

CARE > God to Us... Us to Others!

Sunday, 8/25 – 9:00 † Monday, 8/26 – 7 PM

11th Sunday after Pentecost / 10th Sunday after Trinity – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: We are continuing a short series in [Hebrews](#); we have already covered much of [chapter 11](#) – *with many amazing examples of faith*. Today we pick up in [chapter 12](#) with the important topic of discipline. Discipline is not pleasant for those receiving it, *but the one giving it is* † *showing care and* † *putting his love into action!*

1. **Discipline Shows Care:** ⁴ **In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.** ⁵ **And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.** // In [12:3](#), we were reminded that Jesus suffered much to fulfill His mission; as He did not give up, *so we are being called to endure!* Then, *to help us understand our sufferings*, let us † remember who we are – *God’s children in Christ*, and † rightly respond to His discipline. Why?
 - a. ⁶ **For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises** [*literally scourges; severely punishes*] **every son whom he receives.”** ⁷ **It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?** // The word “discipline” does not sound pleasant, *but it is used by God and parents to show love and care* by † guiding, † instructing, † training, and † educating. For some, *discipline must be very strong to be effective!*

- b. ⁸ **If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.** ⁹ **Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?** ¹⁰ **For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.** // Our parents did their best for us, *even though it wasn't perfect*; in response, we gave them ***some respect then, more respect now!*** What about with God our Father? His discipline to us ***“is without fail, always to our advantage; He never makes a mistake in the kind and in the amount of suffering which He has us endure”*** (Kretzmann, NT II: 489).
- c. ¹¹ **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.** ¹² **Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees,** ¹³ **and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.** // Think back to when you were being disciplined, did you enjoy it? *By no means*; however: ***“It is through that training of the Lord that our faith is rendered pure, true, precious, that we ourselves are thoroughly prepared, strengthened, founded unto eternal salvation”*** (Kretzmann, 489). Therefore, *even when God's discipline is heavy upon us, let us* **rejoice** that He is at work in our lives, **be** certain that He loves us, and **know** that He is at work for whatever is best spiritually and eternally!

2. **Being at Peace with Others Shows Care:** ¹⁴ **Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.** // Having been forgiven in Christ, we **✦forgive all who sin against us and ✦try to be at peace with them.** Also, knowing we must be holy in God's sight to have eternal life, we **✦are thankful to be in Christ now and ✦strive/struggle to live with ongoing sorrow and faith.**
3. **Paying Attention to Spiritual Needs Shows Care:** ¹⁵ **See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;** ¹⁶ **that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal.** ¹⁷ **For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.** // The grace of God is salvation, so those who do not obtain grace **or do not continue in it face damnation.** We don't want that for us or anyone, so God is warning us to care about ourselves and others by noticing a **TURN ✦from God's Word ✦to our own sinful ideas.** Esau was mentioned as an example: **✦A single meal** became more important to him than **✦being in the blood line of the Messiah.** Later, he desired to gain the blessing back, yet he was rejected. Some lose blessings in this life; some lose God's gift of eternal life. *Let us show that we care!*
4. **Contrasting Terror and Forgiveness Shows Care:**
- a. Terror under the law: These words describe the scene at Mt. Sinai when the Israelites received the Ten Commandments: ¹⁸ **For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest** ¹⁹ **and the sound of a trumpet**

and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.²⁰ For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.”

²¹ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” // Without God’s love in Christ, *we should all be terrified!* But, *good news*, God loves us, has saved us through Jesus’ holy precious blood, and has promised us the gift of a wonderful eternity!

- b. Forgiveness under the gospel: These words identify God’s dwelling place and those who are there with Him, including: Jesus, the holy angels, and those who died as believers in Jesus: ²² **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,**²³ **and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,**²⁴ **and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.** // As the blood of Abel cried to God to take vengeance, *so the blood of Jesus cries to God to pronounce us righteous by grace through faith!* For those rejecting Christ, *let us care about them by sharing God’s law;* for those who know Christ, *let us comfort them with God’s gospel!*

This Week’s Challenge: As the Lord cares about us by taking action according to our needs, *so let us do the same toward others!*

Let Us Pray: Dear Father in heaven, thank you for deeply caring for us; *now move us to show true care for others!*

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