

Becoming Like My Jesus

Yesterday I sat in on a ZOOM Sunday School class led by a layman in our church. We have had to go to ZOOM meetings for our church due to a recent COVID outbreak, with nearly 50% of the church self-quarantined. Back to that class—it was on Hebrews 12. The teacher, Mr. Larry Gotham, did an outstanding job of opening the Word of God. His thoughts have prompted my newsletter portion for the day. I will be looking at just one verse.

Hebrews 12:11 ways: ***“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.”*** Most of us are familiar with the passages from Romans 5 and James 1, which tell us we are admonished to rejoice in trials/discipline. We can do that—rejoice in trials—because we KNOW some things. Things such as the progression from suffering to endurance to character to hope. However, in Hebrews we learn there is a CONDITIONAL aspect to this growth. That CONDITIONAL aspect is “*being trained*”. Before we tackle that subject, let me develop some thoughts on the first part of the verse.

“*All discipline*” the inspired writer notes, seems painful. Now, the word “all” is significant. My homiletics professor in seminary used to say, “All means all and that’s all, all means.” Think about it: I can accept discipline from a host of people and areas. Is there a disconnect in which I cannot accept “all” discipline? My boss can correct me, my teenager can correct me, and my spouse can correct me. But what about someone in church? Or, putting it another way, I can learn the lessons of life in my health, finances and job performance but, can I learn and grow when confronted by a disgruntled church member?

“All means all and that’s all, all means.”

Moving on to the word “*discipline*.” It is the Greek word “paideia”. The noun form of the word is “child” and in the verb form it denotes “to train children, suggesting the broad idea of education or instructing.” (Vine’s Exhaustive Dictionary). To be honest, all of us need to CONTINUE to grow. We are all in need of education.

The promise of the verse is “*the peaceful fruit of righteousness*” can be ours. I suspect we all long for that peaceful fruit in our lives. The term “yields” can be understood as a payback for an activity.

What is the pay back or yielding of which the author speaks? The catch is: “*have been trained by it*.” This verb tells me there is a CONDITIONAL aspect to profiting from an experience. The way the ESV translates the verb led me to suspect it was perfect passive participle. Sure enough, my Logos program confirmed it. This means (perfect tense)—it is an ongoing process—starting in the past with impact on the present time. The CONDITIONAL part is underscored in the passive voice of the verb. Passive Voice means an outside force does the action to me. The participle verb form enhances the main verb in the verse—“yields” or as pointed out above—a payback.

Here then, is my paraphrase of this verse: “Every correction/trial/discipline seems to be painful and I usually do not like it. The only way to achieve the peaceful fruit of right living is by allowing the Holy Spirit to take the hard lessons and apply them to my life. If I can look upon the experience as a blessing from God I will take a step of becoming like my Jesus!”

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