

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – February 26, 2009

A child is taught to respect and obey his parents. When he refuses to do so, mom and dad usually apply some form of negative reinforcement and discipline in order to provide correction. In today's Templates of Truth, the prophet Isaiah reminds us that God is our heavenly Father and relates to us in the same parental way.

Isaiah quotes God as referring to *sons (He) has reared and brought up* (1:2). The Bible often characterizes the relationship between God and His people in familial terms. The Lord told King David concerning his son Solomon: *I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me* (II Samuel 7:14). Paul quoted the Lord as applying this same relationship to all His followers: *I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty* (II Corinthians 6:18). God is our heavenly Father and we are His children.

In light of this relationship, God responds to us in a divine parental role. He went on to say to David about Solomon, *when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod* (II Samuel 7:14). Indeed, the writer of Hebrews affirms: *those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives* (Hebrew 12:6). The people of Israel were God's children and they had *abandoned the Lord...and turned away from Him* (1:4). As any loving parent would, God had to deal with their wayward behavior, and He sent the prophet Isaiah to deliver that message.

We have no problem accepting earthly parents who administer punishment and discipline to their wayward children, but for some reason we struggle to see God in the same role. The Bible has no such problem, however, and the Book of Isaiah centers on that very theme. Now the rules are not that complicated. God told Isaiah: *Say to the righteous that it will go well with them...(say) woe to the wicked! It will go badly with (them)* (Isaiah 3:10-11). God said nearly the same thing but in a different way to Moses: *Blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the Lord your God...if you will not obey...curses shall come upon you and overtake you* (Deuteronomy 28:2,15). As we behave or misbehave, God responds accordingly in His parental role over our lives.

God is so very patient and long-suffering with us, giving us every opportunity to cease doing wrong and begin doing right. When we continue to live in rebellion against His commands and expectations of us, Isaiah quotes God as declaring: *let Me tell you what I am going to do...I will remove (your) hedge, and (you) will be consumed...I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on (you)* (Isaiah 5:5-6). Do you remember the story of Job and how Satan came to God seeking permission to test Job's faith? Satan couldn't get after Job the way he wanted to because he saw that God had *made a hedge about him and his house and all that he had on every side* (Job 1:10). Isaiah refers to this same barrier of divine protection. Persistent sinful rebellion or spiritual neglect & complacency by God's people, may result in God removing the hedge that surrounds and protects your life, leaving you vulnerable to Satanic attack. He may even withhold vital resources from your life in order to apply pressure – negative reinforcement, to encourage you back into faithfulness and obedience to Him. This is what loving parent do.

This negative reinforcement may be in the form of sickness, emotional stress & depression, natural disaster, domestic problems, job & career failure, and most frequently economic & financial loss. The Bible teaches that all of these are applications of God's divine judgment against sin in the lives of His people. It doesn't have to be that way, and only you can change the response of God in your life. Through Isaiah, God says: *come now, and let us reason together...though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow...if you consent and obey, you will eat the (very) best of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword* (Isaiah 1:18-20). How is it with your life today?

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

© Copyright 2009 – All Rights Reserved – Renewal Resource Services, PLLC