**Spiritual MythBuster**

**God Uses Hardship to teach us, Because Hardship is the best teacher...Or is it?**

Introduction: This phrase is something that many of us have heard both inside and outside of the church. But just because it is something that has been said and taught for years, does not mean it is biblically accurate. Some preachers and bible teacher may use the Bible to support this myth and I have heard many sermons about God being the author of hardship as a means of teaching His people.

Clarifying Question & Statement: Can God teach us after we have suffered loss or experienced hardship?

Yes

Does this mean that God uses calamity to as his most effective teacher?

**NO**

However, I endeavor today to dispel the myth that hardship is the best teacher and identify how God desires to teach His church.

What is the Origin of this Myth & Why it truly is a Myth

There are verses in scripture (especially in the Old Testament) that seem to illustrate that God is actively using hardships like hunger, sickness, poverty, heaviness(sadness) as a means to teach His people. However, if we take a closer look at what the scriptures are saying throughout both the Old and New Covenant we can get a clearer picture of how God teaches His people.

Now it is true that under the Old Covenant it is recorded that God used the curses of the law as punishment for disobedience to His Law. We can see this in verses like:

*Deuteronomy 28:15 AMP*

*“But it shall come about, if you do not listen to and obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today, then all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:*

*2 Samuel 7:14 KJVS*

*[14] I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:*

Here, the phrases rod and stripes can be interpreted as physical striking or blows.

However, us as New Covenant believers are not subject to the same punishment as those under the Old Covenant because of the finished work of Christ. With His sacrifice He took our punishment:

*Galatians 3:13-14 AMP “Christ purchased our freedom and redeemed us from the curse of the Law and its condemnation by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS [crucified] ON A TREE (cross)”— [14] in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might also come to the Gentiles, so that we would all receive [the realization of] the promise of the [Holy] Spirit through faith.*”

As we examine the scriptures, we see this truth that God’s wrath has been satisfied through the Jesus’ perfect sacrifice explained by the prophet Isaiah:

*Isaiah 53:1-5 KJVS*

*[1] Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? [2] For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. [3] He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. [4] Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [5] But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

*Isaiah 54:4-10 AMP*

*“Do not fear, for you will not be put to shame, And do not feel humiliated or ashamed, for you will not be disgraced. For you will forget the shame of your youth, And you will no longer remember the disgrace of your widowhood. [5] “For your husband is your Maker, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of the whole earth. [6] “For the LORD has called you, Like a wife who has been abandoned, grieved in spirit, And like a wife [married] in her youth when she is [later] rejected and scorned,” Says your God. [7] “For a brief moment I abandoned you, But with great compassion and mercy I will gather you [to Myself again]. [8] “In an outburst of wrath I hid My face from you for a moment, But with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” Says the LORD your Redeemer. [9] “For this is like the waters of Noah to Me, As I swore [an oath] that the waters of Noah Would not flood the earth again; In the same way I have sworn that I will not be angry with you Nor will I rebuke you. [10] “For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, Nor will My covenant of peace be shaken,” Says the LORD who has compassion on you.*

We can see here that God’s wrath or punishment is not for us today. But at this point some may be saying, isn’t there scripture in the New Testament that says God chastens those He loves. The answer is yes, specifically in Hebrews 12: 5-7. However, a closer study of these verses will show us how to properly interpret these passages of scripture.

*Hebrews 12:5-7 KJVS*

*[5] And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: [6] For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. [7] If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

The misunderstanding rests in the way we interpret the words “chasteneth” and “Scourgeth”. I have heard it taught that the chastening and scourging that are spoken of here can be interpreted as sickness, disease, calamity, or poverty.

However, the word **chasteneth** here means **tutorage that is education or training; by implication disciplinary correction: instruction, nurture (Strong’s Definition) and the whole training and education of children (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon)**

**Thus, the key words here are education & instruction.**

The word **scourgeth** here means **in the literal sense “to whip” “to beat with a lash” while figuratively it means “to lash with words”.** According to Geoffrey Bromiley’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament when scourgeth is used in Heb. 12:6 it is used in the figurative sense. The writer of Hebrews is quoting Proverbs 3:11-12 which states:

*Proverbs 3:11-12 KJVS*

*[11] My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of his correction: [12] For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*

*Deuteronomy 8:5 KJVS*

*[5] Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.*

I want us to again look at the word chasteneth, this word is often associated with beatings. As previously mentioned, the word in certain context means literally to chastise with blows, however Strong’s also says that figuratively the word chastenth means to chastise with words or to instruct. Another Study Tool entitled Brown-Driver-Briggs Bible Dictionary defines chasteneth here as:

discipline, instruct, admonish.

We can look at the context of the above verse to see how to properly interpret the word chasteneth here.

*Deuteronomy 8:6 KJVS*

*[6] Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.*

In verse 6 of Deuteronomy 8 the author is quoted as using the word therefore, thus indicating a direct connection with verse 5 and the author goes on to say “thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God”. So here we see the author referring to the commandments of the Lord thy God and commandments are communicated through the use of words. Throughout this entire chapter God’s people are being instructed to remember the commandments of the Lord

Who Is the Real Teacher of the Church? And How Does God Desire For Us Learn?

**The Holy Spirit Is the Teacher of Church and the Bible is Our Textbook**

Jesus during His earthly ministry and the Apostle Paul have given us these truths.

*John 14:26 KJVS*

*[26] But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

*2 Timothy 3:16 KJVS*

*[16] All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

**Summary**

Even though it is often true that our struggles and hardships have led to our learning, the reality is that God desires for us to learn directly from him so that we don’t have to experience the pain of having our negative circumstances teach us.

*Proverbs 4:20-23 KJVS*

*[20] My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. [21] Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. [22] For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. [23] Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

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