is there any known unrepentant sin in my life? Repent!*
        ii. *Is there any unknown unrepentant sin in my life? Repent!*
        iii. *What do my closest spiritual counselors make of this situation?*
    c. Listen to the Scriptures, the Spirit, your community—groups and pastors.

Am I able to discern the Lord's discipline when it is taking place? If not, where do I need to grow? How do I view the Lord's discipline?

Understanding the "FOR":

1. Any proper understanding of God's discipline is rooted in the love and fatherhood of God.
    a. He doesn't just love you, He *delights* in you because of Christ.

*"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. **6** For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." **7** It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? **8** If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. **9** Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? **10** For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. **11** For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:6-11 ESV*

    b. God's discipline is a mark of our sonship.
    c. God's discipline is intended for our holiness.
    d. God's discipline, at the time, seems painful.
    e. God's discipline leads to growth.
2. **MAINTAINING THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE** while experiencing God's discipline essential.
    a. Our ultimate destiny in life is not that we would be happy, but holy.
    b. What is in God's heart is REDEMPTION and RESTORATION not RETRIBUTION.

What is my response when I sense God is disciplining me? Rebellion or submission?

Putting Feet on It:

1. Develop the proper, biblical understanding of what the Lord's discipline is and why He disciplines His children.
2. Maintain the proper perspective when experiencing God's discipline.
3. Get into the habit of always asking the question "God, what are you trying to say to me through this difficulty?"
4. Be active in the lives of those around you in discerning and encouraging.

What is God saying to me about this issue?

Visit www.crossinglouisville.com for more helpful resources.

Works Consulted : Expositor's Bible Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible