



Practical Christian Living

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you". Matthew 6:33
Course 4 Lesson 12

GOD'S CHASTENING



KEY VERSE:

*"Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall be also reap."
Galatians 6:7*

As Christians we are to live our lives by the principle of obedience. God has never intended that His children live in sin. The Bible says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, THAT YE SIN NOT...."¹

However, Christians do sin, and many of them take sin all too lightly. In this lesson we want to deal with the question: What happens when a believer sins willfully?

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER

In Lesson 6 we saw one of the consequences of sin in a believer's life: Sin breaks our fellowship with God. In this lesson we are going to consider another consequence of sin in a believer's life: Sin can bring God's chastening hand upon us.

It is true that a believer's sins were forgiven when he received Christ as his Savior. But this does not give him the right to live any way he pleases and do anything

he wants to do. He must still face the practical consequences of his actions. The Bible says,

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7

Whatever sin we may have committed, if we go to God and confess that sin to Him and ask for forgiveness, we will be forgiven. Our fellowship with God can be restored very quickly. God is willing to forgive all the sins that we commit when we confess them sincerely. But that does not mean that we will not be chastened for our sins.



Sin breaks our fellowship with God and brings His chastening hand upon us.

DAVID'S CHASTENING

The accounts of the lives of people in the Old Testament are given to us that we might learn from their experiences. There are two very important lessons that we need to learn from the account of David's great sin:

1. Although we may be forgiven of our sins, we must face the consequences of our actions
2. Some sins have lifetime consequences.

David was not only a mighty man of God but he was also the greatest king that the nation of Israel ever had. Even so, David sinned grievously and he suffered the consequences of his sins.

Chapter 11 of 2 Samuel records the account of David's great sin. David was at home in his palace while his soldiers were away fighting a battle. One evening as he walked on the balcony of his palace, David saw a beautiful woman bathing. Lust entered his heart. He sent for Bathsheba and committed adultery with her.

Some time later, Bathsheba sent word to David, informing him that she was with child by him. Since Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, had been away for some time. David realized that his sin of adultery would soon be exposed.

In order to cover up his sin and to enable him to marry Bathsheba, David arranged to have Uriah killed in battle. David seemed to have been successful in covering up his sin, but the

Bible says, "the thing David had done displeased the Lord."

God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David with his sins of adultery and murder. David truly repented of his sins and confessed them to God. Psalm 51 records the depth of David's confession:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."
Psalm 51:1-3

From this we can see that David was truly brokenhearted over his sins. God accepted David's confession, forgave him, and restored him to fellowship with Himself. Nathan told David, "The Lord has put away the sin: thou shalt not die."



David was truly brokenhearted over his sins.

But this was not the end of the matter. God is the ruler of the universe and He is holy and righteous. He cannot overlook our sins or pretend that He does not know about them. Although David was king, he nonetheless was chastened by God. The Bible says that God is "no respecter of persons."

Because David's sin gave the enemies of God occasion to blaspheme God's name, God said,

"The sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised Me."

Even though God had forgiven him of his sins, David had to reap the earthly and practical consequences of his wrongdoing. He suffered many sorrows. The son that was born to Bathsheba died. One of his sons was murdered. Another son led a rebellion against David and was killed in battle. Truly, the sword never departed from David's house.

May we see that, though we may be forgiven of our sins, we, like David, must face the practical consequences of our actions. May we see also that sins often have lifetime consequences.

Some things we must not do

A Christian simply cannot afford to live carelessly. He cannot afford to take sin lightly. Even though God is gracious, and willing to forgive us our sins, that does not mean that we will not be chastened by Him.

There are some things we must not do if we want to avoid serious consequences:

1. We must not sin willfully.

To deliberately disobey God is an act of rebellion, and it can bring God's chastening hand upon us. God does not chasten His children every time they do something wrong. He is not like that. He loves His children, and He is gentle and patient with them. David said, "He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him."² David recognized that God is very gracious and exceedingly patient with His children.

But there is another side to this matter. While recognizing that God is very patient and forbearing with us, we must also realize **that a single act of willful dis-**

obedience can have serious and far-reaching consequences.

It was a single act of disobedience on the part of the first man and woman that brought sin and death into this world, along with all the sorrow, heartache, and tragedy that results from sin. And a single act of disobedience on our part can have tragic and even lifetime consequences.

A young man, the son of Christian parents, went to an immoral woman and had sexual relations with her. From this one-time sexual relationship, he contracted a venereal disease. He received medical attention, but the disease was not brought under control. In less than three years, he was dead.

2. We must not live after the flesh.

To live after the flesh is to give in to your fleshly desires and appetites. The Bible warns us against this.

Samson is an example of the consequences of living after the flesh. Samson was chosen of God to be a deliverer for his people. He was given special power and abilities by God. He performed many mighty deeds. But Samson did not control his fleshly desires.

Samson had an immoral relationship with a Philistine woman named Delilah. Delilah's actions made it plain that she intended to betray Samson into the hands of his enemies. Samson knew this. He also knew that he was doing wrong; yet he continued to have sexual relations with Delilah. No doubt God spoke to Samson's heart many times concerning his actions.

