

Gain Hebrews 12:11a: On the One Hand—Discipline

Just as with Hebrews 12:10, Hebrews 12:11 uses the grammatical construction which compares two circumstances with the formula *men + de*, translated “*on the one hand,*” and “*on the other hand.*”

In Hebrews 12:10, on the one hand, our parents, while we were children, disciplined us according to what seemed best to them. On the other hand, God disciplines us for the purpose of our profit so that we might receive as dividends, a share of His character.

Now in Hebrews 12:11 another comparison is going to be made. On the one hand, discipline at the time it is being administered seems to be a time of sorrow but on the other hand, it pays back with interest the benefits of righteousness to those who respond to it.

Let’s break it down grammatically in order to get a corrected translation. The verse begins with the particle: *men* - “*On the one hand . . .*” This is followed by the adjective: *pas* - “*all,*” + the noun: *paideia* - “*discipline*”; “*One the one hand, all discipline*” Then comes the prepositional phrase: *pros + pareimi* - “*while in the process of being applied*” Next comes the verb: *dokeo* - “*appears,*” or “*seems.*” This indicates subjective analysis by the recipient.

Link this up with the negative *ou*, and you get the following translation: “*One the one hand, all discipline, while being applied, seems not*”

dokew dokeo:

present - Customary; indicates what may reasonably be expected to occur. When you are under divine discipline you can expect to be unhappy, uncomfortable, and miserable.

active - All divine discipline produces this kind of discomfort.

indicative - Declarative; reality of unpleasantness, discomfort, and misery while under discipline. This is followed by another verb, the present active infinitive of:

eimi - “*to be*”

Seems not to be what? *chara* - “*an occasion for happiness.*”

At the time a person is being disciplined by his parents or is the recipient of divine discipline from God, it does not seem to be an occasion for happiness. In fact, it is an occasion for pain and suffering, misery and discomfort, unpleasantness and sorrow. It would not achieve its intended purpose unless these things were true. The primary purpose of discipline is to change the status quo.

In sports, an athlete may have natural talent and abilities. But unless he learns to control, to organize, and to manage those skills, he will never be able to become a winner. An outfielder may naturally know how to catch a baseball but he has to be taught how to discern where the ball is going before it is hit, the best position to be in when it's caught, and what to do with it when he does. He may have a very strong and accurate arm but he has to be taught who to throw it to and why. Every position on the field has nuances which must be learned in order for the team to ever have a chance at a winning season, much less a championship. When a player refuses to follow the instructions of the coach, then he becomes a detriment to the team and limits his own advance. The coach may seek to break down this negative attitude by having the player run laps, sit ups, wind sprints. He may bench the player or suspend him from the team. It all seems unpleasant at the time it is being applied, but if the player responds to the discipline and repents—changes his minds about the coach's instructions—then he may use his talents to the best possible advantage for himself and for his teammates. Thus, the

coach's discipline has produced profits and dividends: happiness at the prospect of improved performance, winning records, and championship trophies being among them.

Such is the case with the believer in Jesus Christ. He is imputed phenomenal divine operating assets at the moment he joins God's team. These assets are designed to enable the believer to advance to unimaginable levels of happiness and prosperity. The spiritual equivalents of winning seasons and championships are available. All that is required is a positive ear to the heavenly Coach's instructions as they are communicated through His assistants called pastor-teachers and the daily application of these skills to the game of life.

When an individual is selected at physical birth, God's desire is that the person would become a member of His royal family. If that should occur, then God's love motivates Him to lead that person to the highest and the best that He has to offer, namely, escrow blessings in time and eternity. As with any good coach, God is going to offer all the training that the new believer will willingly accept. God's objective is to build a winner. If His child is rebellious to His leadership, then God will seek to goad him into compliance. This takes on the aspects of divine discipline.

The attendant pain and suffering is not administered for the sake of revenge, vindictiveness, or retribution but out of an attempt to inspire the believer to utilize his portfolio of assets to his own best advantage. If compliance follows then God's justice provides great blessings and prosperity. If not, then the discipline increases to the point that the child is kicked off the team by means of the sin unto death.

Whether with a raw, undeveloped athlete or with a new or reversionistic believer, the purpose of discipline is to change the status quo. The discomfort of discipline is what makes it an effective method of teaching truth directly to the individual.

Hebrews 12:11 - One the one hand, all discipline, while being applied, seems not to be an occasion for happiness ...

What is seems to be instead is introduced by the strong adversative conjunction: *alla* - "but." Sets us a strong contrast between happiness and: *lupe* - "an occasion for sorrow."

There is no way that properly administered discipline can be regarded by the recipient as being pleasant. God's intent is for the discipline to be effective, that is, stimulate a change of mind about current thought patterns so that reversion recovery might begin.

People are not prone to regard a lifestyle which presents no adversities or problems to be one that needs changing. Certain believers may hope to establish or maintain such a lifestyle but they are bucking the Tiger and the odds are all on the House.

God imposes goads whose purpose is to be effective at mind changing. In order to accomplish that objective, the discipline will cause great pain and suffering, or, according to Hebrews 12:11, sorrow instead of happiness.