

### *Are consequences of sin a form of God's discipline?*

Natural consequences follow an action. For example: a child is burned when he touches a hot stove, a woman gets emphysema after years of smoking or a man gets a venereal disease from committing fornication. God does not remove natural consequences.

Christians are led by the spirit of God (Ro 8:14).

The apostle John wrote:

Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because His seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God. This is how God's children—and the Devil's children—are made evident. 1 Jn 3:8–10, HCSB

The Christian does not live habitually in sin.

John said, "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not sin, but the One who is born of God keeps him (1 Jn 5:18)."

When the believer does not act as he ought, the Father may see fit to correct him. He chastens his own (He 12:6-7) not the devil's children (Jn 8:44).

He does this because he is concerned that his followers are made more into his likeness (2 Co 3:18). God is holy (Ps 16:10, Is 11:4, 5) and he wants his children--elected (Ro 8:29) and called (1 Thess 4:7)—to be holy, as well.

He lovingly (2 Cor. 2:6–8) and gently (Gal. 6:1) disciplines believers to: maintain a sound faith (Tt 1:13), correct disorder (2 Thess. 3:6–15) and remove the wicked (1 Cor. 5:3–5, 13).<sup>1</sup>

God, the Father is the disciplinarian (He 12:9-10). Readers of scripture should be reminded of Solomon's words—an exhortation from God: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth (Pr 3:11–12)."

Believers are urged: "Don't ignore it when the Lord disciplines you (12:5b)," and "Don't be discouraged when he corrects you (12:5c)." Rather, "Remember that God is treating you as his own children (12:7a)." Chastening proves that one is His child (12:6b) and that he is loved (12:6a).

Chastening produces righteousness (12:11b) and peace (12:11a). Believers will be renewed (12:12-13).

Whereas discipline is for the believer; wrath is for the unbeliever and make-believer (1 Thess 5:9).<sup>2</sup> Wrath abides on unregenerate men (Jn 3:7).

Satan's men seem to prosper at all times (Ps 10:5). The prophet Jeremiah lamented, "Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously (Je 12:1)?" But, in reality no

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). Nelson's quick reference topical Bible index (p. 179). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Caused by: apostasy (2 Chr. 34:24, 25), sympathy with evil (Lev. 10:1–6), unfaithfulness (Josh. 22:20), provocations (2 Kin. 23:26), fellowship with evil (2 Chr. 19:2), mockery (2 Chr. 36:16), idolatry (Ps. 78:58, 59), intermarriage (Ezra 10:10–14), profaning the Sabbath (Neh. 13:18), speaking against God (Ps. 78:19–21). Ibid, p. 662.

one gets by with sin (Ga 6:7). Those who are disobedient (Rom. 2:8, 9) and reject the gospel of Jesus Christ go to the Lake of Fire (Mt 10:15).