Introduction

There are people who start well – eager to follow Christ – but there are not as many who finish well.

All along the way there are things that can distract us or trip us up.

So how does God keep us on track?

By his divine discipline, he keeps calling us back to himself.

I. God disciplines us because he loves us. Hebrews 12:4-8

In their struggle against sin, no one had died yet. But it is a struggle.

They had experienced oppression and persecution, but even in that, God is with them and he will use it for good.

How can persecution be good?

He reminds them “You have forgotten God’s word.” Proverbs 3:11-12

Suffering and hardship doesn’t mean that God doesn’t love you. In fact, the opposite is true. God is treating you as a son.

There are two attitudes toward God’s discipline that we should avoid.

- Don’t make light of it.
- Don’t lose heart.

II. There are three types of discipline.

Corrective – to turn us from sin.

“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.” Psalm 119:67, 71

Preventive – to keep us from sin.

“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh.” II Corinthians 12:7

Instructive – to teach us or show us something that will help us to grow.
“My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you.” Job 42:5

III. God disciplines us for our good. Hebrews 12:9-10
He disciplines us “so that we might share in his holiness.”

The results of an absent or abusive father can have long term impact.
A father’s love and approval are so important. Our discipline must be done in love.
Without it, our children will grow up lacking the self-discipline they will need to be successful as adults.
If we submitted to and respected our earthly fathers for their loving discipline, how much more should we submit to God, whose discipline is perfect?

IV. The fruit of discipline. Hebrews 12:11
It produces “a harvest of righteousness and peace.”

Discipline is not pleasant at the time.
Trials and suffering deepen our roots and strengthen our faith.

“I have never heard anyone say, ‘The really deep lessons of life have come through times of ease and comfort.’ But I have heard many strong saints say, ‘Every significant advance I have made in grasping the depth of God’s love and growing deep with him has come through suffering.’” John Piper, Desiring God

When we hold on to God and trust him even in our trials, we are a testimony to the goodness of God and the preciousness of Christ.

Conclusion

What are the trials you are facing in your life, your marriage and your family?

Remember:

- God loves you.
- God’s discipline is corrective, preventive and instructive.
- God’s discipline is for our good – to make us holy.
- The fruit of his discipline is righteousness and peace.