

Tools of Chastening
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Open your Bible to Hebrews 12:3-13: *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 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: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

Father, bless the reading of Thy Word to our hearts. Help us to fear Thee more tonight in a godly fear. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Now, I was afraid of my daddy. I was not terror stricken, but I assure you that I was afraid of him. My daddy loved me, but my daddy dealt with me. He never threatened. It was all over before I knew it. I had to watch the clouds if I wanted any warning. All of a sudden, the lightening flashed; the thunder rolled; and there I was. I had had it. He did not kill me a dozen times. He just did it once, and I knew it. I am afraid of God. I fear God. I do not want to displease God. God chastens His children. Chasten means *to instruct*. I used to get a whipping, and he would say, "That'll learn ya." It was instruction. It was not always a whipping. It was child training. I want to talk tonight on, "The Tools of Chastening." This is a continuation from last Sunday night's message on this matter, "The Tools of Chastening." God does chasten. If you are without chastening, you do not belong to the Lord. You are a bastard. You are illegitimate and not sons. Now, God can chasten us in many ways. He does chasten us. I will give you seven or eight ways that He chastens us.

God chastens, child trains, by allowing the chickens to come home to roost in the backslider's heart. I read two passages of Scripture concerning that. One in the book of Jeremiah 2:19: *Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.* Proverbs 14:14: *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways:* Listen very carefully as I read a sermon by Charles Spurgeon on the *Man's Conduct Comes Home to Him*. I want to read this to you. This frightens me. Listen to it. *Backsliders become full of their own ways. It is dangerous to tell them of their faults, for they will not accept your rebuke. Even so, the backslider must eat of the fruit of his own ways. A considerable time elapses before you can eat bread of your own growing. The ground must be plowed and sewn. The wheat has to come up to be ripened and to be reaped and threshed and ground in the mill. The flour must be kneaded and baked in the oven, but the bread comes to the table and is eaten at last. Galatians 6:7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* [Now, look at the backslider eating of his own ways. This is frightening] *He neglects prayer, and when he tries to pray, he cannot. His powers of desire, emotion, faith, and entreaty have failed. He kneels awhile, but he cannot pray. The spirit of supplications is grieved and no longer helps his infirmities. He reaches down to his Bible. He commences to read a chapter, but he has disregarded the Word of God so long that he finds it to be more like a dead letter than a living voice, though it used to be a sweet Book before he became a backslider. The minister, too, is altered. He used to hear him with delight, but now the poor preacher has lost all his early powers, so the backslider thinks. Other people do not think so. The place is just as crowded. There are as many saints edified and sinners saved as before. But, the wondering in the heart began criticizing, and now he is entangled in the habit, and he criticizes everything but never feeds upon the Truth at all. How can it be*

