
DISCIPLINE: EXPERIENCING THE EMBRACE OF THE FATHER

Mountain View Community Church
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HERE IS A STACK OF CONCRETE BLOCKS. THE DESTRUCTION OF SUCH A STACK IS WHAT LED TO MY LAST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT BY MY DAD.



DISCIPLINE

- SHARING TIME:
 - When was the last time you were disciplined by your parents?
 - What was the situation?
 - What kind of discipline did you receive?
 - What was your response and what was the result?
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**YOU STARTED CRYING
BEFORE GETTING LICKINS**

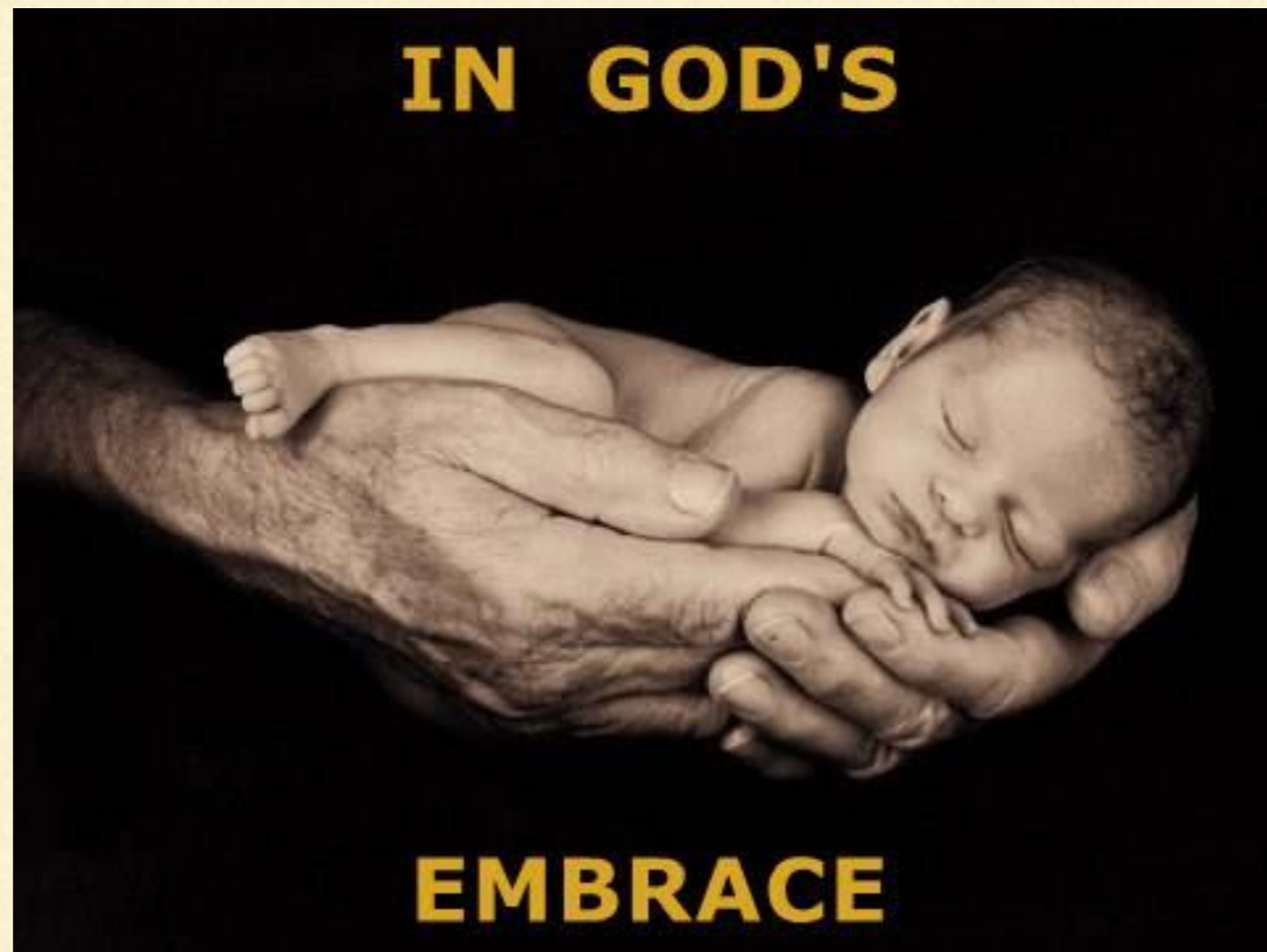


**IN HOPES THAT YOU
WOULD GET LESS**

BUT IT NEVER WORKED

SEEING GOD'S EMBRACE IN DISCIPLINE

- Changing our perspective on God's discipline
- 5 characteristics of God's discipline
- 2 ways not to respond to discipline...and the right way to respond
- Then end goal of discipline



THIS IS NOT AN EASY CONCEPT TO GRASP!



SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v. 1-Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins.

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v. 2-Keep your eyes on *Jesus*, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever.

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v. 3-And now he's *there*, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. *That* will shoot adrenaline into your souls!

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v. 4-In this all-out match against sin, others have suffered far worse than you, to say nothing of what Jesus went through—all that bloodshed! So don't feel sorry for yourselves. Or have you forgotten how good parents treat children, and that God regards you as *His* dear children?

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v. 5b-My dear child, don't shrug off God's **discipline**,
but don't be crushed by it either.
It's the child he loves that he **disciplines**;
the child he embraces, he also **corrects**.

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v. 7-God is educating you; that's why you must never drop out. He's treating you as His dear legitimate children. This trouble you're in isn't punishment; it's *discipline*, the normal experience of legitimate children. Only irresponsible parents leave children to fend for themselves. Would you prefer an irresponsible God?

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v. 9-We respect our own parents for **disciplining** and not spoiling us, so why not embrace God's **discipline** so we can truly live? While we were children, our parents did what seemed best to them. But God is doing what is best for us, **disciplining** us to live God's holy best.

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v.11-At the time, **discipline** isn't much fun. It always feels like it's going against the grain. Later, of course, it pays off handsomely, for it's the well-**disciplined** who find themselves mature in their relationship with God.

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-13

v.-12 So don't sit around on your hands! No more dragging your feet! Clear the path for long-distance runners so no one will trip and fall, so no one will step in a hole and sprain an ankle. Help each other out. And run for it!

THE WORD “DISCIPLINE” USED IN THIS PASSAGE IS THE GREEK WORD *PAIDEIA*.

PAIDEIA HAS THE FOLLOWING MEANINGS:

1) the training and education of children (which relates to the *cultivation of mind and morals*, and employs not only commands and admonitions, but also reproof and punishment) It also includes the training and care of the body.

THE WORD “DISCIPLINE” USED IN THIS PASSAGE IS THE GREEK WORD *PAIDEIA*.

PAIDEIA HAS THE FOLLOWING MEANINGS:

2) whatever in adults also *cultivates the soul*, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing passions.

2a) instruction which aims at *increasing virtue*.

2b) chastisement, chastening, (i.e. hardships that God allows *to make us better*)

MORE DISCIPLINE SCRIPTURE:

- Proverbs 3:11-12 My child, do not despise **discipline** from the Lord, and do not loathe his rebuke. For the Lord **disciplines** those he loves, just as a father **disciplines** the son in whom he delights.
 - Job 5:17 "Behold, blessed is the one whom God **reproves**; therefore despise not the **discipline** of the Almighty."
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MORE DISCIPLINE SCRIPTURE:

- Proverbs 12:1 The one who loves **discipline** loves knowledge, but the one who hates reproof is stupid.
 - Proverbs 13:24 The one who spares his rod hates his child, but the one who loves his child is diligent in **disciplining** him.
 - Revelation 3:19 All those I love, I rebuke and **discipline**.
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CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S DISCIPLINE

1. It is proof of legitimate family identity:

7 As you endure this divine **discipline**, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never **disciplined** by its father? 8 If God doesn't **discipline** you as he does all of his children, it means that you are *illegitimate* and are not really his children at all.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S DISCIPLINE

2. The purpose is our good—God disciplines out of love:

1. 6 For the Lord **disciplines** those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.
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CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S DISCIPLINE

3. The goal is our holiness:

v 10-God's **discipline** is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S DISCIPLINE

4. The product is assured:

v.11-No **discipline** is enjoyable while it is happening —it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of righteousness for those who are trained in this way.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S DISCIPLINE

5. The end result is meant to be for our strengthening and security:

v 12-13-So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. 13 Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN DISCIPLINED BY GOD

Two wrong responses to discipline in this passage:

First, not taking it seriously:

“Don’t make light of the Lord’s discipline” (v. 5a).

