Dear Open Door,

When I was in high school I went through some pretty heavy discipline. Everyday for around 3 hours I would run the stadium steps, lift weights, run wind sprints, do suicides and fourth quarter drills till I was exhausted. I hated it - and yet I loved being able to play into the 3<sup>rd</sup> overtime during a game and not be tired. Our coach was a man who believed in ultimate value of DISCIPLINE - and he was serious about it. And anyone who was NOT serious about the discipline necessary to play ball for him did not make the team. As I was reading in Hebrews 12 the thought that God brings His DISCIPLINE into the lives of His children came through clearly.

**Hebrews 12:5-7** (NET) And have you forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons? "My son, do not scorn the Lord's DISCIPLINE or give up when He CORRECTS you. [6] "For the Lord DISCIPLINES the one he loves and CHASTISES every son he accepts." [7] Endure your SUFFERING as DISCIPLINE; God is treating you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not DISCIPLINE?

I think that in the past I have interpreted these verses through the eyes of a child who has been disobedient and is suffering punishment. Certainly punishment for wrong doing can be part of God's discipline; the word CORRECT means to rebuke and CHASTISE (vs. 6) means to punish. But the word DISCIPLINE can also mean to nurture, correct and instruct. The hard part is that the FORM the Discipline takes many times is the SUFFERING (vs. 7) that we go through.

## Contrasting Parents and God, the writer to the Hebrews says...

**Hebrews 12:10-11** (NET) ...they DISCIPLINED us for a little while as seemed good to them, but He does so for OUR BENEFIT, that we may share His holiness. [11] Now ALL DISCIPLINE seems painful at the time, not joyful. But later it PRODUCES the fruit of peace and righteousness for those TRAINED by it.

Good parents do their best to discipline their children but God like the perfect parent - OR - the masterful coach brings DISCIPLINE into our lives using it to TRAIN us SO THAT we will have a harvest of godliness. Once I started seeing the things God brought into my life from that perspective - I was much more willing to see them and embrace them as for MY good. The discipline my coach force on me trained me so that I could play at full strength all the way to the end of the game. God TRAINS us through the discipline of hard and painful things SO THAT we will be able to FINISH the race which He has placed before us. (Heb. 12.1-2)

**PRAYER:** Lord God, please help me to remember that You are doing all things in my life for my benefit and good. Lord, I long to finish each day well - in a way that really does honor You. Help me to see the hard things that come along as part of your discipline in MY LIFE to strengthen me and encourage me. Thank You.

Pastor Mark Kieft