otherwise? He is drinking water out of his own cistern and eating the bread of which he sowed the corn some years ago. His ways have come home to him. Now, that is frightening to me. I remember a dear brother; in fact, it was my own brother. His child lay dying, and he asked me to pray. He said, "I can't pray." That is frightening. God does deal with us. The tools of chastening are simply allowing the chickens to eat the grain that we sowed to harvest and a man to eat of his own fruit of what he has sewn. That is serious. Turn in your Bibles to Psalms 51:12. How does God chasten? He chastens by taking away our joy. David made this petition. Psalms 51:12-13: *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* David lost his joy. Turn to Psalms 32. He describes it just a little more. Psalms 32:3-4: *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* It was like the Sahara Desert in his soul. He had lost his joy. I do not read of any Psalms that David wrote when he fell into sin. There are Psalms that described the condition that he felt when he was there. David prayed: *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.* Ephesians 4:30: *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.* When we sin, the Holy Ghost of God reaches over and turns off the music. In fact, He is the music. When He becomes silent, our song is gone. One of the Psalms talks about, "How can we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?" They hung their harps upon the willows. Psalms 137:1-2: *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.* They were in Babylon because they had sinned. They put their harps up. Their song was gone. When sin comes in, it grieves the Spirit of God, and the music goes out of our lives. If there is no song, there is no joy. It is simply the silence of the Spirit of God. I can think of many instances of how God deals with our heart. He deals with it immediately. Turn to 1 Samuel 24:5. David did something, and the Scripture gives an immediate reaction from the Lord about what he did. David had an opportunity to kill King Saul. Saul was in the same cave with David. One of David's men said, "You waited to get him; now get him." David arose, and the Scripture says in the later part of verse 4: *Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.* (Saul was asleep. Watch.) Verse 5: *And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.* There was an immediate conviction. There was an immediate arresting of his intentions. There was an immediate loss of his sense of God and His presence. Suddenly, there was an immediate consciousness that he had disobeyed the Lord. I remember several years ago when I was in the business realm in Ocala, Florida. I remember this thing very vividly. When God saved me, He saved me from a lot of things. He did not save me from temper. He has surely dealt with me about it through the years, but He did not save me from it. I was waiting on a customer. The customer made a remark to me that was not necessary. On top of that, it was a woman. That was not what triggered it, but I said to that woman, "If you were not a woman, I would have hit you upside the head with this shoe stick." I am saved, but I am not acting like it. The woman walked out of the store. She did not see me go back to the bathroom, get on my knees, close the door, put my head on the commode, and cry to God for forgiveness. "Lord, you heard me. Lord, you saw me. You saw what I did." It broke my heart that I had sinned. I repeat again: she did not see that. I wish she could have seen that, not for show but to recognize that I had dealt with my sin. That was an immediate smiting of the Spirit of God to my heart about what I had done.

Andrew Teleford is a preacher in his nineties. Andrew got saved. He was happy in the Lord. He was saved and lived on a farm. Andrew was discing, if I remember correctly. He was discing the field. He had come to disc around the fence the places that he had gone back and forth and missed. As he went round the fence, he ran under a limb of a tree. He held it up. It slipped out of his hand and wacked him across the head. Andrew evidently had a problem with profanity. When it hit him on the head, an oath came out of his mouth. When it came out of his mouth, he said, "I spent the rest of the day plowing with tears running down my cheeks. 'God, I did not mean to. God, I did not mean to. I am sorry, Lord. I did not mean to.'" The Spirit of God will tell you when you play with sin. He lives in your heart. The preacher does not need to be there. He will tell you. He will let you know if you keep sensitive to Him. The sad thing is that we ignore His dealing with us, and His voice gets fainter and fainter and fainter. Then, we can sin very notoriously, and it does not bother us a bit in the world. But the Spirit of God is still there, and He still turns off the music and the loss of joy.

How does He rebuke us? He rebukes us with financial, material, and business loss. Haggai 1:3-11: *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house (His house, God's house) lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. (Do some thinking.) Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.* That is far enough. That is financial or material loss. Juanita Rynn's daddy, Josh Benny, told this publicly. Josh used to be a deacon in this church previous to my coming. He is a good fisherman. He is a friend of mine. He was telling about one week when he decided not to tithe, and he said, "I was driving Florida Avenue and coming to about 1945 North Florida Avenue. A blue light special pulled up beside me. The blue light special wrote me a ticket for speeding. The ticket was exactly what my tithe would have been if I had put it in church." You say, "God did that?" I do not have any doubt about that. He does not have any doubt about that. God is dealing with His children. Josh said, "Yes sir, I got the message, and I never did that again." Turn in your Bible to the Old Testament. Here is a good king. His name is Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat got linked up with an ungodly man. I read in 1 Kings 22:48, and if you will, turn to 2 Chronicles 20:35. We will read these two passages of Scripture. This is a business venture that he should not have been in on with a wicked man. 1 Kings 22:48-49: *Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: (He was looking for money. He was going over there to buy gold.) but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber.* (Evidently, the storm broke up the fleet.) *Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.* Evidently, it was another expedition. Look at 2 Chronicles 20:35-37, the cross reference on this particular event: *And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly: And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Eziongeber. Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.* This was a financial or business loss that was a result of the hand of God's chastening.