Some people do not learn the lessons God intends because they *refuse to admit* that sufferings are meant for their instruction. The *paideia* has not accomplished its purpose, so God will have to allow them to go through more discipline.

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN DISCIPLINED BY GOD

The second wrong response is **to become depressed and give up**: “...don’t give up when he corrects you.” (v 5b).

We either treat discipline as nothing, or we say it is too much, that God is punishing us beyond what we can bear. We say that he does not care for us or that he is too hard. But if we give way to depression and fail to respond correctly to God’s painful discipline, we will have to go through *paideia* all over again.

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN DISCIPLINED BY GOD

What should be our proper response?

- We should rejoice when God disciplines us and draw comfort from the biblical principle: “For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.” (v. 6).
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HOW TO RESPOND WHEN DISCIPLINED BY GOD

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN DISCIPLINED BY GOD

- We can reason like this: “I am experiencing painful discipline; therefore, I can conclude that God is my heavenly Father and I am his child. God loves me with an everlasting love. I am not an illegitimate child.”
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CULTURAL CONNECTION



More often than not, Roman men of this time had concubines in addition to a legal wife. Roman fathers would financially support their children by their concubines, but they would not discipline them. These fathers disciplined only the sons of the legal wife so that they could be their heirs. Only disciplined children had privileges and communion with the father. Illegitimate children did not.

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLINE AS LOVE

It is difficult for us to see the link between love and hardships. The devil tells us these are opposites, but the Scripture tells us they belong together. When we are going through discipline, Satan will whisper, “So that’s how your loving God treats you, huh?”

If he can get you to doubt God’s love or His sovereignty over your situation, he has succeeded in driving you away from your loving heavenly Father.

IS FATHER GOD GOOD AND LOVING?

CS Lewis: “We are taught in the Scripture that God is Good and Loving. Those are two of His eternal characteristics.

By the goodness of God we mean nowadays almost exclusively His *lovingness*; and in this we may be right. And by Love, in this context, most of us mean *kindness*- the desire to see others than the self happy; not happy in this way or in that, but just happy.”

IS FATHER GOD GOOD AND LOVING?

“What would really satisfy us would be a God who said of anything we happened to like doing, ‘What does it matter so long as they are contented?’ We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a *Grandfather* in heaven.”



IS FATHER GOD GOOD AND LOVING?

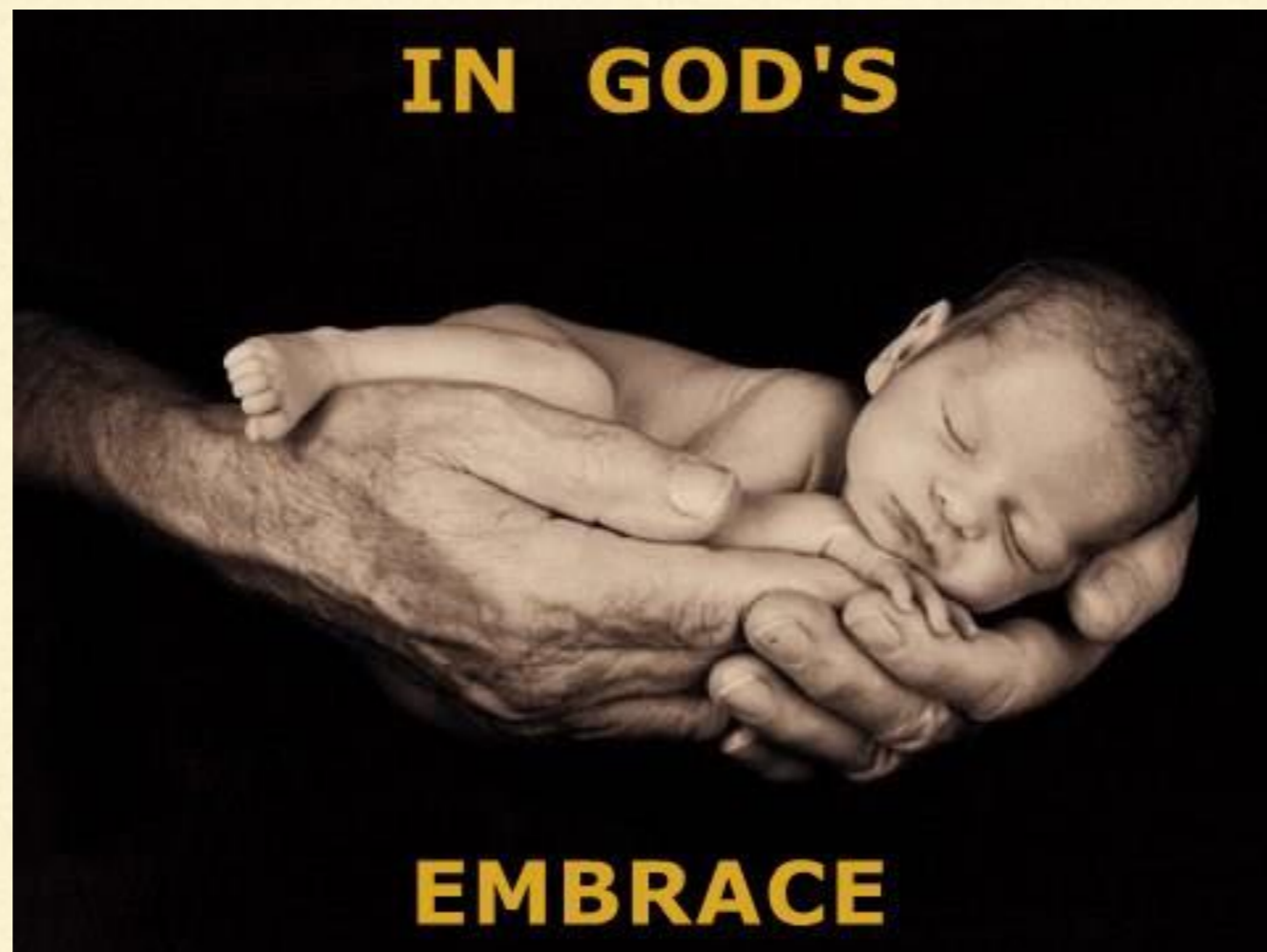
“We want a senile benevolence who, as they say, likes to see people enjoying themselves’, and whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of each day, ‘a good time was had by all’

