

“TRUE SONSHIP”

Hebrews 12:3-11

Message 1624

There are only two classes of people in the world by the standards of the Bible. One group is called the children of God. The other group is called the children of the devil.

Jesus once told some people who were around Him that they were the children of their father, the devil. They did not like that. And I suspect there are very few people who wish to be called children of the devil.

Most people hope, in some way, to be called the children of God. However, **TRUE SONSHIP** does not come automatically. It does not happen without our doing anything about it. True sonship is described in Hebrews 12:3-11.

3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5. 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:

6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9. 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?

10. 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.

11. 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.

Here we discover several practical **TESTS** by which to measure the quality of our sonship.

THE CONTRADICTION OF SINNERS is the test from fellowmen. To be sure, as Christians we have no real harmony with sinners, with unbelievers. We are expected, of course, to live peaceably with all men. But our lives and the lives of sinners are in direct contradiction.

Jesus understood and endured such contradiction. He suffered death rather than compromise. He saw there was no real harmony between Him and sinners. Rather than compromise, He was willing to die. He suffered and endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.

We are encouraged by this text to do the same. We must not become weary or faint in our minds. We must hold firm like He held firm. As true sons we must recognize the contradiction and we, like Jesus, can not compromise.

One time Jesus said to His disciples, “Don’t be surprised if the world hates you. Just remember it hated me before it hated you.” On another occasion He said, “Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

THE CHASTENING OF SUFFERING is the test from the Father. Chastening means correction, and correction of the right kind always love. Any father who truly loves his son will correct him. He will attempt to direct his son into a proper way of life. He will guide him and guard him against going in the wrong way. That is why God gave children parents. Fathers and mothers are responsible to train their children, to correct them, even if it means suffering. It must spring from love. True chastening springs from love.

Then chastening defines sonship. God’s love for us means He will correct us, because the Lord chastens those He loves. We can be assured that when the Lord chastens us that He is doing so to make sure that we understand how we are His sons. Sonship is tested by that chastening of suffering. It means that we are under God’s loving care.

I want to assure you, if you are a believer and undergoing suffering, remember that God loves you and God wants to perfect in you true sonship. That may at times be easier to talk about than to experience. I know that full well. But I encourage you with this test from God’s word that true sonship does endure the chastening of suffering.

THE CONTROL OF THE SPIRIT is the test from within. We have had fathers who have corrected us, and we gave them reverence. When we control our spirits in the face of chastening, we recognize the fatherhood of God. It is important for us to accept that deep in our hearts.

I notice that He does this for our profit. We must, therefore, control our spirit so as not to react against God, but to receive from Him that which He longs to perfect in us.

This Scripture teaches us, in verse ten, that He does it so that we might be partakers of His holiness. When we control our spirit and receive from God that which He longs to perfect in us, then we are cleansed by His loving hand washing us in the blood and we are made to be partakers of His holiness.

Even more than that, we yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness in our lives. It certainly is true that no chastening at the time is a happy experience. It is grievous. It hurts to pass through these hard places in life. It is not pleasant at the time. But the fruit, the outcome of it, that is what the Lord desires.

To accomplish this we must listen to and pass this third test of true sonship, the control of the spirit, so that we do not react unfavorably toward God’s will and work in our lives. He wants us to be partakers of His holiness and to produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

When it comes to being sons of God, some rather radical claims are made by some people. But it matters little what claims are made, the question is how do they look when the tests of true sonship are applied? That truly is what counts.

These tests of true sonship come to every Christian. How is it with you? When you look at your life and examine it by these tests, how do you rate? Do you pass? Let me repeat them: the contradiction of sinners, the chastening of suffering, and the control of the spirit. Can you pass these tests? If you can, then you have true sonship.