Turn to Luke 22. How does God chasten us? He chastens us by allowing us to have a humiliating failure because of self-confidence in the Christian life. If you have just got it made, you do not need to read your Bible. You do not have to come to church. Nobody can tempt you to do this, that, or the other. You are cocksure about that. Simon Peter was not a liar, but Simon Peter knew beyond any shadow of doubt that the rest of them may deny Him, but he never would. You do not know who you are talking to. The Lord warned him, "Simon." He called his name twice. When God calls our name twice, we had better pay attention twice. Maybe He calls us twice because we do not hear the first time. "Simon, Simon, the devil is after you." "Now, Lord, you do not need to worry about that." "You had better watch and pray." "I do not have to watch and pray." "Satan is after you." "I do not need to do that. I do not have to have my Bible study. I do not have to pray. I do not have to be faithful. I would never do that." Yes sir, if you ever make that declaration, you surely had better pray. He could not be told. You find Simon Peter. What does he do? A little maid causes him to deny his Lord, not a great big soldier but a little maid. When God deals with us, He delivers tiny things. Not a soldier, not an army, but a little maid said, "Your confidence and your conversation betrays you." What happened? The cursing and the swearing started. Then going out into the dark to weep bitterly — what a humiliating failure for self-confidence in the Christian life. Later on, he writes to the saints in 1 Peter 5:8: *Be sober, (That does not mean stay off the bottle. That means that you had better have your eyes open.) be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:* Satan had asked for time in Peter, but Peter could not take the warning. Parents face this many times when teenagers try to tell them, "Don't worry about me, Mom. I can handle myself." When you say, "Do not worry about me," you are already on dangerous ground. 1 Corinthians 10:12: *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* We are talking about the matter of humiliating failure for self-confidence in the

Christian life. He could not be warned.

Turn to 2 Samuel 12:15. God chastens by allowing the death of a loved one. I have heard people say, “God does not take lives.” You cannot read then. He does do so. Look at David. I do not need to tell you the story. 2 Samuel 12:15: *And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.* What happened? That little baby died. David fasted. David prayed, but that little baby died. Every baby that dies is not a chastening of the Lord. There are different kinds of chastening. There is chastening because of sin. There is chastening. God chastens us sometimes in our heart. We get our heart on something that comes between us and the Lord. God gave Abraham a son, a son that he had longed for. He had a son, not with Sarah, but he had a son. Then, God gave him a son born of Sarah and Abraham. Genesis 22:2: *And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.* That was chastening. God will deal with that which we allow our affections to come ahead of God. God will remove that. He chastens by taking lives. My brother, who I referred to awhile ago, was not saved. That is the reason he could not pray. The awfulness of not being able to pray is a beautiful little girl, eighteen months old, in the Monroe Memorial Hospital in Ocala, Florida. My brother was a man that did not know his own strength. He was a powerful man. He was a “Tarzan.” He would get up in the morning, go outside, and holler. I guess he had so much energy that one of the first things he would do is get up in the morning, go outside, and let out a hoop. He would drive like a maniac, yet he never had a wreck. He was a fruit buyer. He would run off the road and out through the orange trees, and he would hold just one hand driving like this. Silvia was a beautiful little girl. Bud was not saved. Bud was better than the hypocrites down at Olivet Baptist Church. He was not an immoral man. He was not an ungodly man. He loved his family; he loved his children; he loved his parents; but Bud was not saved. That night in Monroe Memorial Hospital, he and I got into a telephone booth. He bowed his head and said, “I can't pray. Pray for little Silvia.” I prayed. When I prayed, I felt in my heart that everything was going to be all right, not the assurance that she was going to be all right but that everything was going to be all right. Silvia died on the operating table at eighteen months old. Evidently, she bled to death. Bud loved that little baby dearly. In my mind's eyes, I can see coming down the steps outside of Monroe Memorial Hospital in Ocala a great big man. I see him fall like a tree on the gravel flat on his back. I see a wounded man get up, get into his car, and leave that hospital. He was burning the metal. We went home. There is a road called Buffington Road in Ocala. That road is possibly a mile and a half long. He would run from one end to the other — VROOM! back and forth, back and forth. When he finally ran down, he stopped. I stood out there in the road. I put my arms around my brother, and I cried with him. Oh the anguish that came from his heart there in the middle of that road! Bud got saved in two weeks. Years later, he would weep and cry. He said, “If I hadn't been so stubborn, my little girl would be here instead of in Heaven.” God took that little girl Home to Heaven. God not only had taken her life, but God also got my brother's heart. God got his attention. God loved him. God gave His Son that we may not go to hell. He will take one of our loved ones to keep us from going to hell also. God did that not because He hated him. God did that in loving mercy. Yes, He will do that. That is chastening. God chastens us with loss of health or even death. Turn to 1 Corinthians 11. Paul is writing to the saints at Corinth. The saints at Corinth were divided into cliques. It is not a funny thing to get divided into cliques. It is not a pleasing thing to God. I am serious about that. Cliques in a church or anywhere else are not good. You read in the book of Corinthians about the cliques of the rich and the poor. They had love feasts in those days. They came together before the services. They would have a love feast. The rich would bring the groceries, and they would invite the poor brethren to come in. They had a feast — the rich and poor, black and white, slave and free, men and women. It was a love feast called an agape feast. Look what they did at that feast. Let us begin reading in 1 Corinthians 11:17: *Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. (You are not helping matters. You are coming together for the worse.) For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.* (I remember back when we had dinner on the

