

Volume 3, Day 28: Discipline IS NOT Punishment

I hear so many people when we talk about God's affection saying, "Yeah, I believe in God's affection. I believe He loves us. But what about that passage in Hebrews? It talks about Him disciplining those that He loves?" I know why you ask. But I grew up thinking discipline and punishment were the same thing. So if anything bad was happening in my life, well that must have been God's punishment because I didn't do good enough.

It's strange that we think of discipline as punishment because discipline isn't about punishment. Discipline is about shaping. It's about training. It's about ordering our lives in a way that we can be pleasing to God and live deeply in his life. So when God trains us, He's just pruning us up so we can be fruitful and it's that simple. And when He gets it down to the four or five canes that will be fruitful, then the other thing He does is wrap those up on a wire. When I get done with this later today, all these canes will be lying along this wire and this vine will be ready to bear fruit next year in the way it produces the greatest amount of fruit.

Well, discipline isn't God punishing you! It's God training you! Why? So that His joy might be in you, that your joy might be full. 1 Peter chapter 4 says it this way, and I'm quoting from the Message version, "Jesus gets the last word on everything." And I love the idea that Jesus is going to be the last person to go through my life, just like my dad was for his vineyard. Whoever picked grapes, pruned vines, and tied vines. My dad was the last one to walk through his vineyard just to make sure everything was arranged as he wanted it to be. Peter continues, "Jesus has been through everything you're going through and more."