



October 25, 2015
2 Chronicles 36
"God's Discipline"
Pastor Gary Hamrick

The Bible tells us that God disciplines those whom he loves. It also tells us that no discipline is pleasant at the time, only painful. Can you relate? Is God trying to bring loving correction to your life in some way? In the book of Hebrews, the Bible reminds us that it's a loving father who disciplines his children, and God is acting in the same way when he disciplines us.

Join Pastor Gary for today's study as he shares five things about God's discipline and how we can know the difference between times when God is correcting us and when we are simply going through hardships because we live in a sinful, fallen world.

Historical Background

1. At this point in Judah's history, God had been patient with the nation 400 years.
2. These rebellious people had tried and tested God's patience with their wickedness and their sinfulness, to the point where God had had enough.
3. The last three kings of Judah were Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.
 - a. **2 Chronicles 36:5** - *"Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God."*
 - b. **2 Chronicles 36:9** - *"Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord."*
 - c. **2 Chronicles 36:11-14** - *"Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the*

prophet, who spoke the word of the Lord. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the Lord, the God of Israel. Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the Lord, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem."

4. Even though the people became "more and more unfaithful," the Lord continually tried to reach out to them and warn them through his prophets; men such as Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Amos, and others.
 - a. **2 Chronicles 36:15-16** *"The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity ¹ on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy."*
5. It's hard to believe that over a period of 400 years, when 19 kings of Judah reigned (eight "good" kings and only one who didn't mar his testimony) and 19 kings of Israel (not a single good king among them), the people followed wicked leaders, and God put up with them because he had compassion for them.
6. It's important to remember that God's patience is longsuffering, but it's not without limit.
7. **2 Chronicles 36:17-20** - *"He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the Lord's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons..."²*
8. Over a period of approximately 20 years, Nebuchadnezzar deported the surviving remnant of the nation over 900 miles to Babylon.

¹ The King James (KJV) Bible uses the word, "compassion."

² This happened in 586BC.

9. The Bible doesn't provide much information about what it was like to be an exile living in Babylon, and what we do know is found in the book of Daniel.
10. We know with certainty that [Psalm 137:1-4](#) refers to the exiles, and some Bible scholars believe [Psalm 42](#) and [Psalm 43](#) also refer to the Jews living in Babylon.
 - a. [Psalm 137:1-4](#) - *"By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?"*
 - b. Other than these psalms, we don't have an understanding of hardships they faced, but we do know that God allowed this/did this to discipline those whom he loved.
11. Things worsened to the point that God's patience ran out, and his discipline included sending them to Babylon for 70 years, for the purpose of purging them of their idolatry, as well as bringing them to the place that they would see how much they needed him.

God's Discipline Means He Loves Us

12. [Revelation 3:19](#) - *"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent."*
13. [Proverbs 3:11-12](#) - *"My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."*
14. Pastor Gary said, "The reason God will sometimes put the squeeze on us and make life difficult, is not because he delights in it, but it's because he loves us so much that he will never be content to see us go down a wayward path."

God's Discipline Means He Accepts Us

15. [Hebrews 12:5-11](#) - *"And have you forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.' Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you*

are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful, Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

16. In this Scripture, the Lord uses the analogy of a father with a son or daughter that shows there’s a relationship between them.
17. The Lord knows what we need and he’s never too harsh or too soft in his discipline, but he loves us enough that he will sometimes put on the squeeze, so to speak, and life will become difficult, because he’s disciplining us to bring us back.

God’s Discipline Is Only Exercised After We Have Ignored Repeated Warnings

18. It was only after 400 years that God brought the Babylonians as part of his plan to discipline the nation; it wasn’t after the first week, because God gives time to repent and turn back to him.
19. “God does not discipline us to subdue us, but to condition us for a life of usefulness and blessedness. In his wisdom he knows that an uncontrolled life is an unhappy life, so he puts reins on our wayward souls that they may be directed into the paths of righteousness.” – Billy Graham ³

God’s Discipline Is Intended To Spare Us A Greater Judgment

20. **1 Corinthians 11:32** – *“When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world [on the great day of Judgment].”*
21. **Psalm 94:12** – *“Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord, the man you teach from your law...”*

God’s Discipline Is Timed And Designed To Bring Us Closer To God

22. God’s discipline is not indefinite, because there is purpose behind his discipline.

³ <http://bit.ly/1Wihilc>

23. The people were exiled for 70 years, and this was made known in advance, because God had it all planned out, speaking through the prophet Jeremiah.
24. **2 Chronicles 36:22-23** - *“In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: ‘This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you - may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.” ’ ”*
25. This Scripture helps us understand that it was always God’s plan to bring them back, after he rid them of their sinfulness, selfishness, and idolatry, to bring them to a place of surrender.
26. The way he brought them back from exile was to raise up the Persians to subdue the Babylonians, in the same way he had raised up the Babylonians to subdue the people of Judah.
27. **Jeremiah 29:10-13** - *“This is what the Lord says: ‘When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.’ ”*

What’s The Difference?

28. The way we can know the difference between God’s discipline and the difficulties of living in a fallen world is clear conscience.
29. **2 Corinthians 1:12** - *“... Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God.”*
30. Paul was saying it was his clear conscience that was the difference.
31. **Job 5:17-18** - *“Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Chronicles 36:5, 9, 11-16](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Before you came to faith in Christ, how did the Lord use people to reach out to you regarding repentance, forgiveness, and salvation?
4. What are some of the ways you've experienced the longsuffering patience of the Lord?
5. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they were "being squeezed" by the Lord, as well as times when they were dealing with the hardships of life.
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's statement about the reason God disciplines those whom he loves, as well as reading and talking about [Proverbs 3:11-12](#) and [Revelation 3:19](#).
7. Read and discuss [Hebrews 12:5-11](#).
8. Spend time talking about the Billy Graham quote Pastor Gary shared. (See #21 above)
9. Read and discuss [1 Corinthians 11:32](#) and [Psalm 94:12](#).
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's statements regarding God's patience and discipline.
 - a. God's patience is longsuffering, but it's not without limit.
 - b. God's discipline is not indefinite, because there is purpose behind his discipline.
 - c. The way we can know the difference between God's discipline and the difficulties of living in a fallen world is clear conscience. (See #31 and #33 above)
11. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 29:10-13](#).
12. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).