Dear Open Door Family,

Thanks so much for your prayers for Tascha and Kathryn and myself as we traveled to Quito, Ecuador for the International Teams Regional Conference. It was a long trip, but a good one. While there I had the privilege of sharing six times with missionaries from IT who came from all over South America. One of the benefits was that we were able to spend time with Woody and Sue Roland who were our co-workers in La Paz, Bolivia as well as David and Toti Quiroga who were among the first people we had a share in discipling.

At one point in the conversation we talked about the hard and difficult things in the life that missionaries and people in full time ministry go through. We discussed the fact that everything has a purpose in God's plan. Sometimes God's discipline is to correct something wrong; at other times the purpose is to shape us and make us more like Jesus. The honest truth is that none of us enjoys suffering or hardship but we can learn to accept it from God's hand when we understand that it is for our good. Let's look at these verses together.

Hebrews 12:7-11 (NIV) Endure <u>hardship</u> AS DISCIPLINE; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?... [10] ...God disciplines us for our good, <u>that we may share</u> in HIS HOLINESS. [11] No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:7 (HCS) Endure [suffering] AS DISCIPLINE...

We would think it negligent for a parent to allow their toddler to touch a hot stove because they did not want to go through the hassle of discipline and setting boundaries. To do so because they did not want to have to say NO to their child is a misguided sense of love. Common sense and the scriptures teach us that the younger a child is the more supervision and discipline is necessary for them to grow up and mature. When we go through hard things Heb. 12:7 says accept it, persevere in it, because it is God's discipline in our lives. God as our loving, perfect, heavenly Father brings only those things into our lives that will be good for us. His discipline may indeed be painful suffering, or serious hardship, but it comes into our lives from His good and loving hand. It is always for our good and brings a harvest of righteousness and peace.

"We may respond to discipline in several ways: 1- we can accept it with resignation; 2- we can accept it with self-pity, thinking we really don't deserve it; 3- we can be angry and resentful toward God; or 4- we can accept it gratefully, as the appropriate response we owe a loving Father." Life Application Study Bible.

PRAYER: Lord, God thank you that ALL that you bring into my life is ALWAYS for my good. You are in control of all things and You have a good purpose. Lord, I long to see the harvest of righteousness and peace that Your discipline brings into my life. Please help me to submit to Your hand as You do Your work in my life. Thank You!

Pastor Mark Kieft
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