

## THE DRAMA OF DISCIPLINE: TOWARD AN INTERTEXTUAL PROFILE OF *PAIDEIA* IN HEBREWS 12

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**Abstract:** *When the concept of discipline (paideia) is examined in the biblical writings, often an interpreter makes a choice between the punitive or educative sense of the term. Does it mean correction for disobedience or does it mean the process of education or training for a task? In Heb 12:3–11, this interpretive choice becomes critically important. In particular, determining the appropriate conceptual background that informs this concept is necessary for understanding its meaning and function in Hebrews 12. This study seeks to demonstrate the strategic significance of this passage, examine the nature of paideia, and then provide a profile of two OT contexts that likely inform the concept of discipline in Hebrews 12: the directly quoted context of the book of Proverbs and the less recognized intertextual backdrop of the book of Deuteronomy.*

**Key Words:** *Hebrews, Hebrews 12, discipline, paideia, intertextuality, conceptual background, Proverbs, Deuteronomy*

When the concept of discipline (*paideia*) is examined in the biblical writings, often an interpreter makes a choice between the punitive or educative sense of the term. Does it mean correction for disobedience or does it mean the process of *education* or *training* for a task? In Heb 12:3–11, this interpretive choice becomes critically important. The term *paideia* itself is one of the verbal elements that stitch the tapestry of this section together.<sup>1</sup> In particular, determining the appropriate conceptual background that informs this concept is necessary for understanding its meaning and function in Hebrews 12. In contrast to other portions of Hebrews and other portions even of this passage, one might say Heb 12:3–11 has not received an inordinate amount of analysis. Accordingly, this study seeks to demonstrate the strategic significance of this passage, examine the nature of *paideia*, and then provide a profile of two OT contexts that likely inform the concept of discipline in Hebrews 12: the directly quoted context of the book of Proverbs and the less recognized intertextual backdrop of the book of Deuteronomy.

### I. THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF HEBREWS 12:3–11

Why is it the case that Heb 12:3–11 is sometimes downplayed or neglected? Does this passage contain an “offensively banal piece of advice” as some readers

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<sup>1</sup> A form of the word for discipline occurs in 12:5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11. Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 467, notes that “the concentration of this distinctive vocabulary in Hebrews 12 unifies the section.”

might conclude?<sup>2</sup> And, if not, what is its role in the flow of the discourse? In light of the tightly crafted nature of most of the letter, the function of the discussion of divine discipline in Heb 12:3–11 is an important interpretive question. Though N. Clayton Croy notes that this passage is sometimes neglected, he contends that it is not “inconsequential, a sort of epistolary backwater.”<sup>3</sup> Rather, in its synthesis and development of the themes of sonship, suffering, and perseverance, this paragraph unit expresses “supremely the letter’s paraenetic aim: to reinvigorate the flagging faith of the readers.”<sup>4</sup> Matthew Thiessen also notes that “one is hard-pressed to find much discussion of 12.5–13.”<sup>5</sup> This study joins Croy and Thiessen (*inter alia*) in attempting to fill in a bit of this scholarly lacuna.

There are several sometimes neglected features of this passage that make it particularly prominent in this section. First, Heb 12:3–11 is the first paragraph unit following the rhetorical peak of 12:1–2.<sup>6</sup> These justly famous first two verses of chapter twelve are the last of a long string of exemplars that populate the “great cloud of witnesses” in chapter eleven of those who endured various trials “by faith.” As readers of Hebrews have always noted, this passage is a striking and stunning description of Jesus as one who has accomplished the perfect work of redemption by enduring the shame of the cross. After the Christological climax of

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Luke T. Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (NLT; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 319, who observes that “these verses are critical to understanding both the Christology of Hebrews and its vision of discipleship. Yet, because the metaphorical field within which they work is often missed, the following section can be regarded as the intrusion of an offensively banal bit of advice.”

<sup>3</sup> N. Clayton Croy, *Endurance in Suffering: Hebrews 12.1–13 in Its Rhetorical, Religious, and Philosophical Context* (SNTSMS 98; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Thiessen, “Hebrews 12.5–13, the Wilderness Period, and Israel’s Discipline,” *NTS* 55 (2009): 366.

