

## Spiritual Training under God's Gumnasiarchs

NOTE: Bible class for Thursday, 18 January, cancelled due to weather.

Two reviews of the motion picture, *Sense and Sensibility*, introduced the first session: Bowman, James. "The Talkies." *The American Spectator*. February, 1996, p. 61; Simon, John. "Film." *National Review*. 29 Jan., 1996, p. 67.

Such is the case with spiritual growth. You think that missing Bible class is no big deal; that you know a lot of doctrine already and anyhow, what's one class? But what missing class does is break your momentum. It's easier to rationalize cutting the next class and then the next. At first you make it up on tape but then you don't even have time for that under the rationale, "*Aw, he'll eventually repeat whatever I miss.*"

As circumstances of life begin to overwhelm you, they command more and more of your attention. You rationalize that you have responsibilities in life and these duties must come first. This may be true from time to time but when it becomes a lifestyle you need to see the cause-and-effect relationship which develops. Cutting class under the pressures of the moment is easily rationalized at first but it sets a precedent for cutting class again in the future under similar circumstances. If you will cut class under one set of circumstances then you will do so under another and then yet another. Momentum is broken. What used to be tests are now transformed into goals.

You rationalize your absence at class to family, professional, or civic responsibilities but all these are just more excuses. You can't deal with the mounting problems because you have a depleted inventory of ideas. You are in reversionism. And, of course, the reversionist never knows he's there, that's what contributes to his prolonged stay.

The only way to recover is to admit to yourself that you are wrong. Confess all sins to God alone. Return to Bible class and begin the growth process. Remain loyal to the exercise program under pressure which means consistent endurance under the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

You would never consider your circumstances so overwhelming that you would not show up for your job. You would never consider your circumstances so time consuming that you would eliminate meals from your schedule. If you can organize your day to include work and food, you can organize your day to include the nutrition of your soul. A doctrinal stream of consciousness is the only possible resource by which you can conquer the problems that confront you. If you dedicate yourself to organizing your life so you can get back into the gymnasium and resume training under the Holy Spirit's doctrinal regimen, then, over time, you will recover as per our verse:

**Hebrews 12:11** - One the one hand, all discipline, while being applied, seems not to be an occasion for happiness but an occasion for sorrow. On the other hand, afterward, it pays back with interest prosperous gain from the source of integrity for those who are trained [*gumnazo*] by it.

### **gumnazo:**

perfect - Intensive; emphasizes an action completed in the past but with emphasis on the existing results. This indicates that a reversionist who has recovered must go through the training process—he must do the prescribed workout in the gymnasium on an ongoing and consistent basis.

Anyone who works out consistently in the gymnasium under a physical regimen will benefit and prosper physically. Anyone who works out consistently in the gymnasium under the two spiritual skills will benefit and prosper spiritually.

passive - The believer receives the action of being trained. In Athens the director of the gymnasium, or the superintendent of athletic training, was called the *gumnasiarch*.

The athlete must submit to the regimen demanded by this person whom we would call trainer, manager, or coach. Thus the athlete receives the action of being trained.

Likewise, the believer must submit to the regimen demanded by his spiritual *gumnasiarch*, the Holy Spirit and the delegated power and authority of his local *gumnasiarch*, his pastor.

participle - Circumstantial, which emphasizes the required volitional submission to authority which is necessary before a successful recovery can occur.

The fruit of integrity is the production which comes from acquiring a share of God's character.

The thing which sets God apart from humanity is His perfect essence. The attributes emphasized in this passage are His righteousness and His justice which come together to make up His divine integrity.

We share in His character by acquiring His integrity through submission to His training program. Once accomplished it pays dividends with interest from the source of that acquired integrity.

From our passage so far, we have noted quite a number of benefits which are associated with divine discipline. Review corrected translation of Hebrews 12:5-Hebrews 12:11.

From these seven verses we have discovered the following benefits from divine discipline:

When you are under discipline you have the encouragement of knowing that you are a true son of God. This also emphasizes the principle of eternal security which becomes a Mae West for a sinking reversionist.

**Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. "Mae West":**

*Mae West n [Mae West American actress noted for her full figure]: an inflatable life jacket in the form of a collar extending down the chest that was worn by fliers in World War II.*

You may orient to your circumstance by realizing that you are under the direct method of training from God. Relief may be realized by returning to the indirect method: a return to the gymnasium.

When a believer strays off the righteous path designed by God for His children, discipline becomes a sign of divine love expressed by means of goads. Your *gumnasiarch* under discipline becomes the goads with which you are forced to deal. The attendant pain and suffering is designed to motivate a return to the indirect regimen inside the gymnasium.

Hebrews 12:12 and Hebrews 12:13 start a new paragraph which amplifies the results of divine discipline. Since reversionism is the primary reason for discipline then reversion recovery is the intended result.