

**Disciplined Children — Hebrews 12: 3-13**  
**Basil Howlett - Carey Baptist Church – 13 January 2008**

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Some of these Hebrew Christians were in danger of dropping out of the Christian race so, as we saw last week, the writer of this letter urges them and us to keep on running. He gives two incentives to do so.

- Consider what Jesus endured as he ran this race (v3).
- Remember you haven't yet put everything you've got into this race. (4).

In verse 5, he then gives one of the main reasons why the Hebrews were so dejected and tempted to give up. They had forgotten a very important word of Scripture, namely Proverbs 3:11-12, which speaks about God disciplining his children.

**A. What is discipline?** If a child doesn't listen to father when he speaks, then he has to take sterner action. Sadly, these days, discipline is ignored and some children are allowed to go on unchecked. But the good father disciplines his child, in order to correct and train them to be a worthy citizen. God disciplines His children like that (v6, Prov 3:12).

**B. How does God discipline His children?**

- By means of financial loss (Job 1:13-17).
- Or bitter disappointment (2 Corinthians 12:8).
- Sickness (1 Corinthians 11:30).
- Times of spiritual darkness when God seems distant (Ps 42:9, Song of Songs 5:6).
- Through persecution and opposition, as with these Hebrews.

**C. Why does God discipline us?** The devil tries to tell us it's because God is a tyrant, who doesn't really love us, or because we're not really Christians, but this passage tells us:

- He disciplines us because we are his dearly loved children (Heb 12:6-7, Rev 3:19). If we know nothing of God's discipline there's a big query whether we are true children (v8).
- He does it for our good (v10) – always! Earthly fathers some times make mistakes but God never does.
- To make us more holy. Negatively, to take away spiritual weeds; positively, to develop a harvest of righteousness and peace.

**D. How should we react to God's discipline?**

- Don't make light of it (verse 5).
- Don't lose heart and give up (verse 5).
- Humbly submit to God (verse 9).
- Be serious about training (verse 12, Isaiah 35:3).
- Get back on track (verse 13, Proverbs 4:26). If you try to run 'off track' 'in the rough' you will be disabled.