

The Arrows of God's Discipline

by Conrad Murrell

“O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.” (Psalm 38:1-3)

Saints are not sinners, but they sin. Sinning is not the tenor or bent of their lives. Rather it is holiness. But we yet abide in the flesh and are susceptible to being turned aside from the ways of God to the ways of depraved men.

As we grow in grace, God removes certain sins from our lives through divine chastisement. This is not punishment, but God's means of teaching and correcting His children. We suffer from His scourging rod and learn to put out of our lives those things that displease Him.

A child of God under chastisement realizes he is being rebuked by His heavenly Father. He does not ask that he not be rebuked, for that is necessary for his spiritual growth. But he asks that the rebuke be not in God's “hot displeasure,” that God will be merciful and gentle. Notice also there is no pleading of innocence, no complaining that he does not deserve what he is suffering. None of that. A Christian knows he deserves much more affliction than he gets.

There is nothing more grievous to a child of God than to experience God's heavy hand of displeasure on him. The whole man suffers, physically, psychologically and spiritually. The sensibility of God's anger will not permit rest.

The arrows of God's chastisement are aimed at, and hit a particular object. The object is sin, a particular sin. It is not the believer's only sin, but it is the sin which God wants out of his life now. It is the sin that causes us the most problem, that besets us from the race we must run, the one thing we love so much we are loathe to part with it. We know what it is. And as soon as we agree with our righteous Lord about its offensiveness and put it away, the affliction will cease and we can again rest in the love and favor of God that is merited by our Lord Jesus Christ.