I should very much like to live in a universe which was governed on such lines. But since it is abundantly clear that I don’t, and since I have reason to believe, nevertheless, that God is Love, I conclude that my conception of love needs correction. “

SEEING GOD'S EMBRACE IN DIFFICULTIES

TAKEAWAYS FROM TODAY:

- Changing our perspective on God's discipline
- 5 characteristics of God's discipline
- 2 ways not to respond to discipline...and the right way to respond
- Then end goal of discipline



UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLINE AS LOVE



Do not
interpret God's
love by your
circumstances.

Rather,
interpret your
circumstances
by God's love.

SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF SEEING GOD'S EMBRACE IN DIFFICULTIES

Joseph—"You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." Genesis 50:20



SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF SEEING GOD'S EMBRACE IN DIFFICULTIES

Job--the whole message of the book of Job is that God allows suffering to refine us and make us more holy.



SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF SEEING GOD'S EMBRACE IN DIFFICULTIES

Jesus—was made perfect through suffering!

James 5:8-9-Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being **made perfect**, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.



SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF SEEING GOD'S EMBRACE IN DIFFICULTIES



Because He has loved us from eternity with an everlasting love, God disciplines us to form His character in us so we may be qualified for eternal fellowship with Him. He disciplines us because He loves us, not because He hates us.

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLINE AS LOVE

When difficult times come upon us, God is at work in the midst of the struggle and pain as any loving father would, not necessarily punishing but “disciplining” us so that we learn and grow.