<sup>6</sup> The boundaries of this paragraph unit are debated, as scholars begin and end the surrounding sections at various points. One reason many commentators begin this passage at 12:4 is because the editors of the NA<sup>28</sup> make a paragraph break after 12:3 rather than after 12:2. There are also a number of reasons to treat 12:3–11 as a paragraph unit. One initial observation is that 12:1–2 works well as a discrete unit. In this regard, the *γάρ* of v. 3 can work to connect v. 3ff to 12:1–2, thus closely associating the paragraphs rather than just sentences. The content of 12:3ff, then, would function in some ways as support material and an expansion of this crucial exhortation to run the race with endurance. Second, the grammatical use of asyndeton in v. 4 points to a close relationship with what has preceded as well, while not necessarily entailing a content shift. In this regard, one would expect the statements of vv. 4–5 to relate directly to the content of v. 3. In other words, there is not as much indication of a shift in content as there is after v. 2. Third, there is a verbal parallel between “endured” (*ὑπομενεγκότα*) of v. 3 and “endure” (*ὑπομένετε*) of v. 7. Together, these terms would also connect to the “endurance” language of v. 2. These key phrases stitch together the most prominent clauses of the paragraph unit. Regarding the other boundary of the paragraph, though the larger unit is probably 12:3–17, there is a clear shift in v. 12 to a portion of the discourse that results from 12:3–11 (marked by *διό*). In this scheme, the rhetorically striking elements of vv. 12–13 are a direct application of the exhortations of vv. 3–11. In light of these cumulative structural considerations, the following textual analysis will focus on 12:3–11 as a discrete paragraph unit. Proponents of the 12:3–11 boundaries include the NASB, ESV, O’Brien (*Letter to the Hebrews*, 459), and Cynthia L. Westfall (*A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship between Form and Meaning* [LNTS 297; London: T&T Clark, 2005], 264–65), among others. The NASB follows the 12:3–11 structure internally, but this decision is obscured orthographically by the insertion of a bolded section header after v. 4 (“A Father’s Discipline”).

the “author and perfecter” of our faith who ran his race with endurance for the joy set before him, the shift to *paideia* in 12:3–11 can seem abrupt and almost parochial. Though this shift is perhaps one of the reasons why the passage is sometimes neglected, it also represents part of its unique significance. What does the writer say when he has said all there is to say about the finished work of Jesus? The urgency of this question points to the critical importance of the passage.

Second, the center of this passage is the quotation of Prov 3:11–12, where the term and concept of *paideia* is introduced. Significantly, the writer fashions this particular quotation of Scripture as a forgotten *exhortation* (*παρακλήσεως*). The task of exhortation is critical for the purpose of the letter.<sup>7</sup> However, the writer only uses this expression to describe a written text one other place, when he characterizes his own composition as a whole as a *τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως*. There in Heb 13:22, the writer urges, “bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.”<sup>8</sup> Here in Heb 12:5, he urges, “you have forgotten” the *παρακλήσεως* that is “addressed to you as sons.” Accordingly, Heb 12:3–11 represents a unique rhetorical moment (a kind of intertextual *Inception*): The writer gives us an exhortation within an exhortation; a carefully crafted sermon, within a carefully crafted sermon. The embedded *παρακλήσεως* about *paideia* gives this section a unique level of prominence within the broader discourse. Accordingly, the writer’s use of Prov 3:11–12 becomes central to the textual tapestry of this particular moment in the letter.

Third, after the quotation of Proverbs 3, the writer then expands on the notion of discipline in an extended exposition section (Heb 12:7–11). This expository move gives further prominence to the quotation (in this regard, the exposition far out-extends the quotation).<sup>9</sup> By sheer virtue of textual real estate, then, these features demonstrate that the quotation and the concept of *enduring discipline* are central to the writer’s intentions in this section of the letter.

