



# 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 9



## KEY VERSE:

*"Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of Thy law." Psalm 94:12*

We have seen how God shows us in our conscience what is right and what is wrong in His sight. In this lesson we will see how God trains His children to walk in obedience to Him.

## GOD JUDGES THE UNSAVED

Many times it seems that the wicked get by with their sins and prosper in this life, while God's children have many trials and troubles. In Psalm 73, the psalmist was complaining to God about this very thing. He said,

*"For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked ... they have more than heart could wish." Psalm 73:3,7*

The thought of how the wicked were prospering was painful to the psalmist until God showed him what would happen to the wicked. The Bible says,

*"Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castest them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors." Psalm 73:18,19*

# God's Discipline

The truth brought out here is that the wicked will receive the final judgment for their sins in the next world. They may prosper in this life, but they cannot escape God's righteous judgment. One day they will stand before the Great White Throne where they will be judged for every sin.

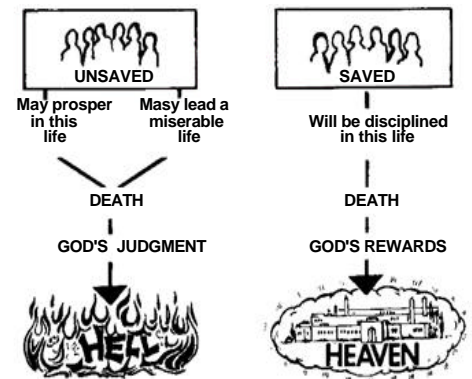
## GOD DISCIPLINES HIS CHILDREN

God's children have a privilege that the unsaved do not have. They come under the **discipline** of their heavenly Father.

What is discipline? Discipline is 'child-training.' It is the training a father gives his child. A father does not discipline the children of others, but he pays close attention to the training of his own children.

When a father disciplines his son, he is training him to be what he wants him to be. A good father wants his son to be obedient. He wants him to be truthful. He wants him to be honest. He wants him to be diligent. He wants him to be polite and considerate of others.

A good father begins the training of his son at a very early age, and he continues his training until his son reaches maturity. Day by day, he faithfully and lovingly disciplines his son to make him what he wants him to be.



## GOD DISCIPLINES HIS CHILDREN BY TEACHING THEM

God is a good father. He faithfully and lovingly disciplines His children to make them what He wants them to be. He trains and teaches his children so that they may bring honor to His name. The Lord gives this promise to His children:

*"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the waywhich thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." Psalm 32:8*

God teaches us as we spend time alone with Him over His Word. He teaches us through pastors and Bible teachers. He teaches us through the example of godly men and women. Throughout our lives we should be learning about God and his ways.

## GOD DISCIPLINES HIS CHILDREN BY THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES

God uses our circumstances to discipline us and to make us what He wants us to be. The story of Jacob in the Old Testament is an example of how God uses circumstances to discipline his children.

Jacob did not have a very good character. He was not only clever and cunning, but he was also greedy and dishonest. He was always trying to get the best of other people.

Jacob cheated his older brother out of his birthright. He deceived his father. In fact, he managed to get the best of almost everyone with whom he came in contact.

God knew what Jacob was like, and he was dealing with him. Jacob was a deceiver, and God sent him to work for his uncle, Laban, who was the same kind of person as Jacob.

Jacob fell in love with Laban's daughter, Rachel, and wanted to marry her, but Laban required that he work seven years for her. Jacob gladly agreed to do this. The Bible says, 'Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.'

When his seven years were completed, Jacob asked for his bride. Laban prepared a great wedding feast. When it was over, Jacob discovered that he had been deceived. Laban had substitute Leah, his older daughter, for Rachel. Jacob had married the wrong girl! He had to work another seven years for Rachel.

For twenty years Jacob was cheated by his uncle. During this time, Laban changed his wages ten times. Eventually, Jacob left the land of Haran to return to his home. During the journey, Rachel became sick and died.



