

## Doctrinal Summary of Repentance: The Believer's Proper Response to Divine Discipline

In Hebrews 12:10, the writer of Hebrews identifies the difference between God's discipline and the discipline of earthly fathers.

"For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness."

The word "disciplined" is translated from the Koine Greek word ἐπαίδευον ("eh-pai-deu-on") which literally means, "they really performed the continuous past action to train a child to meet an acceptable standard of mature behavior through practiced compulsory instruction coupled with consistent enforcement of incorrect behavior designed to significantly influence the conscious will of the child to successfully meet the standard in his behavior." Earthly fathers focus on training their children to meet a standard of behavior which is established by the father who then attempts to mold the child through instruction and discipline into meeting that standard. Correction takes place in the form of punishment and discipline when the child's behavior fails to meet the father's standard. Thus, earthly fathers train and correct their children in what seems best to them, but God disciplines His children into what is advantageous for them for the purpose of sharing in His holiness.

The word "share" is translated from the Koine Greek word μεταβεῖν ("meh-ta-bein") which literally means, "to perform the action as a matter of purpose to take hold of a part or share with another." God's discipline is focused on bringing His children into a behavioral pattern that shares in His holiness. Every aspect of His discipline is designed so that believers can participate in His holiness and develop His character.

Christ's substitutionary death on the cross justified sinners in order that they could have a relationship of fellowship with God. Fellowship is the sharing in all things with another whom you have commonality with as a partner. As believers walk in fellowship with God they develop His character, morals, norms and standards, and protocols in their heart. When believers walk out of fellowship with God His discipline comes into play in order to bring the believer back to fellowship with him (cf. Heb. 12:7). Jesus even disciplines the church because of His love for it according to Revelation 3:19.

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent."

The word "reprove" is translated from the Koine Greek word ἐλέγχω ("eh-len-choh") which literally means, "I really perform the continuous type of action to provide irrefutable evidence of one's wrongdoing in order to bring about conviction, acceptance, and admission of guilt." Because Jesus loves the believer, He provides irrefutable evidence of the believer's wrongdoing. His purpose in doing so is to confront the believer into admitting his guilt and to motivate him to zealousness and repentance.

Spoken to the lukewarm congregation assembled in Laodicea, Jesus' statement commands an uncompromising commitment in pursuing righteousness in Him while likewise commanding that the lukewarm congregation change its present belief system with a new belief system through repentance. Both His discipline and the Father's discipline are designed to bring about a response of repentance in the believer for the purpose of restoring the relationship to one in which the believer can participate with God in His holiness. Thus, repentance is the proper response for the believer to divine discipline.