## II. DEBATING DISCIPLINE IN HEBREWS 12: PUNITIVE OR NON-PUNITIVE?

Two of the most recent monograph- or article-level studies of this passage argue that the “discipline” in Hebrews 12 should be understood primarily in educative terms and against the backdrop of either Greco-Roman culture or the interpretive grid of Second Temple Judaism. In his volume, *Endurance in Suffering: Hebrews 12.1–13 in Its Rhetorical, Religious, and Philosophical Context*, N. Clayton Croy argues on the whole that *paideia* lacks a negative punitive sense in this passage and mostly

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<sup>7</sup> See Heb 3:13 (“encourage one another day after day,” *παρακαλεῖτε*); 6:18 (“we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement,” *παρακλήσιν*); 10:25 (“but encouraging one another,” *παρακαλοῦντες*); 13:19 (“and I urge you all the more to do this,” *παρακαλῶ*); and 13:22 (“But I urge you, brethren,” *παρακαλῶ*).

<sup>8</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the NASB.

<sup>9</sup> There are 22 words in the quotation and 107 words in the introduction, exposition, and reflection on the quoted text in 12:5–11.

involves the positive sense of educational instruction and moral training.<sup>10</sup> He bases this observation on an extensive study of the use of *paideia* in Greco-Roman literature. In particular, Croy argues that the athletic imagery of Hebrews 12 confirms that only education and moral training are in view. Croy's monograph is one of the only dedicated studies of this passage in print. Because most commentators following him take his work on this subject into account, Croy's study is an important dialogue partner on this particular question.

In a 2007 article called "Hebrews and the End of the Exodus," Matthew Thiessen argues that Hebrews utilizes the image of Israel's wilderness period not only in Hebrews 3–4 but in a pervasive way throughout the letter.<sup>11</sup> In a further article, Thiessen extends this thesis in relation to Heb 12:5–13. Building on Croy's work, Thiessen examines the possible OT contexts informing Hebrews 12. He focuses on Jewish exegesis of Deuteronomy 8 (e.g. Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, and Josephus), and argues that these interpreters parallel what Hebrews does with the concept of discipline. Thiessen maintains that non-punitive discipline is involved here by arguing that discipline in this passage "should be understood as an allusion to the *παιδεία* that Israel experienced in the wilderness period."<sup>12</sup>

In dialogue with but in distinction from Croy and Thiessen, I suggest that the concept of discipline (*paideia*) in Hebrews includes both negative and positive connotations. Not only is the semantic range of *paideia* capable of this nuance, it is possible that the writer is exploiting this multifaceted sense of the term. This use of *paideia* is not a linguistic innovation, but is drawn from strategically chosen OT texts and resonates with the overall structure and message of Hebrews. To demonstrate this matrix of meaning, I will examine the writer's quotation and explication of Proverbs 3 (a sometimes neglected use of the OT in Hebrews) and also examine the background of the concept of *paideia* in the Pentateuch. If the concept of discipline in Proverbs is informed by the concept of discipline in the Pentateuch, then this intertextual sequence is hermeneutically significant for reading Hebrews 12. In sum, I suggest that by drawing on these two OT contexts, the writer is able to employ the concept of discipline both as a means of correction for disobedience and also as a means of training in obedience (or at least in a way that allows both ideas to remain active).

### III. THE NATURE OF DISCIPLINE IN PROVERBS

In recent extended studies of *paideia* in the book of Hebrews, one curious feature is the omission of any direct consideration of *paideia* in the book of Proverbs. Following the guidance of the writer of Hebrews, however, it seems appropriate to draw our understanding of *paideia* directly from the book of Proverbs itself. Indeed, the writer chooses to introduce the concept of discipline from a direct quotation of

<sup>10</sup> See Croy, *Endurance in Suffering*, 35–36.

<sup>11</sup> See Matthew Thiessen, "Hebrews and the End of the Exodus," *NorT* 49 (2007): 353–69.

<sup>12</sup> See Thiessen, "Hebrews 12.5–13, the Wilderness Period, and Israel's Discipline," 366–79.

Prov 3:11–12. Consequently, disciplined reflection on the concept of *paideia* in Proverbs 3 and within the book of Proverbs as a whole seems imperative.

It is at this point where disagreement arises. The value of this particular interpretive horizon is particularly questioned by Croy. For him, the connection to the “wisdom tradition” of Proverbs is actually a detriment to understanding this passage. For Croy and others, the Greco-Roman concept of training or moral instruction should norm our understanding of *paideia* in Heb 12:1–13. On this view, importing the conceptual baggage of Proverbs 3 is an unwelcome intrusion into the cohesive training or “gymnastic interpretation” of discipline that the writer develops in Hebrews 12.<sup>13</sup> In my opinion, this decision is the *crux interpretum* of this passage: to the point, which conceptual background is hermeneutically relevant to the meaning of *paideia* in Hebrews 12?