Jacob had deceived others and he himself was deceived

Later, Jacob's favorite son, Joseph, was sold as a slave by his jealous brothers. These brothers deceived their father into thinking that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. Jacob believed that Joseph was dead and mourned for him many years.

Jacob had deceived others, and he himself was deceived. He encountered one difficulty after another. At one time, he cried out "All these things are against me." Actually, though, God was working all these circumstances together for Jacob's good. Through discipline and chastening, God was bringing about a change in Jacob's character.

In the end, we see a different Jacob. The one who had started out as a cunning deceiver was not a prince with God. He was gentle, humble and matured - a man who walked with God. Even Pharaoh, the mightiest king on earth at that time, recognized Jacob as a man of God. Pharaoh bowed before Jacob to receive a blessing from him.

**We have much of "Jacob" in us.**

Every one of us has much of Jacob's nature in us. We are selfish and self-seeking. We know how to be clever and even deceitful to get what we want. Therefore, God has to discipline us.

How does God discipline us? He disciplines us by our circumstances. God arranges all sorts of happenings to teach us

what he wants us to learn. The things that happen to a child of God are not accidental. All the things that happen to us are either ordered by God or permitted by Him, and they are working together for our good. The Bible says,

*"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28"*

Many things that happen to us do not in themselves seem to be good. Indeed, they may be painful and bitter to us. But God's Word says that we can know that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

## GOD DISCIPLINES HIS CHILDREN BY CHASTENING THEM

If we do not heed his teaching and his discipline, God has to chasten us. Chastening is a "spanking" from God. It is a form of discipline. God chastens us when we are disobedient.

Chastening is not the same as punishment. The object of punishment is to make a person suffer for his wrongdoing; whereas, the object of chastening is to help someone to be a better person by correcting him.

There is another difference. Punishment does not involve love, whereas chastening does. A father shows his love for his son by chastening him. The Bible says,

*"He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (often)." Proverbs 13:24"*

## THE MEANING OF GOD'S CHASTENING

When God has to chasten us, we may feel sorry for ourselves and wonder, "Why is this happening to me?" We may

look around and see others who have done the same things we have done, and yet they are not having the problems that we are having. We wonder why. We may even think that God does not love us or that He is angry with us. But these are wrong conclusions. Now let us see the true meaning of chastening.

● **Chastening is proof that we are God's child.**

The first thing we need to see about chastening is that it is proof that we are God's child. God does not chasten unsaved people. He chastens only His own children.



A mother chastens her own children

Five children were playing in a yard. They were covered with mud. Suddenly, a mother came out and soundly spanked three of the children, forbidding them to play there any further. One of her children complained, "Why didn't you spank the others too?"

"Because they are not my children," replied the mother.

Do you wonder why unsaved people do wrong and seemingly get by with it, whereas, when a child of God does the same thing, he is chastened? The reason is simply this: Unsaved people are not God's children. God only chastens his own children in this life. If God chastens you, it simply proves that you are His child. The Bible says,

*"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Hebrews 12:7,8*

● **Chastening is proof that God loves us.**

The second thing we need to see about chastening is that it is proof that God loves us. God does not chasten us because he does not like us or because He is angry with us. He chastens us because He loves us. The Bible says,

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

When we realize that trials and difficulties come from our Heavenly Father, and that they come to us because He loves us, our whole attitude toward them changes. The psalmist says,

*"Blessed (happy) is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of Thy law." Psalm 94:12*

**HOW SHOULD WE RECEIVE GOD'S CHASTENING?**

God tell us in His Word how we are to receive His chastening. The Bible says,

*"May son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." Hebrews 12:5*

In this verse, God tells us that there are two attitude we are being chastened.

**1. We must not despise the chastening of the Lord.**

The word "despise," as it is used in this verse, means "to treat lightly." The Bible tells us here that we are not to treat lightly the chastening of the Lord. If God chastens us, we should take it seriously. We should seek to find out what He is trying to teach us.

Unfortunately, many Christians go on for years without learning what God is trying to teach them. Why? Because they either do not realize that God is chastening them or they do not take it seriously.