Eventually, Delilah succeeded in her plan. She delivered

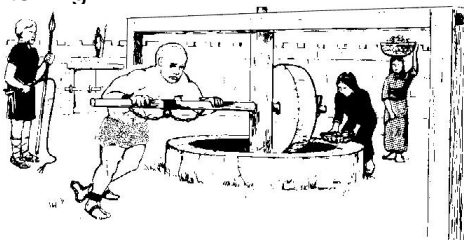
Samson into the hands of his enemies. Samson thought that he could use his mighty power to overcome his enemies as he had done before. But the Lord had left him, and he was no stronger than any other man. The Philistines put out his eyes, bound him in chains, and put him in a prison house, grinding corn.

The accounts of the experiences of David and Samson, as well as those of others in the Old Testament times, are recorded that we may learn from them. The Bible says, "Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition (for our warning)."³

The lesson to be learned from the story of Samson is this: **We must not live after the flesh.** The Bible says,

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die...." Romans 8:13

We have listed some specific sins, but these are not the only sins that can bring God's chastening hand upon us. Any unconfessed and unforsaken sin can bring us under God's chastening.



Living after the flesh brought God's chastening hand upon Samson.

GOD WANTS US TO JUDGE OURSELVES

When we are doing something that is displeasing to God. He first speaks to us through our conscience. By His Word and by the Holy Spirit, God seeks to show us the error of our ways. God may send a faithful Christian friend to warn us. God wants us to

confess and forsake our sins so that He will not have to judge us. The Bible says,

"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." 1 Corinthians 11:31

If we will not judge ourselves, then God must judge us. God chastens us because He loves us too much to allow us to go on in disobedience. The Bible says,

"But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." 1 Corinthians 11:32

How does God chasten us? God has many ways of chastening His children. He may bring sickness upon us, or let us be involved in an accident. He may allow us to suffer financial losses or even the loss of a loved one. God has many ways of dealing with His children. We cannot say how God will chasten us, but we can be sure that He will chasten us when we need it. The Bible says,

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son when He receiveth." Hebrews 12:6

CAUTION: We must not make the mistake of assuming that all sickness is God's chastening. Many times sickness is the result of natural causes.

GOD'S PURPOSES IN CHASTENING US

God has His purposes in chastening His children. Let us consider three of them:

1. God chastens us that we might learn obedience.

Our heavenly Father knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows that we are not naturally obedient. We are like

children who do not obey their father unless they see the paddle in his hand. God knows that only through chastening will we learn to obey Him. David said,

"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy Word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes." Psalm 119:67,71

Even after God has chastened us, we may still be disobedient and rebellious. This is indeed tragic. It means that we have not learned to obey God and to be in subjection to Him. This grieves God's heart because He does not like to see His children suffer. Yet He must continue to deal with us until we learn to submit to Him. It is most important that we learn to accept God's chastening in the right spirit. The Bible says,

"We have had fathers of our flesh (our human fathers) which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" Hebrews 12:9

May we learn to agree with God quickly and to say to Him, "Lord, Your judgments are true and righteous. I am willing to be in subjection to You."

2. God chastens us that we might be partakers of His holiness.

God does not chasten us because He is angry with us and wants to punish us. All of God's dealings with us are for our profit. He is "child-training" His children. God's purpose in chastening us is that we might be "partakers of His holiness." The Bible says,

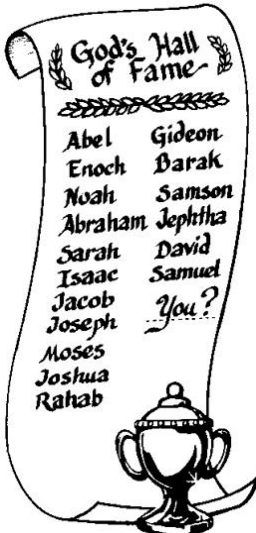
"For they (our earthly fathers) verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that

we might be partakers of His holiness." Hebrews 12:10

God incorporates His holiness in us through His chastening. When He chastens me, I should say, "Lord, what is it that You are teaching me in this?" Each chastening should cause us to learn more of God's ways and to become more like Him.

3. God chastens us that we might bring honor to His name.

Through God's chastening and His discipline, David became a man after God's own heart. David's name is listed in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. This is God's "Hall of Fame." It lists those who brought honor to God's name by their faith and by their deeds.



Samson repented of his sins, and in his death he destroyed more of God's enemies that he did during his whole lifetime.

Samson also is listed in God's "Hall of Game."

God disciplines and chastens us that we, too, might bring honor to His name.

4. God chastens us that He may vindicate His name.

We bear Christ's name. A Christian is a "Christ-one." What we do reflects upon Him. If we disgrace His name, God will chasten us. By His actions in David's situation, God showed that He had nothing to do with David's sin. He did not condone it nor would He overlook it. God will do the same with us if we bring disgrace upon His name. During the time of such chastisement, let us bow our head and worship God saying,

"Lord, I gladly accept Your chastening in this matter. I acknowledge that this is due to my sin. I will gladly let Your people, the world, and Satan know that You had nothing to do with this, but it is all my fault."