Croy laments that modern commentators combine the corrective and educative sense of *paideia*. For Croy,

This observation seems to derive more from the semantic range of the word than from the argument of Hebrews 12.1–13, its literary context, and its place in the larger milieu of ancient reflections on human suffering. Hebrews’ concept of suffering as *paideia* was rarely compared with similar concepts in Greco-Roman authors. Commentators usually neglected, or at most made passing reference to, the Stoic notion of hardship as education or training. The presence of a citation in Hebrews 12.5–6 from Jewish wisdom literature, namely Proverbs 3.11–12, seems to have skewed the discussion toward Jewish concepts of suffering.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, Croy’s repeated contention throughout his work is that the quotation of Proverbs 3 has unduly influenced (i.e. “skewed”) the discussion toward Jewish concepts of *paideia*. For Croy, this does not do justice to the literary context of the passages.

Croy develops this objection later in his work after surveying the parallels within Greco-Roman literature. He asserts, “Given such a variety of possible interpretations, one’s exegesis of Hebrews 12.1–13 must not be done within a rigid framework.”<sup>15</sup> “True,” Croy continues, “the author of Hebrews appropriates Proverbs 3.11–12 as a text for exposition, but the intellectual milieu of the author, who gives evidence of being in tune with the rhetorical and philosophical currents of his day, was rich with alternatives, any of which could exert an influence without intruding in the form of a citation.”<sup>16</sup>

Accordingly, Croy’s basic understanding of the concept of *paideia* from Proverbs is that the writer of Hebrews has reconceptualized it “in such a way that Proverbs 3.11–12 becomes *merely* the carrier of useful terminology.”<sup>17</sup> Croy notes, too, “Semantically, any of these nuances is possible for *paideia* and its cognates in He-

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<sup>13</sup> For this characterization, see Croy, *Endurance in Suffering*, 7–9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 197 (*italics mine*).

brews 12.5–11. Contextual factors, as always, must determine meaning.”<sup>18</sup> He then asserts that “the first-century usage of the word group *by pagan Greek speakers* was overwhelmingly *non-punitive*.”<sup>19</sup> Croy’s understanding, then, is that “it is quite possible that our author has employed a text that was not ideal in every respect, but was from a source regarded as authoritative by his readers, and was, in the main, suitable to his purposes.”<sup>20</sup>

Croy essentially argues that although the writer quotes the words of Prov 3:11–12 at length, he draws his basic conception of discipline (*paideia*) primarily from alternative sources (i.e. those in the Greco-Roman “milieu”). As will be noted below, many commentators take Croy’s overall approach to this passage and look in the direction he points. Sensing that the notion of *paideia* in Hebrews 12 is important and also a bit opaque, readers readily recognize the need for a conceptual framework in which to set the writer’s discussion of the discipline of the Lord. Croy’s deep and reflective analysis of the Greco-Roman sense of *paideia* provides just such a depth dimension.

However, in this particular instance, the directional shift that Croy recommends seems like an unnecessary dismissal of the directly quoted Proverbs text. To disregard (by omission or reconceptualization) the intertextual cue that the writer himself gives by quoting this important passage from Proverbs seems to itself neglect the literary context.<sup>21</sup> Especially when the discourse setting of Hebrews as a whole is taken into account (a composition brimming with quotations, allusions, and echoes of the Hebrew Bible), then an orientation toward the textual world of the Hebrew Bible seems not to run roughshod over the immediate literary context but rather to follow its own contours. In order to make his argument, it seems Croy needs to demonstrate that the Greco-Roman “intellectual milieu” is strong enough and pronounced enough in the author’s communicative intention that it mutes the text that he explicitly cites.<sup>22</sup> In my view, this demonstration would not be possible based on the text of the letter itself.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Croy also notes that “the standard Classical Greek lexicon cites only biblical texts for the meanings ‘chastisement’ and ‘chastise, punish’ for the noun and verb respectively” (ibid.).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>21</sup> We can note here, too, that Croy’s discussion of the broader literary context of the book of Proverbs is very brief (see ibid., 89–90).

