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THE 7 LETTERS | LAODICEA PART 2

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."
Revelation 3:19-20

When we read the word "discipline" ... we are inclined to think "punishment."

Punishment - the infliction or imposition of a penalty as retribution for an offense.

Discipline – learning that molds character and enforces correct behavior. Instruction or training.

Punishment is aimed at condemning. Discipline is aimed at correcting.

Punishment is for the benefit of the offended. Discipline is for the benefit of the offender.

Punishment is focused on past wrongs. Discipline is focused on future potential.

Punishment flows from anger. Discipline flows from patience.

Punishment is about making a situation right. Discipline is about helping a person get right.

Punishment produces guilt, shame, bitterness, resentment, and regret. Discipline produces love, gratitude, peace, steadfastness and joy.

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"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."
Isaiah 55:8-9

"And by that will (Jesus' doing the will of God by dying on the cross) we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin."
Hebrews 10:10,14,18

God does not punish his children. He disciplines His children.

"In this all-out match against sin, others have suffered far worse than you, to say nothing of what Jesus went through—all that bloodshed! So don't feel sorry for yourselves. Or have you forgotten how good parents treat children, and that God regards you as his children? My dear child, don't shrug off God's discipline, but don't be crushed by it either. It's the child he loves that he disciplines; the child he embraces, he also corrects. God is educating you; that's why you must never drop out. He's treating you as dear children. This trouble you're in isn't punishment; it's training, the normal experience of children. Only irresponsible parents leave children to fend for themselves. Would you prefer an irresponsible God? We respect our own parents for training and not spoiling us, so why not embrace God's training so we can truly live? While we were children, our parents did what seemed best to them. But God is doing what is best for us, training us to live God's holy best. At the time, discipline isn't much fun. It always feels like it's going against the grain. Later, of course, it pays off big-time, for it's the well-trained who find themselves mature in their relationship with God. "
Hebrews 12:4-11

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God's discipline is evidence of HIs gracious love for His children.

1. Confusing discipline as punishment invites shame into our lives.
2. Confusing discipline as punishment limits our freedom.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."
Romans 8:1-2

3. Confusing discipline as punishment distorts our image of God.

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."
Galatians 5:1

Learning to separate discipline from punishment does not eliminate suffering from our experience.

Learning to separate discipline from punishment should cause us to examine ourselves when we face suffering of any kind.

"I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!"
Psalm 119:32

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"But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt;"
Jude 1:17-22

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