

Does God Punish Believers? – Sept. 20, 2023

I ran across this debate about God's love & punishment.

It begins with scripture:

Isaiah 53:5 - But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

From that is this belief: *“God no longer punishes us for our sin because Jesus took that punishment.”* *“It doesn't matter what I do, God will forgive me.”*

- Some say: *“If God loves us, He won't punish us.”*
- Others: *“Am I being punished right now for?”*
 - The Question: Are believers punished by God?

Let's start at the beginning. There have always been punishments:

- 1 – Serpent - punished - must crawl on his belly the rest of his life.
- 2 – Man – punished - having to till the soil & work by the sweat of his brow.
- 3 – Woman - punished - labor pain while giving birth.
- 4 – Cain – punished - having no home; must wander from place to place.
- 5 – Lot's wife – fleeing Sodom/Gomorrah, turned into a pillar of salt.
- 6 – Moses – punished - not allowed to enter the Promised Land.
- 7 – David – punished more than once; . . . a “man after God's own heart”
 - **2 Sam. 24:12** – David had to choose 1 of 3 ways for God to punish him:
 - 3 yrs famine... flee from enemies for 3 months... plague for 3 days
 - **2 Sam. 24:14** – David replied: “Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great. Do not let me fall into human hands.”
- 8 – **Acts 5.** Ananias & Sapphira – sold property, lied; said they were giving it all to the apostles. They had agreed to keep some for themselves.

Luke 12: Jesus told parable of being watchful, ready for the Lord's Coming. . .

Luke 12:35-36 – “Be dressed for service & keep your lamps burning, as tho you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast.”

(Luke 12:41) - Peter asks: that parable for us, or everyone?

42-48 – Jesus replies: “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. 43 If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a

good job, there will be a reward. I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. But what if the servant thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' & he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful.

47 "A servant who knows what the master wants, but isn't prepared and doesn't carry out those instructions, will be severely punished. 48 But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required."

According to **Jesus . . . there is punishment... & its for the servants.**

- Some argue whether punishment or discipline going on. Difference?
 - **Punishment:** inflicting suffering for past behavior.
 - **Discipline:** training someone for future behavior.

Apostle Paul spoke of both punishment & discipline in **Hebrews 12.**

5-6 – NLT - "have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said,

"My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline,
and don't give up when he corrects you.

For the Lord **disciplines** those he loves,
and he **punishes** each one he accepts as his child."

7-11 – NIV – "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons & daughters at all. 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 spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. **11** 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."

God's Discipline is:

1. Personal.

Heb. 12:6 – “For the Lord disciplines the one He loves.” NIV

- God's discipline is linked with love. Always. To make us better.
- **Deuteronomy 8:5** – “So know in your heart that just as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.”
- Remember: discipline is tied to **future behavior**. He's training us.
 - o “The purpose of God's discipline is not to punish us, but to transform us.” – Jerry Bridges.
- Jesus said: There are blessings & rewards ahead for the faithful servant.
 - o We are learning how to be faithful. Well done...

2. Painful.

Heb. 12:11 – “No discipline is pleasant at the time, but painful.”

- Time out/in the corner is not pleasant. But it's a blessing in disguise.
- “Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.” – Job 5:17
- Just b/c we experience the consequences of our choices doesn't mean God is angry with us.
 - o I discipline Scarlett often... not angry with her. Want better.
 - God's discipline is the same.

3. Purposeful.

Heb. 12:10 – “God disciplines us for our good.”

- Good isn't the same as pleasant. As a kid, I never wanted discipline. Example: football/Saban. “The Box”
- A disciplined football player elevates the performance of his team... has an impact on the game... doesn't hurt his team.
- A disciplined Christian is the same. We help the cause of Christ, don't hurt it.

Song of the week – “God Help Me” by Unspoken