The more we submit ourselves to God's discipline and acknowledge that it was all our fault, the quicker God's discipline will pass away. On the other hand, the more we excuse ourselves and blame others the longer it will be with us.

"THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM"

Every Christian should have a holy reverence for God that

causes him to be afraid to disobey God. God has said that He will chasten us if we willfully disobey Him, and we know that He keeps His Word. If we truly love God and respect Him, we will not want to disobey Him. This kind of loving respect for God makes us wise and thus enables us to make right choices. This is why the Bible says,

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."
(Proverbs 9:10).*

May we learn to love righteousness and to hate sin. If, for any reason, we do bring God's chastening hand upon us, let us accept it in the right spirit. We should say,

"Lord, I know that I was wrong. You are altogether right in what You are doing. What would I have been had You not dealt with me? Thank You and praise You for Your love and Your faithfulness to me."



Discovered Gem

Even though God forgives us of our sins, we must still face the practical consequences of our actions.

1. 1 John 2:1
2. Psalm 103:10,11
3. 1 Corinthians 10,11

MEDITATION GUIDE

(TO STUDY AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE NEXT LESSON)

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages there is a Meditation Guide for each of the three lessons in this booklet. Each Guide has a key verse, comments, and questions that will help you to see from the Bible the main message of the lesson.

AFTER YOU FINISH the Question Pages, and have sent them in, we suggest that you work on the meditations. Do NOT send in your meditations. They are for you to personally use and keep.

THE PURPOSE of the Meditation Guide is to help you learn how to study the Bible on your own. It will help you to think (meditate) about a portion of Scripture in order to understand it. It will help you learn how to get in touch with God through His Word and through prayer.

MEDITATION. What does "meditation" mean? It does not mean to let your mind go blank. Quite the contrary, meditation means that you get hold of your thoughts and bring them all together to concentrate on a

portion of God's Word. As you do this, it gives the Lord an opportunity to make Himself known to you.

PAUSE TO PRAY. Before beginning each meditation, pause to pray, quieting your heart before the Lord so that you will be ready to hear what He has to say to you from the Bible.

If there are any words you do not understand, be sure to look them up in a dictionary.

MEMORY VERSE. You may wish to memorize the Key Verses, or other verses found in these Meditation Guides. Memorizing Scripture is one of the best means to meditate on God's Word. It would also be very helpful in keeping before you the main truth of each lesson.

NOTE: The King James Bible was used in preparing these Meditation Guides.

KEEP THIS GUIDE - DO NOT SEND IT IN

Lesson 12: GOD'S CHASTENING

Key Verse:

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7

In Lesson 12 we read of David's sin concerning Bathsheba and her husband. (See II Samuel 11 and 12.) Nathan, the prophet, was used by God to point out to David what he had done. David was deeply sorry for his sin.

In II Samuel 12:13, David said to Nathan, "I have _____ against the _____." After David made this confession, Nathan told him, "The Lord also hath _____ thy _____; thou shalt not _____."

The Lord forgave David's sin, yet David suffered for it. One result of David's sin is found in II Samuel 12:14. What happened? _____

After this episode with Nathan, David wrote Psalm 51. Turn to it in your Bible and read it. We want to see David's heart attitude toward his sin and toward God.

What are David's four request in verses 1 and 2?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What did David do in verse 3? _____ In verse 4 David recognized that his sin was against _____. In verse 1 and 2 David expressed some of the characteristics that he knew about God. What were they? _____

What else you learn about God in this Psalm?

- Verse 6 _____
- Verse 7 _____
- Verse 10 _____

Pause here a moment for prayer. Name each characteristic about God that you have listed and thank Him for being this kind of God. What have you learned from this incident in David's life that will help you?

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Turn to the Question Page as you finish each lesson. Fill in the answers for that lesson before going on to the next lesson.
- 2. When you have studied all the lessons and have completed the Question Pages, prepare for mailing. Don't forget to write in your name and return address. Send in your ANSWER SHEET ONLY!

EXAM

Lesson 12

- 1. Two consequences of sin in a believer's life are:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
- 2. Does a believer have the right to live any way he pleases and do anything he wants to do? _____
- 3. Two important lessons that we can learn from the account of David's great sin are:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
- 4. List some things we must not do if we want to avoid serious consequences:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
- 5. List three of God's purposes in chastening us:
 - 1. God chastens us that _____
 - 2. God chastens us that _____
 - 3. God chastens us that _____

What is the most important thing you have learned in this lesson? _____

Send your exam to the following address:
Latin Evangelical Outreach
 P.O. Box 549
 Irvington, New Jersey 07111-0549

Your Name and Address.....Please Print

Complete Name _____ Age _____

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Do you have friends who would like to receive these lessons?

Please send us their address:

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Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____