<sup>22</sup> Apparently, Croy believes interpreting the concept of discipline within the framework of Jewish wisdom literature (the context explicitly cited) is interpreting it within a “too rigid framework.” Croy’s alternative is less felicitous: the “jumble of ideas” that forms the interpretive milieu “in which Hebrews 12.1–13 raises its voice” (see ibid., 157). In this context, Croy observes that Jewish writers and Greco-Roman authors were “not monolithic, but varied and even contradictory” (ibid.). This is understandable, as Croy notes, because “a complex, existential problem like suffering does not permit easy solutions” (ibid.). Though Croy draws the opposite conclusion, it seems that the variegated situation he describes would actually favor following the guidance of the writer in pointing readers to a stable literary context that is connected to a broader conceptual framework (i.e. a proverb within the book of Proverbs within the conceptual world of OT Jewish wisdom literature).

<sup>23</sup> In this regard, the argument would necessarily have to be one of conceptual parallels (because textual examples are not present in Hebrews). The opposite is the case for the intertextual links to the OT.

1. *Sketch of paideia in Proverbs.* An important note to make here is that the concept of *paideia* in the book of Proverbs does have a corrective, punitive aspect, but is also capable of the positive concept of discipline as guidance and instruction. Though we often associate “discipline” exclusively with punishment, the concept in Proverbs is broader than that. It can convey the idea of both discipline as correction for disobedience and discipline as training in obedience. The concept also combines the idea of teaching with the notion of active guidance. And, this is no bare or brute instruction that is in view. Rather, in Proverbs 1–9 especially, the *paideia* concept involves a father giving a word of instruction and also guiding the efforts of the son who carries it out. As I explore below, the integrated connection of the father-son image to the concept of discipline is hermeneutically significant. In Proverbs, discipline can variously entail correction (13:24; 23:12–14; 29:17), reproach (5:12; 15:32), and also guidance and instruction (23:19). Most commentators on Proverbs note the possibility of this wide semantic range for the concept.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, to argue that the corrective sense of *paideia* is not present in Hebrews (along with the non-punitive sense), one would have to argue the writer does *not* draw his understanding of *paideia* from the book of Proverbs.

Accordingly, because of the multiplex nature of *paideia* in Proverbs, it is possible that the writer of Hebrews is utilizing just this dual function. The word *παιδεία* itself is capable of this flexible semantic range.<sup>25</sup> In general terms, *παιδεία* can be defined as “the act of providing guidance for responsible living.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, if the book of Proverbs genuinely forms the backdrop for the concept in Hebrews 12, then this “guidance” would involve both punitive and non-punitive notions. In the LXX passage from Prov 3:11, *παιδεία* translates the Hebrew word מוֹסֵר which can also include the idea of discipline, training, and exhortation/warning.<sup>27</sup> This semantic range can be seen from the usage of forms of *παιδεία* or מוֹסֵר in the book of Proverbs. Depending on the context, “discipline” can have the wholly positive sense of education or training (as Croy aptly notes) or also a wholly negative sense of punishment or chastisement. Because of this range, the term is flexible enough to convey a blend of these emphases if the context it is used in contains both elements. Commentators that see the quoted Proverbs text as a resource for the writer’s understanding of *paideia* often make this connection and interpret the concept accordingly in Hebrews 12. As Lane argues, the biblical concept of discipline “combines the nuances of training, instruction, and firm guidance with those of

<sup>24</sup> E.g., see Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 34–35. Fox observes the dominant sense of “correction” but also recognizes the “extended sense” of “admonition” or “preemptive correction, a warning given prior to failure” (p. 35, italics his). Cf. David P. Kingdon, “Discipline,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 448–50.

<sup>25</sup> Croy observes this semantic range as well, noting that the term *παιδεία* is “without question, a polyvalent term” and that “the history of research” shows that “beginning in the early patristic period, commentators were aware of several different nuances” (*Endurance in Suffering*, 197).

<sup>26</sup> See BDAG, s.v. “*παιδεία*.” The only other uses of this term in the NT outside Hebrews are Eph 6:4 and 2 Tim 3:16.

