

What will keep you from financial and personal disgrace? (13:18)

Poverty and shame *will come* to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored.

THE TEXT (NASB)

Poverty and shame *will come* to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored.

Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction, but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. Classic KJV - Proverbs 13:18

INTRODUCTION



We may encounter poverty or shame, but if we neglect discipline, we will experience both bads!

Someone, like a Mother Teresa of Calcutta, can be pitifully poor, yet earn the respect of the entire world. On the other hand, some are enormously wealthy and thoroughly despised by everyone.

Oh discipline! How can we learn to love you and avoid double trouble?



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COMMENTARY

Be Alert and Humble

To avoid double trouble—financial need and public humiliation—we must master the use of the three most difficult words in the English language: “I was wrong.” We all find these words difficult, especially when we must say them in public. They hurt, but in the end, they’re necessary to regain our lost respect. We all esteem those who admit their mistakes, correct them, learn, and move on. As the second part of this proverb implies, accepting “reproof” may not make us rich, but it will earn us respect. Respect and riches are two different things.

An important detail: The words “will come” are in italics, indicating that they aren’t found in the original Hebrew. Their absence makes the message stronger and tighter: Neglecting discipline is just jammed together with poverty and shame, maybe even the same as poverty and shame. The shameful attitude toward discipline is expressed by the use of the word “neglects”—instead of “rejects.” All that is needed for a life of poverty and shame is the neglect of discipline. A cavalier attitude, an inconsistent focus, a lack of concentration, all invite poverty and shame. Most of us never overtly reject discipline; we just ignore it. But then, what is discipline?

Discipline Defined



The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “discipline” as: “control that is gained by requiring that rules or orders be obeyed and punishing bad behavior... a way of behaving that shows a willingness to obey rules or orders... behavior that is judged by how well it follows a set of rules or orders.”

All three related definitions deal with order, rules, and obedience—essentials for success. Those unwilling to submit to reprimand and correction, to unlearn and extinguish harmful personal habits, are doomed to the double-trouble described by this text.

Discipline Starts at Home

The Hebrew word is also translated frequently as “instruction” or “correction.” It is used first in Deuteronomy 11:2, where it can be translated “chastisement” (KJV)—painful punishment



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intended to correct aberrant behaviour. Such loving punishment usually comes from an outside party, not from our own selves. We overlook our own errors, because they seem right to us. For most of us, our parents provided our earliest corrections, and we often chafed at their chastisement. But those who ultimately obey and honour their parents are promised the rewards of God himself. Parental discipline is one of the first steps toward real financial success, regardless of any financial inheritance (Deuteronomy 5:16).

Reasons for Poverty



Many in this world are poor through no fault of their own. Their poverty may be the result of the death of their parents, natural disasters, disease, oppressive governments, or wars. In such cases, it's wise to help the poor. But then, some are poor ultimately by their own choices. They don't want to change their habits and refuse to accept reproof, correction, and advice.

This "regarding reproof," paying attention to correction, requires humility. This teaching is in line with the proverb, "Pride goes before destruction, but humility goes before honour." We must first be teachable, and then follow instruction, to avoid poverty and to be respected.

Wise Charitable Giving

This text provides valuable guidance in selecting charities, especially in distinguishing among those charities that support the poor. Some people are poor because they are continually rejecting instruction and training. They do not want the discomfort associated with discipline. They don't want the pain in order to get the gain. Their condition is unfortunate, but does not warrant charitable aid.

So it was that St. Paul instructed the early Christian church (2 Thessalonians 3:10): "If anyone will not work, neither let him eat." Note the message is "will not work" and not "cannot work." Those who are unable to work should receive much kinder treatment than those who refuse to work. Feeding those who will not work is not a real kindness.



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus was the most disciplined person who ever lived. He did nothing on His own initiative, but always did only what His Father told Him to do (John 5:19,30).

Can anyone else in history make such a statement... truthfully?

Only someone without sin always obeys another sinless one, perfectly. Jesus NEVER neglected discipline. He will be most highly honoured. Everyone will kneel one day (with both knees) at the name of Jesus (Philippians 2:10).

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Evaluate yourself as to how well you have followed the advice of parents and teachers. Are you poor because you have been too proud to accept instruction?
- Humble yourself to gain both wealth and respect.
- How do you react to the message, "You were wrong; change your ways"? Ask God to help you accept ego crushing instructions.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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KEY WORDS

discipline, education, honor, instruction, less assets (quantity), Mother Teresa, poverty, rebellious, responsibility, shame, training

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Quick Buck Betty?



Quick Buck Betty wants to make money fast, and is always looking for “hot tips.” Researching and understanding investments takes too long; she just cares about the returns—especially the short-term returns.

It doesn't matter how the money is earned—in fact she'd rather not know at all! Betty is just eager to “make it” or, even better, have someone else make it for her. She has little time for Steady Eddy and Diligent Daniel—their methods take too long.

Betty views the stock and bond markets like the lottery and casino. She doesn't invest; she gambles. She likes to “play” the markets. Day trading is one of her passions.

