

## Profits Paid From Invested Discipline

NOTE: Bible class for Tuesday, 19 December, was cancelled due to snow storm. Christmas Special, The First Christian Home, ran three lessons and was taught on Thursday, 21 December, and Sunday, 24 December, both sessions. (See: The First Christian Home - 1,2, & 3) No classes were scheduled for Tuesday, 26 December, and Thursday, 28 December 1995.

The contrast about to be presented compares the human thinking of parents, doing the best they can, with God, our heavenly Parent, who functions under perfect standards from absolute righteousness.

Although because of human limitations, parents are not perfect they nevertheless do deal with their children on standards—those standards which they have in their soul. The more successful parents are those who are able to think in terms of principle rather than emotion. Those who function under principle have moral courage to do the right thing even though emotionally they do not want to.

Parents who deal with their children under emotion either discipline in a wrong way or they don't discipline them at all. The prevailing attitudes of the day—the *Zeitgeist* of the moment—makes the duty of the thinking parent difficult since he must buck the trends of society.

A child who is neglected and grows up with an incomplete conscience and limited norms and standards, faces a lifetime of pain and suffering. His parents, whether they failed or were simply ignored, also have a lifetime of pain and suffering because of disappointment and guilt.

The most critical period in a child's life is the time between physical birth and age 12 or so. This is the period where his inculcation of standards is easiest to accomplish. Do the job right between zero and 12 and odds are the outcome will be good.

But up or down, thin or flush, parents discipline their children according to what seems best to them. But God, on the other hand, deals with us as sons and His dealings are perfect. His purpose is that we might profit from the experience—the preposition: *epi* - which is in the accusative case and, in this context, connotes purpose. It is followed by the present active participle of the verb: *sumphero* - “confer a benefit, advantage, or profit.”

**CTL Hebrews 12:10b - ... but God on the other hand, disciplines us for the purpose of our profit ...**

The intended purpose of parental as well as divine discipline is for the profit of children. While we remain in this life we are considered by God to be His children and, as a result, He deals with us as sons.

The best definition of the word *sumphero* is “profit.” Here's the English definition from: **Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “profit”:**

*Profit - The excess of returns over expenditures in a series of transactions; the ratio of profit to the amount of capital invested.*

When our human parents disciplined us, it became in effect an investment. Their discipline sought to invest a standard of behavior into our conscience in the hope that once we began to function under its guidance, we would receive a profit.

Parents therefore make a deposit into the child's conscience when they discipline him. If the child accepts the principle and functions under it, he will be benefited to great advantage throughout his entire life.

Therefore, parental chastisement is an investment which has as its purpose the payout of continuing dividends to the child. Likewise, God makes an investment in our conscience by means of divine discipline.

Between our salvation and our physical death, God looks on us as children whose consciences are flawed and need constant improvement. The discipline is designed for our profit. The investment returns its first dividend when, as a result of responding to divine imperatives, the believer makes a good decision from a position of strength. The profit from this decision is that future options are broadened.

What occurs next is the development of an expanding stream of conscience, an enlarged set of norms and standards, and a righteous scale of values. These produce dividends every time they are applied in problem-solving, decision making, and spiritual growth.

Ultimately, these dividends culminate in the payout of a huge escrow account for the believer's "retirement plan" in time. The final profit is the eternal escrow conveyed to the believer at the Nike Award Ceremonies before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

On our arrival in heaven, we are considered mature adults and therefore discipline is no longer necessary. All of these profits are the intended purpose of both parental and divine discipline.