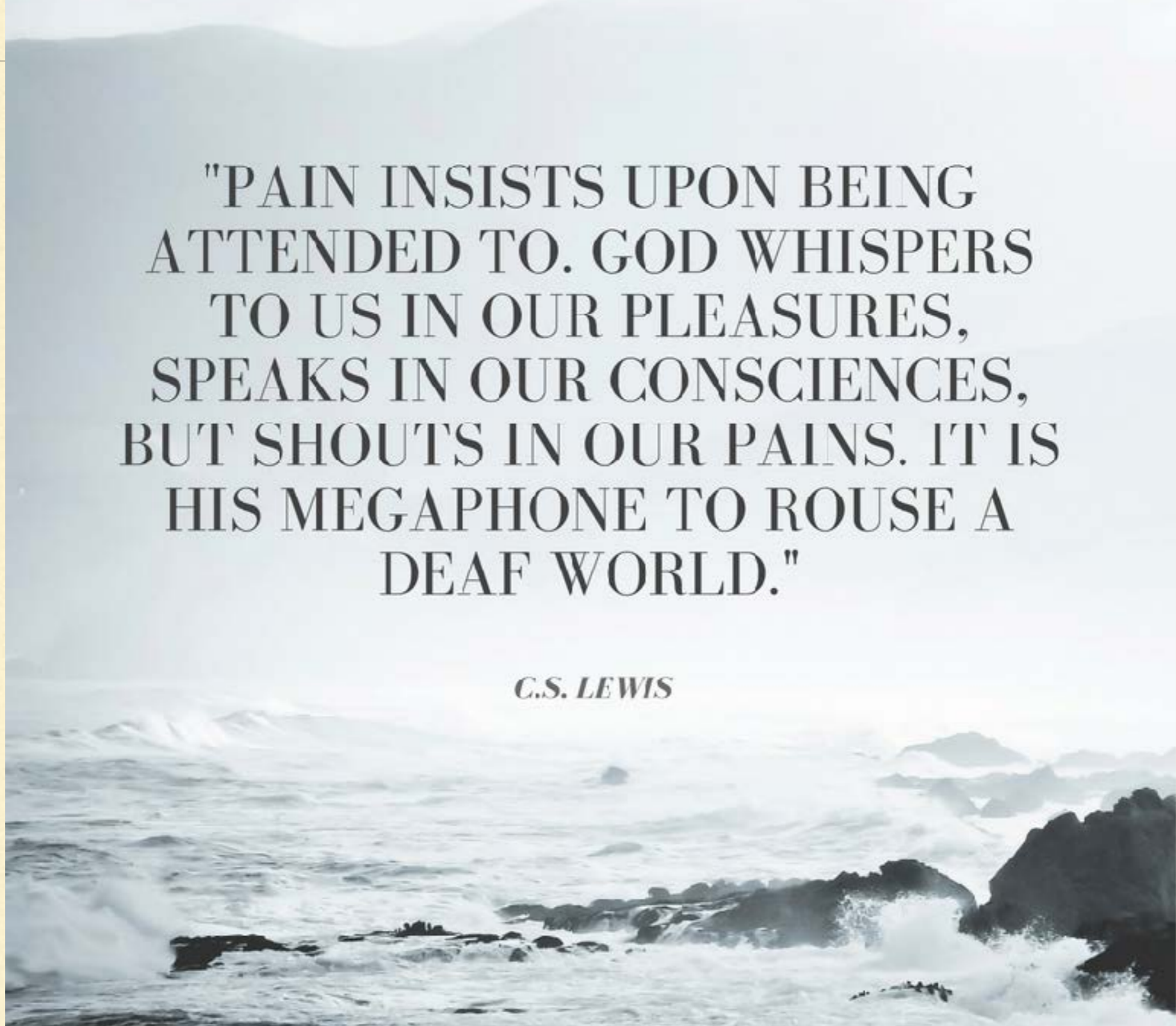
UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLINE AS LOVE

Yes, sometimes we need to be corrected. Other times we just need to be shaped and molded and directed. The presence of pain does not necessarily indicate the presence of sin. viz- The Book of Job!



"PAIN INSISTS UPON BEING
ATTENDED TO. GOD WHISPERS
TO US IN OUR PLEASURES,
SPEAKS IN OUR CONSCIENCES,
BUT SHOUTS IN OUR PAINS. IT IS
HIS MEGAPHONE TO ROUSE A
DEAF WORLD."

C.S. LEWIS



SUMMING UP...

- Verses 10b-11, "But God's discipline is **always good** for us, so that we might share in his **holiness**. 11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a **peaceful** harvest of **righteousness** for those who are trained in this way."
 - Four key words: our good, our holiness, our peace, and our righteousness.
 - Will you trust God? Will you submit to trials and discipline and receive these promises?
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CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that You are Good and Loving.

Forgive me for not accepting the discipline You lovingly but firmly take me through.

Help me to see that the challenges that come my way are meant to demonstrate Your love and approval of me as a legitimate child.

Help me accept them as gifts of correction, direction, learning, and growing in Your knowledge and wisdom.

Whatever it takes, Lord, discipline me for my good that I may increasingly share your holiness and bear the fruit of righteousness and peace.

I pray all this in the name of Jesus, who perfected obedience through discipline.