grounds. We would have preaching and dinner on grounds. There are some folks that you never saw at the church until you had dinner on the grounds. They would just come to eat. They did not stay for the preaching. Some folks would watch them and say, "Man, they are not going to get any of mine." Here they were. Here is my lunch. The poor were embarrassed. They were divided. This was proceeding the Lord's table.) *For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.* (Now, these are saints of God. They got drunk preparing for the Lord's table.) *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* Now, look down in verse 28: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* (This is talking about the unity of the body and the sin of dividing the body. Now, watch.) *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* (He was not talking about snoring. He was talking about many being dead. When I got saved, I did not take of the Lord's table for a while. I misunderstood this verse. If it is worthiness, I am not coming. That is not what it says. It is talking about the manner of the attitude in which all are unworthy, but we can come in a worthy manner. God said that they had loss of health or even death because of that. There is a preacher who used to live in Lakeland, Florida. Tonight, he is dead because of sin. There are folks in this audience who know who I am talking about. He said, "God is going to kill me one day." He got killed in an automobile accident in Jacksonville, Florida. God will take your life.

God chastens with loss of health. I know a dear brother. He got angry with his wife, and he lashed out at her. He called her a word that he ought never to have called her. Shortly after that, he got deathly ill. He went to the doctor who could not find anything wrong with him. He was put in the hospital. They could not find a thing in the world wrong with him. He was deathly ill. He said, "I know what is wrong. Tell my wife to come here." In the hospital, he told me from his own lips. He said, "Honey, I am sorry. I should never have said that." He apologized to her, got up, and went home. Yes sir, God does chasten us. We have heard so much of the love of God. When you do wrong, your heavenly Father is coming after you. Earthly parents may let their child do this, that, or the other; but God will not allow you to do so. He may allow it for a long time. You may think, "Well, it is all covered over, and God has forgotten it." He has not forgotten it. He left David alone for over a year. One day, God came to deal with him by a man of God that approached him with a message from God. He said, "I have got a little story to tell you." He chastens us with rebuke. He chastens us with loss of joy, financial loss, material loss, death of a loved one, or humiliating failure from self-confidence.

Turn to Job 42. Job was a good man. The Bible says so. I do not know if you call it self-righteousness or what you call it. You read the book of Job. Read the dialog between those three fellows in Job. It really gets stiff. Job, one time, said, "Well, I wouldn't even let my dogs associate with your dad." They were getting at it. They did not have any answer. Job shut them up. They had no answer. Finally, God spoke, and God said, *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?* God did not give him an answer. God began to show him the creation. All He did was show him the creation. When it was over . . . Look at Job 42:1-6: *Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* God did something to him in that thing.

