

Am I Being Punished?

*"My child do not ignore the Lord's discipline,
nor lose heart when I rebuke you."*

Hebrews 12:5-6

Many suffering Christians struggle with the mistaken notion that their pain is the result of God punishing them. So many wonderful followers of Jesus seek to know what they have done wrong to merit such difficulties in life. They hope to relieve the suffering by correcting some sin in their lives.

As Christians we cannot be punished by God at any time during our journey through life. If we have turned to Jesus and embraced Him as our Saviour, then we need to understand that all of the punishment due to our sins was laid on Jesus.

Jesus took all of the just wrath of God for our sins and we are now free. So when the believer in Jesus suffers in this life it cannot be payment for our sins.

Punishment for sin is only directed to those who refuse to bow before a holy God. Punishment for Christians is all directed to Jesus.

The question naturally arises then, "If Jesus has taken all of the punishment for His people's sins then why do fine, godly Christians still suffer in this life?" One answer lies in the verse for today. As a loving parent the Lord will at times rebuke a child of His who has wandered away from Him.

Our Creator requires first place in our hearts and when we choose to love someone or something more than Him, that is the time He gently corrects us. The correction is escalated until we return to Him (1 Corinthians 11:23-32). If a believer in Jesus is afflicted then they should consult with their spiritual advisor, a godly and experienced Christian, or their pastor to help them discover if the reason for their sorrow is because God is drawing them back to Himself.

It also seems evident, from some biblical stories, that the Lord allows sorrow to come our way for reasons

that He does not explain. This certainly was the case with Job. There is a clear witness by God of Job's fine, godly walk (Job 1:6-8; 2:3). Then, as you search through the entire book of Job, you cannot find an explanation by God for allowing Job's misery.

Here is where many believers struggle. God gives them the ability to think and to analyse situations in life and we struggle when we cannot draw any conclusions from our search for answers. When we ask, "Why?" we expect answers. Yet, for reasons only known to God, He does not always give us the answers we seek in times of sorrow. It is at that point faith must rise and confess that God is just, sovereign, and loving in a situation where the opposite seems to be the case.

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