Our Heavenly Father is constantly training His children; yet many of God's children do not see the hand of God in the things that happen to them. They think that what happens to them is only accidental, never realizing that God is behind their circumstances. They do not realize that God is using these things to try to teach them His ways. It is indeed tragic for a Christian not to see God's hand in his circumstances, and it is tragic to despise or treat lightly God's chastening.

Therefore, one of the first attitudes a child of God needs to learn is to take seriously the chastening of the Lord. We certainly do not say that every sickness or every accident is the chastening of the Lord. But we should pay careful attention to our circumstances.

When something occurs, our first question should be, "What does this mean? Is there something in my life that is not pleasing to Him?" We must take seriously the dealing of the Lord or they may go by without benefiting us.

**2. We must not "faint" when God rebukes us.**

The word "faint" here means "to lose heart" or to become too discouraged. The Bible tells us here that we are not to take it too hard when God rebukes or chastens us. This is the opposite of treating it too lightly.

When God is dealing with us, we may become so discouraged that we feel like giving up. We may think that we just cannot live the Christian life. But God tells us not to "faint." He wants us because He loves us and desires only the best for us.

**THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

May God enable us to see that the trials, experiences, and chastenings which He sends are

for our highest good. There is nothing enjoyable about being chastened, but if we accept it in the right way, it will yield precious fruit in our life. The Bible says,

*"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."*  
Hebrews 12:11

To whom does chastening yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness"? It yields it to "them which are exercised thereby" - those who are submissive to God's chastening.

David knew what it was to have God's chastening hand upon him. He also knew what it was to submit to God. He did not accuse God of dealing with him

unfairly. He did not hold resentment against Him. Instead, he was thankful to God for His faithfulness. David said,

*"I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."* Psalm 119:75

This is the way we should receive God's chastenings. We should tell Him that He is altogether right in what He does. We should be thankful to Him and learn the lesson He is teaching us. We should realize, too, that God will use our experiences to help others who follow after us. The Bible says,

*"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let*

*it rather be healed."*  
Hebrews 12:12, 13



What does this mean? It means that we do not live to ourselves; we influence others. Others are following after us. If we are disobedient, we make a crooked path and lead others astray. But, if we walk in obedience to the Lord, we make a straight path for others to follow.



### Discovered Gem

God disciplines His children that they walk in obedience to Him.

## 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 9: GOD'S DISCIPLINE

### Key Verse:

*"Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law."* Psalm 94:12

In lesson 9, we learned that discipline means "child-training." In Psalm 32:8, there are three important words that tell us how God trains us. Although these words are similar, they are a little different. First, write down the word and then on the line following the word, write what it means to you.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

"Blessed" means "happy." Our Key Verse tells us that the person whom the Lord chastens and teaches is a happy person. We learn a lot about chastening in Hebrews 12. Turn in your Bible to this chapter and read especially verses 5 through 11. Verse 5 tells us that there are two attitudes that we are to maintain when the Lord chastens us. They are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Explain in your own words what they mean to you. \_\_\_\_\_

Verses 6, 7 and 8 tell us about a relationship. What is it and how is it proved? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the fruits of chastening? (Look at the end of verses 10 and 11) \_\_\_\_\_

What in these Scriptures has been most helpful to 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 9**

1. Do wicked people often prosper in this world? \_\_\_\_\_. When will the wicked receive the final judgment for their sins? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Discipline is \_\_\_\_\_. It is the \_\_\_\_\_ a father gives \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Does God discipline us by our circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_. If we do not heed His teaching and His discipline, God has to \_\_\_\_\_ us. Chastening is \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Chastening is proof of two things:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Two attitudes that we are to maintain when we are chastened by God are:

- 1. We must not \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. We must not \_\_\_\_\_

What have you learned in this lesson that will help you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Send your exam to the following address:  
**Latin Evangelical Outreach**  
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 Irvington, New Jersey 07111-0549

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