Let us look at the processes of purification. Turn to 1 Corinthians 5. God will allow the devil to use you as a play thing. Do you want to play with sin? I remember a boy was caught smoking cigars or cigarettes, and the dad made him smoke the cigar or packet of cigarettes one right after the other. He never wanted to smoke the rest of his life. He turned green and did everything else in the world. God lets you have sin and have sin and have sin until you cannot stand sin and say that you wish you were out of that. God says, "You want to sin? Okay." That is what the Bible says. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 tells churches: *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* It says: *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.* Sometimes when a rebellious person

will not hear, God will allow Satan to use him as a play toy. "Have some more sin. Have some more sin. Have some more sin." Sin is a punishment for sin. Sin does not satisfy. This individual was turned over to the devil. There is an illustration that I know definitely in the Scriptures. Turn to Romans 5:3. God wants to teach us patience. Who is born with patience? Do you know anybody? The sloth maybe. Who is born with patience? I read in Romans 5:3: *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;* You are always flying off of the handle. You always say you cannot stand this. God just turns on more. The only way in the world to learn to have patience is to have trouble. "God, help me to be patient." The Lord says, "I'll answer that prayer" He turns everything in the world around. Everything in the world will come at you. Everything goes wrong. Why? It is to try your patience again and again. We get to the place when those things do not bother us anymore. The same circumstances are there. What has changed? The circumstances have not changed. We have changed. That is patience. God is not interested in changing the circumstances. He is interested in changing us. Who wants patience after that? As parents, we help make it difficult for God to teach patience to our children. When they whimper and when you give them this and give them that, they find out later that they may whimper, but God does not do that. They cry, and God does not do it. "Well, with my mom and daddy when I cried, I got it immediately." What happens? It takes longer to brake them and teach them patience because their parents spoiled them. When we pitched a fit or something, we got what we wanted. You can pitch a fit, but you will not get God to hurry up with it. Patience. Your patience possesses your soul. I want to tell you if Jesus does not come soon, you and I are going to have to have a barrel of patience with what is transpiring in our country.

Let us turn to Genesis — deception. God has strange ways of getting at us. Abraham was in the role call of faith. Abraham was the friend of God. Abraham had a problem with telling the whole truth. His problem was fear. He said to his wife, "When we go down, you say that you are my sister." Well, she was his sister, his half-sister. Why did he do this? He was concerned about Sarah's husband. He wanted to make sure Sarah's husband came out. So he told her what to say. Isaac did the same thing twice. Where did he get it? Got it from dad. Somebody spoke to me after the service last Sunday night and was talking about Absalom. We were just discussing it. We did not have time to deal with everything. The question was, "Was not that probably David's fault about Absalom, because he did not discipline his boy?" It probably was. Abraham told the half truth. It is all gone. Look at Genesis 20. Abraham is in a fix again. Genesis 20:1-7: *And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity (This is a pagan king.) of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. (He said, "Lord, I am innocent.") And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.* Just think for a moment what that did to Abraham. He threw a curve. He was dishonest. He did not tell the truth. The king was innocent, and now, God told Abraham to pray for him. You do something wrong. You get caught up with it. God says, "Now, you name it, and you pray for him." You feel just about that big, not quite that big. "Me pray for him?" What does that do? That does something to Abraham's heart of getting right with God, getting his testimony right with a pagan king. What was God doing? God was allowing the deception to come to the front to bring Abraham to face this thing of deception, of covering up the truth. God deals that way.

Let us turn to one other passage of Scripture. Sometimes, God takes privileges away from us of things we want to do. Let me give you an illustration. I used him last Sunday night, and I will use him tonight. I hope it will be a long time before I do this again. Joe had a riding lawn mower. What could be a dream of a little boy but to drive a riding lawn mower when he is a little boy? He would take the lawn mower and go around and cut my lawn. He was doing me a favor and enjoying it. One day, he did something, and for that, he could not cut the grass. What did I do? I penalized myself. Who is going to cut the grass? I am going to cut the grass.

That might not have been very smart. So, he stood outside. He wanted to cut the grass. He wanted to ride that lawn mower. He stood out back eyeing me riding around happy as can be cutting the grass. I came around, and he said, "Need any help?" I said, "Everything is all right." He stood out there, and I rode and cut the grass. I would have rather him cut the grass. It would save me time so that I could do something else. I cut the whole yard, and he stood out there. That is chastening. I took something from him. He would rather have had a spanking, and I let him ride that tractor. But, the purpose now was to deal with what he had done, not the matter of spanking. What hurts the most? Now, do not take privileges about going to church or camp or something like that away from them. You punish them. They cannot go to church. They cannot go to youth group. They cannot go to camp. No, no, no, you are punishing them in the wrong places. That is what they need to get right.

