

Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

-A study through D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sermon series-

Chapter 18 - In God's Gymnasium

Lloyd-Jones is going to continue to look at Hebrews 12. He understood the _____ of God to be a major reason for spiritual depression so he gives another sermon to this topic to help us understand to greater depths the purpose of the Lord's dealings with us.

"As I understand the argument of this man in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews we can put it like this: That chastisement, even chastisement by God, does not work in us automatically. The mere fact that we are chastised does not mean that, of necessity, we are going to benefit by it. The writer's argument is that it is only as we understand this teaching concerning chastisement, and apply it to ourselves properly and truly, that we shall derive any benefit from it."

Christians must think and consider why things are happening to them as they are. One of the reasons for the difficult circumstance in our lives could be the chastisement of the Lord. We as children of God must respond rightly to His fatherly chastisement. There are three wrong ways that we can respond to trials and if we respond in any of these 3 ways the chastisement of the Lord will not _____ us at all.

-Wrong response 1-To "regard _____ the discipline of the Lord"-12:5a

Stoicism is not the proper response to the chastisement of the Lord. It is not godly to act as though the chastisement of the Lord doesn't _____ you.

"That is the first wrong way of regarding chastisement, to regard it loosely, to pay no attention to it, to shake it off as something light, and not to take it very seriously - putting on a bold front, as it were, and not allowing it to affect us at all."

-Wrong response 2-To "be _____ when reproved by Him"-12:5b

While acting like nothing bothers you is not right. It is also not right to respond to the chastisement of the Lord by throwing up your hands and quitting. We must not _____ when we are rebuked by the Lord.

"This, of course, is a quotation from the Old Testament, from the Book of Proverbs, and it refers to the danger of being discouraged by chastisement, the danger of fainting under it, the danger of giving up and giving in, the danger of feeling hopeless. We are all familiar with this."

-Wrong response 3- To let "a root of _____" spring us-12:15

The chastisement of God can lead some to get angry and bitter at the Lord and bitter at life in general. They feel that He has been too _____ and not fair to them and they begin to view Him and all of their life through the lens of bitterness.

"Some people react to the trials and troubles and chastisements of life by becoming bitter. I know nothing that is so sad in life, certainly there is nothing sadder in my life and work and experience as a minister of God, than to watch the effects of trials and troubles upon the lives of some people. I have known people who, before misfortunes befell them, seemed to be very nice and friendly, but I have observed that when these things happen they become bitter, self-centered, difficult...they turn in on themselves and they feel that the whole world is against them. You cannot help them, the bitterness enters their souls, it appears in their faces and in their very appearance."

"These things that happen to us in life test us, they test us to the very depths and they show whether we are truly children of God or not. Those who are not children of God are generally made bitter by

misfortunes. Sometimes, temporarily, even the children of God may be, and they need to be warned against this particular reaction to chastisement and trouble-against a root of bitterness springing up.”

-Remember you are a son of God and we must think about things as sons and not as _____-12:5

We must strive to respond to the chastisement of the Lord with Christian _____.

“The first thing he tells us is that we must learn to behave as sons and not as infants...There was never a babe or an infant that did not misunderstand chastisement. When we are children we always think we are being dealt with harshly, that it is most unfair of our parents and that we do not deserve it...His exhortation is: ‘Pull yourself together, do not behave as a child’ ...Stop fainting, stop whimpering and crying, stop acting like a child and sulking.”

-Remember the word of exhortation (the _____)-12:5

We must have Scripture guide our thinking. When thinking about the Lord and our life our thoughts must be led by Scripture because our natural thoughts of God and His ways will always be _____.

“As Christians we are to take everything and put it immediately into the context of the Bible...In a sense that is the one great difference between the non-Christian and the Christian. When everything goes wrong in the life of the non-Christian what has he to fall back upon? He has nothing but worldly wisdom and the way in which the world reacts, and that does not help. The Christian, however, is in an entirely different position. He has the Bible, and he should at once take any circumstance and put it right into this context.”

“What foolish creatures we are. How often are we guilty of acting as the world does and not as Christians at all. Let us remember that we are men, that we are sons of God, that we have God’s Word. Put the thing whatever it may be, into the context of God’s Word.”

-Let the _____ of Scripture control your thinking-12:5, 11

The Scriptures are not just sentimental words that make us feel better. The Scriptures reason with us. We must use our minds and be _____ when we read the Scriptures. We must understand what God is doing to us in chastisement-He is taking us into the spiritual gymnasium.

“There is nothing that I so dislike and abominate as a sentimental way of reading the Scripture...We can never bring too much intelligence to our reading of them, they are not merely meant to give general comfort and soothing - follow the argument; let them reason it out with you.”

“We are told that the very root of this word gymnasium is a word which signifies ‘being stripped naked’ ...He has stripped you, He is examining you, He knows exactly what you need. Now all you have to do is to submit to Him and do exactly what He tells you. Listen to the Instructor, go through the exercises, and if you do so it will give you ‘the peaceable fruit of righteousness.’”

We must _____ ourselves to see if there is some sin in us that needs to be thrown off and if so we must confess that unto the Lord. After confessing our sin unto the Lord, we must then press on in the way of _____. It is not enough just to put off sin but we must strive to put on holiness.

“Here is a man who tells us to yearn after holiness with all our might until we have it, to follow after it, pursue it, to hunt after it-peace and holiness, peace with other people, yes, and all and everything that we can do to be holy like God.”