

## DAY 36 TUESDAY

### HEBREWS 12:4-11 GOD CARES TOO MUCH

<sup>4</sup> *In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.* <sup>5</sup> *And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, <sup>6</sup> because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”*

<sup>7</sup> *Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? <sup>8</sup> If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. <sup>9</sup> Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! <sup>10</sup> Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

In the 1973 movie, “Paper Chase,” the arena of dramatic conflict is the lecture hall of the legendary Harvard Law School Contracts professor, Charles Kingsfield. Mr. Hart, the student protagonist, among other things, initially tries to avoid being “shrouded” by Kingsfield. When a student underachieved in Kingsfield’s class, he was rewarded by being ceremonially shrouded, which meant that he no longer existed in the mind of the professor. There was no worse fate when the one doing the shrouding has absolute power over your future. As the movie progressed, it became obvious that the professor was a cold and unfeeling disciplinarian, who didn’t care enough about his students to even bother with their names. They were merely the raw material for the exercise of his pedagogical prowess.

The reviews of the movie never mention the “shrouding,” but for over 35 years it has been the image that has stuck in my mind. What could be worse than being so absolutely ignored that for all intents and purposes you don’t even exist? God is absolutely just, but he is also absolute love. He will not, and indeed cannot because of his nature, write us off. Not only do our sins grieve him, but he also will do whatever it takes to help us recognize the error of our ways and turn back to him in obedience. That is the purpose of loving discipline. Like the shepherd’s rod, God’s discipline is the tool that reorients the direction of his wayward sheep. If we are going to be distracted by every rabbit trail along the path of the Christian life, we need to remember to be thankful for all the times we are “bumped” back onto the main path. And since being bumped is not a pleasant experience, perhaps we should endeavor to do as the Shepherd tells us in order to avoid the experience.

**Father, help me to discern the times that you are disciplining me so that I can be aware of my need to repent and return to the path of your plan for the world and my place in that plan. Thank you for loving me enough to pay attention to what I am doing and caring enough to correct me. Amen.**