



## Secrets of the Vine

### *Breaking Through to Abundance*

#### Session 2- Eternal Discipline

Recommended Reading: Chapters 3-4

### Introduction

Now that you know that you've been created and chosen for an incredibly fruitful life, a life that produces results that will count for eternity. And you've decided that's the life you deeply desire. But what if there's no fruit in your life to speak of right now? What if you look back over the last weeks or even years of your life and still don't find much fruitfulness for God?

There's encouraging news for you! As you'll discover this week, Jesus cares so much about your fruitfulness that He will intervene to help you reach for a meaningful and productive life. In fact, He's actively at work behind the scenes of your life *right now* to bring you to abundant fruitfulness.

How does God respond when our lives are unproductive? John 15:2. *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away."*

A more precise translation of the Greek verb *airo*- here rendered "takes away"- would be "take up" or "lift up." *Airo* is the same word Jesus used when He told the lame man, "Take up your bed, and go to your house" (Matthew 9:6; see also Matthew 14:20; 16:24). In the vineyard, a grape branch does not bear fruit when it becomes diseased and barren and falls into the dirt. But the branch is too valuable to cut off. So a vinedresser "takes up" the branch, cleans it off, and refastens it to the trellis. Soon it's thriving again.

In a similar fashion, when a Christian becomes unproductive because of sin, God acts to lift him up and clean him off. The Bible calls this process discipline, which is described in the first secret of the vine: When we choose to waste our lives in sin, God intervenes through the process of discipline to try to convince us to stop sinning and begin bearing fruit again.

The word *discipline* doesn't mean punishment. Instead, it describes how God the Father lovingly intervenes when we stray into trouble. Why? So we can thrive like we were created to!

-Bruce Wilkinson

### Let's Talk About It

- 1) What is your gut-reaction to the word discipline?
- 2) What was interesting or caught your attention in Warren Wiersbe's reflection on John 15:2?
- 3) Describe a time when being disciplined was helpful to you?



# KNOW

## Understanding God’s Motives in Discipline

The goal of God’s discipline of the believer is always for a person’s good. Read Hebrews 12:1-11. What do we learn about God’s methods and motives in the disciplining process?

- a. *He disciplines us because He \_\_\_\_\_ us (v.6).*
- b. *He disciplines us as our Father because we are His \_\_\_\_\_ (v.7).*
- c. *He doesn’t discipline just some children but \_\_\_\_\_ child (vv.6-7).*
- d. *At the time, His discipline doesn’t feel good; it feels \_\_\_\_\_ (v.11).*
- e. *However, the purpose of His discipline is always for our \_\_\_\_\_ (v.10).*
- f. *In fact, if we allow God to train us, the benefit is “eternal”: We become partakers of His \_\_\_\_\_ (v.10) and receive the peaceable fruit of \_\_\_\_\_ (v.11).*

## Two Common Misconceptions

- 1) Every bad thing that happens to us is God’s discipline.
- 2) God’s discipline is like many dysfunctional, controlling, impatient parents.

## Let’s Talk About It

- 1) How would you compare the parental discipline you received growing up to what you’re learning about God’s discipline?
- 2) Why is it important to make note of the two misconceptions? What happens if these misconceptions are accepted as truth?

## What God Does When He Disciplines

As parents understand, there’s a big difference in how you discipline a child who doesn’t make his bed and a child who repeatedly steals. Restorative discipline is always in proportion to the seriousness of the sin. Jesus taught the principle of escalating discipline in human relationships in Matthew 18:15-17. God disciplines us in the same way. In Hebrews 12, we find three levels of discipline.

- 1. Rebuke (v.5)-** A rebuke is a verbal warning.
- 2. Chasten (v.6)-** This word is used broadly in Scripture to describe the process of child-rearing, but it is often focused specifically on correction. In this text, since chasten is described as “painful” (v.11), it indicates more intensive discipline than rebuke.
- 3. Scourge (v.6)-** This just sounds bad. Scourging causes extreme physical pain. The same word is used to describe how soldiers whipped Jesus before His crucifixion.