God did a two-fold thing with Moses. Moses was with three and a half million people at one time in forty years. One day, he was fed up to here, and it came out. God said, "Okay, Moses, you really wanted to lead the children into the Promise Land. Well, you cannot do that anymore." He lost a dream of a lifetime. Not only that, he lost his life. God was chastening him. God chastens Paul in another way. He gave him a thorn in the flesh to keep him from getting proud. You read 2 Corinthians 12. That is chastening. That is child training to make us usable.

Turn to the book of Galatians 6, and I am through. In 1 Corinthians, he is dealing with a fornicator flaunting his sin. What did he do? The church put him outside, taught him repentance, and took him back. This is somebody running from sin. This is somebody taken from behind. There had been fights. This man needed help. Galatians 6:1: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* Have you ever been tempted and then been embarrassed that you could be tempted? Anybody raise their hand? Two of us. We think, "Hey, wait a minute. That is strange." Did you know that we are all of the same stock, capable of doing anything that anybody else does? I suppose embarrassment is self-righteous. I did not think that I would ever be tempted with that, yet the Bible says: *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:* Galatians 6:1 says: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness;* (It is talking about the attitude of meekness. "It could have happened to me." That is approaching from below, dealing with him. The word *restore* is a medical term. It is the word where you get bones out of joint, and you put it back in. It is very delicate. It hurts. I want to tell the story about how they tried to treat me for growing pains, and my hip was out of place. It surely was bad growing pains. Every time I tried to push my leg straight out there, I had terrible pain so that I had to pull my knee up like that. He talks about the matter of restoration and dealing with the thing that hurts. It is sore. It is sensitive. We have to be spiritual. We have to be in the Spirit. We have to be in the right attitude. We have to.) *considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* This man was running. A man ran from temptation to Jacksonville. He ran all the way down to catch me. It was Sunday afternoon at the motel. He ran from temptation all the way to Jacksonville. He almost burst . . . he did burst into the hotel, "I gotta see ya, and I gotta see ya now." He was running for help. But, those that were overtaken tried to restore them. Let us look at what our Lord did. Simon Peter is someone who is fleeing temptation, not flirting with temptation. This is somebody who does not think that he can be tempted. This is somebody cock-sure. He was sleeping when God told him to be awake. He was not praying, but he was sleeping when God warned him. Then, he sinned. Look at Luke 22:63. These are the sweetest, bitter tears in the Scripture. How does he restore? Luke 22:61: *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.* (You can look at some children, and it breaks their heart. You just look at them. There are some that you have to work the other direction. They are made that way. It is a difference in temperament. However we are made is how God approaches. Here is a man that can be broken by a look from the Lord.) *And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.* Out in the darkness that night was Simon Peter . . . My, what has happened to Judas Iscariot? He committed suicide. The devil was after both of them. He had gotten one, but he did not get the other because the other had a High Priest. Luke 22: 32: *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:* Out in the darkness of the night was a man weeping over his sin. He was weeping over his

