

## Learning to Trust

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### Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 9:27

Romans 14:17

Deuteronomy 32:6-12

Jeremiah 31:3

What a contentious word "discipline" is. When we hear a word our mind defines what it means to us, either through our own experience or through what we have been taught. Consequently, discipline is often associated with punishment. If we don't obey the rules, then we will suffer punishment, a premise that was drummed into those of us who are old enough to remember the cane and its use as the ultimate threat. And, scripture has been used as a justification for this, often gravely misused.

The very word itself should tell us that this idea of unrelenting punishment for error is somehow flawed. The root of the word is from the Latin "disciplina", to learn or to teach, from where we get the word disciple. And a disciple is one who willingly follows, learns and lives whatever it is that they have chosen to follow. Part of the instruction Jesus left for how we are to live is for us to make disciples, never under threat of punishment but certainly by living a life of discipline and obedience.

The Apostle Paul speaks of disciplining himself so that he would not find himself undone when preaching the gospel of Christ. It's clear from this that he sees that lack of discipline results in consequences that would not bring glory to God or souls into the Kingdom.

As always we are given a choice by God, to look with our eyesight or His vision. Discipline in the Kingdom of God is a joyful willingness to obey God our Father, not because we fear punishment if we don't, but because we understand and stand in awe of the purity, righteousness and holiness of God that cannot be tainted by anything that is not covered by the precious Blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

As we walk as disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to be constantly learning and practising the discipline necessary for a deepening relationship with Him and our Father God. We are told that it was in agony that, as He hung on the cross, Jesus cried out "My God, My God why have You forsaken Me". As He became sin for us His Father had to turn His face away, God cannot look upon sin. The discipline it must have taken for Jesus to go through that separation, that awful time, is so far beyond our comprehension, but He did it. What we are asked to do in comparison is so little, yet Jesus did it willingly, because He understood that this was the only way we could ever live for eternity in the circle of Love that He knew so well.

Our Bible so often describes what happens when God's warnings to His people and the world are disregarded. These consequences are frequently described as God's discipline (or "punishment" as it is often interpreted), as if God takes

delight in seeing humankind suffering. This could not be further from the truth.

In the Garden of Eden, God showed us what life could be like without the influence of sin and evil. Adam and Eve were told not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; that wording is so specific. The knowledge of good and evil produces fruit that causes those who eat it to be confronted by choices that they need to make. But, in order to make the right choices, we need to know what the ultimate end will be and without the foreknowledge of God this cannot happen.

The only discipline that God asks of us is to trust Him, to heed all the warnings in Scripture by obeying His Word. We are not promised an easy road, but we are promised the strength and joy in Him that we will need to keep walking the road that He always walks with us.

**Prayer:** Father God, thank You for giving us the precious Blood of Christ that protects and keeps us safe within You. Amen.