## Comparing the Levels of Discipline

Issue	Level 1: Rebuke	Level 2: Chasten	Level 3: Scourge
Intensity	Light	Medium	Severe
God Gets Our Attention	Verbal	Emotional	Physical
We Feel	Annoyance	Anguish	Agony
Our Spiritual State	Conviction	In Conflict	In Crisis



## Bringing It Home

### An Example of Life-Giving Response

Josiah was a good king who initiated many reforms. During his reign, temple workers discovered a copy of the Book of the Law (a part of the first five books of the Bible). When a reading showed the king how far God’s people had strayed, Josiah immediately repented.

#### Read 2 Kings 22:1-23:3

1. What tool did God use to reveal His impending discipline on the nation? (See 22:11, 19)
2. Clearly, Josiah’s personal repentance was deeply felt (22:18-19). Have you ever responded to God’s discipline with a similar intensity of emotion? What did you learn from that turning point?
3. Josiah’s repentance resulted in a historic spiritual turnaround for the nation (chapter 23). Have you discovered in your own life that when you genuinely repented of sin, God gave you power to bear fruit right away? If so, what happened?

### Let’s Talk About It

- 1) How important to the corrective process is the response of the one who is being disciplined?
- 2) How does learning about God’s discipline impact the way you discipline your children or others around you? How does it impact the way you receive discipline from God and others?
- 3) Is there something in your life that needs to be “taken up” or simply taken out of your life? What can you do to respond positively to God’s discipline, or simply discipline yourself?



## Barriers and Breakthroughs

“Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser.”- Proverbs 9:8-9

We never have to be enslaved by sin, repeating the same destructive patterns (Romans 6:11-12). But at times, our human thinking can hold us hostage to lies. Choose the false beliefs that seem to be keeping you from making a change today. Let the Bible help you discover a new breakthrough truth, and write it down in your own words.

### Old Obstacles. New Breakthrough Beliefs

- THE “I CAN OUTLAST GOD” STRATEGY. *You believe that God will eventually give up and leave you alone.* Psalm 139:7-12; Luke 15:1-7.
- THE “IF YOU CAN’T BEAT ‘EM, JOIN ‘EM” DEFENSE. *You believe that you can’t give up your sin. You’ve tried many times; why try again?* Romans 6:14,16,18; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; 2 Peter 2:9
- THE “BIG, MEAN GOD” ASSUMPTION. *You believe that God is wrong to cause you pain no matter what you’ve done.* Job 5:17-18; Psalm 145:8-9; Ezekiel 33:11; Hebrews 12:5-17.
- THE “NO FIRE NOW MEANS NO FIRE LATER” GAMBLE. *You believe that if God doesn’t discipline you immediately when you sin, He won’t do anything later either.* Romans 2:4-11; 1 Cor. 11:31-32; 2 Peter 3:1-9.

My New Breakthrough Belief:

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## **My New Start in a Life of Repentance**

We've spent a week talking about serious matters. I understand if you arrive on this page feeling a little shaken. But the very fact that you've had the courage to face these truths says that you want your life to honor God and bear fruit for His kingdom.

If you're ready, tell God in writing that you want to move forward into fruitfulness in your life. Tell Him the practical steps you'll take to respond to His will. Sign your statement, and lift up the following prayer of commitment.

### **My new commitment to responding to God's discipline:**

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***My Prayer to Respond to God's Discipline***

*Heavenly Father,*

*I understand that sin has muddied my life*

*And kept me from producing fruit of lasting value for You.*

*I see that You have firmly and lovingly disciplined me*

*To bring me back to wholeness and abundance.*

*Please forgive me for my foolish rebellion.*

*I repent of my sin, Lord, and I choose again to bear fruit for You.*

*From now on, I will endeavor to respond to Your discipline*

*Quickly because I trust in Your goodness.*

*Teach me to obey, Lord.*

*Fill my heart now with great anticipation for the eternal harvest*

*You will accomplish in my life. Thank You!*

*Amen.*