



WOW: Word Of the Week

Chasten

June 25, 2025

Chasten. A word we do not hear frequently. I was in elementary school. The teacher said that we could add new words we had learned during the week to our spelling words, including them at the bottom of the page. One week I added hasten, chasten, congregation, and tribulation. I learned a lot of new words by reading the songbook at church and singing those words.

You may know the song. I remember part of the words. “We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing; he hastens and chastens his will to make known... Let thy congregation escape tribulation. Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free.”

To chasten: to correct, often by punishment or suffering; to discipline, to teach. God chastens, but some of us are slow learners. Jonah was a slow learner. He was afraid to do what God wanted, he tried to hide, he was slow to come around to God’s plan, he got angry. God chastened Jonah. Do you remember the story? A storm, a fish, a vine, a worm. God was getting Jonah’s attention through life events. Jonah was slow to learn—but he was aware that God was at work—what was happening was not just coincidence or chance.

The message of many of the Old Testament prophets was that God was chastening his people through the things they were suffering.

Today, God chastens. Yet many people, even Christians, do not see God in the events of life as he works everything for good, doing his work in the midst of good times and bad times. It is our part to interpret life, to know the times so we can know what God wants us to do.

If you recognize the word chasten as a Bible word, you may be thinking about Hebrews 12:6. Whom the Lord loves, he chastens (which is a quote from Prov. 3:11-12). God’s chastening, or discipline, is a loving action that trains and shapes us into his image. God guides, persuades, and sanctifies.

This week: listen to God’s word. Look at life through God’s lens. God’s life lessons are for our learning, and learning is a primary characteristic of a disciple – a learner. How is God chastening you? What is God teaching you? What does God want you to learn?