transgression. Look at Mark 16:7. It was the three longest days probably to Simon Peter than anybody else among that crowd and the rest of the disciples. For three days and three nights in the tomb, here was a man that had blown it all. "It is all over with me. I left all to follow Him. I denied Him." Think of the awfulness and the agony of his betrayal. That look of the Lord Jesus Christ broke Simon Peter's heart. There was silence. Jesus' body was in the grave. He had three days and three nights alone to think about that. Resurrection morning, angels came and rolled away the tomb to let them in to see that He was gone. Mark 16:7: *But go your way, tell his disciples and (and, by the way) Peter* (Why, he was one of the disciples. He did not call the rest of their names. He only called one of their names. One of them was in trouble. All of them denied the Lord, but they did nothing like Simon Peter did. "You go tell his disciples, and you go tell Peter.") *that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.* Let us turn to 1 Corinthians 15. Jesus rose from the dead. When He rose from the dead, He did something. The Scripture says in 1 Corinthians starting with verse 4: *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:* When was that? There is no record in the Word of God when that was. That was a private interview with Simon Peter and his High Priest, his Savior the Lord Jesus. What did He tell him? I do not know. But, he still is not ready. Turn to John 21. The Lord rose from the dead. He met in the upper room with those disciples. After that, Simon Peter, still with feelings of guilt, went back to his net. He went back to his net three times. In John 21, Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing. I can fish. I may no longer be fit for preaching and ministering the Gospel. I am going to go fishing. At least, I know how to fish." Yes, he did, and he took some others with him. The Scriptures said: *that night they caught nothing.* What is the Lord doing? He is arresting his attention. "You will not be a good fisherman anymore." I would hate it. I cannot imagine myself out of the ministry and back in the retail business. What is wrong with retail business? I think that I would feel like Simon Peter. "I can at least go fishing." The Lord said, "Let's just see if you can catch any fish like you used to." The dross that day could have reminded him of his rebellion in Luke 5 when the Lord told him to cast his nets down. He said, "I fished all night. I got these nets all clean. I am not going to get them all dirty again." He let down the net and got that dross of fish and filled the boat. The Lord really arrested his attention. God said, "Now, you are going to leave men to fish, and you are going to fish men." All of those memories came into his mind. In that story, the Lord appears, "Caught any fish?" "They aren't biting now. You ought to see those that got away." They did not catch anything. "Cast your net on the other side." He did, and he caught a multitude of fish, and John said, "It's the Lord." Simon Peter was naked, whether that refers totally that he was in his skinny suit . . . but he was naked the Scriptures said. He gathered his coat, and he jumped overboard. He came to land. There was the Lord Jesus. Look at verse 10: *Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.* He goes by himself and pulls that whole net up by himself. He pulls that thing out. Now watch. Verse 15: *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, A fire was burning there. He sat around the fire when he sinned. Do you see the memories of where he was, his call, his failure, his sin? So when they dined, Jesus said: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? "You said that you loved me more than any of these other disciples and that they may deny me." He did not mention his sin, but He surely rung his bell, his memory. "Simon, do you love me more than the rest of this crowd?" Watch it, now. Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.* Look at the marginal reference. In his answer, three times he never uses the word love at the supreme. He said, "You are my friend." He said, "I can not trust myself to say that word. Back there, I could trust myself. Yes, I knew. But now, Lord, Thou knowest I *philo*, I am a friend of yours." That is a vast difference from *Agapas*, supreme love. He said, "Okay, then feed my sheep." "You get back to feeding sheep and not fishing." What he is doing is restoring. He is restoring confidence. Restoring remembrance. He is restoring dealing with all the things that happened. Verse 16: *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? (Agapas, divine love.) He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I . . . have a friendly affection for you. I cannot say that big word. What changed back there? "I surely was certain of myself. I am not so sure of myself anymore." Look at what the Lord said: He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. "If you love me as a friend, feed my sheep." How many times did he deny the Lord? Three times. Verse 17: He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Now, the Lord stops the *Agapa* and comes down and says, "Do you really love me like a friend?" He has come to where he is now. *Lovest thou**

me? A friend of yours. Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. What did he do? He punctured his self-confidence. Do you have self-confidence? If somebody walked in here with a gun and asked you to deny the Lord, do you have self-confidence that you know just exactly what you would do? You are on troubled ground already. You do not know. Jesus saith unto him: *Feed my sheep.* He is back. He has a new commission. He has a new attitude towards himself. He has a new attitude and respect for the devil. He has a new watchfulness. *Be sober.* He has a new appreciation for his call. He had thought it was all over. He has a new recognition of the grace of God. He has a new attitude towards those that he said, "I love you" to. That is a change of mind. He is back, and he is ready to go. At Pentecost, who is the select preacher? Well, I am not going to let Peter do that. Well, man alive, you know what he did at the cross and garden. Surely we would not do that, but he did. Turn to one passage. I said I was through, but I just want to read this passage. Why does he chasten us? Revelation 3:19: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.* What is he saying? *As many as I love.* Why does he chasten? Because he loves us. It is grievous. He chastens for our sakes and His glory.