<sup>27</sup> See the range of usage listed in *HALOT*, s.v. “מוֹסֵר.”

reproof, correction, and punishment.”<sup>28</sup> This understanding of *paideia* is particularly fitting for the type of argument the writer is making and the type of situation that he is addressing in the broader composition.

2. *Sketch of Proverbs 3 in Hebrews 12.* There are a number of features that seem to confirm the orientation toward the OT. For instance, even the way the writer describes and introduces this quotation is influenced by its textual setting in Proverbs. The shape of the book of Proverbs guides the reading of the individual proverbs that it contains. In the first nine chapters of the book, the writer of the Proverbs depicts a father instructing his son in the ways of wisdom. This extended analogy provides the narrative framework for the rest of the book.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the structural context of the book of Proverbs encourages its readers to view its contents as wisdom to be received as a son would from his godly father. This feature of the quotation’s context allows the writer of Hebrews to apply these words from Proverbs directly to his readers. The proverb can thus fittingly address them “today” as sons. He is about to ask his readers to view their suffering as discipline from the Lord, and he draws his exegetical support for this bold exhortation from the wisdom of the Scriptures.

The keywords of this quotation are son (*υἱός*), discipline (*παιδεία*), and Lord (*κύριος*). These words are particularly suited to the writer’s purpose in Hebrews 12 and serve as the links in several of the semantic chains running through this chapter.<sup>30</sup> These quoted verses function as the “crowning exhortation” of a series of four exhortations in the larger unit of Prov 3:1–12.<sup>31</sup> The content of the quotation consists of a strong discouragement from neglecting the discipline of the Lord. This word is directed in intimate terms to “my son” (*υἱέ μου*).<sup>32</sup> The singular *υἱέ* is sandwiched between the plural *υἱοίς* in v. 5 and in v. 7. Thus, the writer demonstrates that this model of fatherly discipline applies to all children. The writer further informs the concept of this discipline by unambiguously designating its source.

<sup>28</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13* (WBC 47B; Dallas: Word, 1991), 420. Similarly, see Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 648–49; and David L. Allen, *Hebrews* (NAC 35; Nashville: B&H, 2010), 580–81. Allen notes that “punitive discipline is beyond question part and parcel of Christian living,” but maintains that “the focus in this passage is on non-punitive discipline” (p. 580).

<sup>29</sup> For the rhetorical unity of chaps. 1–9, see Glenn D. Pemberton, “The Rhetoric of the Father in Proverbs 1–9,” *JOT* 30 (2005): 63–82. Michael V. Fox calls this first major section the “hermeneutical preamble to the rest of the book” in “Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9,” *JBL* 116 (1997): 613.

<sup>30</sup> A “semantic chain” is an instance of “the use of lexis in grouping,” and specifically an example of grouping “items from the same semantic domain” (Westfall, *Discourse Analysis of Hebrews*, 47–50).

<sup>31</sup> See George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews,” in *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 986. The first four exhortations are to “trust the Lord” (Prov 3:5), “fear the Lord” (3:7), and “honor the Lord” (3:7). Thus the portion that the writer quotes here should be seen as intimately connected to these other directives.

<sup>32</sup> The “preponderance of the textual variants” of both the LXX of Prov 3:11 and the Hebrews text point to the addition of *μου* by the writer. Cf. Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: An Investigation of Its Influence with Special Consideration to the Use of Hab 2:3–4 in Heb 10:37–38* (WUNT 2/160; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 50. This addition adds to the intimacy of the address, but is also likely drawn from the context of the book of Proverbs, where the address “my son” is common (e.g. Prov 1:8, 10; 2:1; 3:1, etc.).



This is no generic hardship or faceless rebuke. On the contrary, it is the discipline of the Lord (παιδείας κυρίου).<sup>33</sup>

The writer senses that his readers are in danger of regarding this discipline “lightly.”<sup>34</sup> The writer intimates that the discipline of the Lord must not be spurned nor merely tolerated, but rather esteemed and highly regarded. By means of parallelism characteristic of Hebrew poetry, the proverb describes taking the discipline of the Lord lightly as growing weary (ἐκλύου) when the reproof (ἐλεγχόμενος) of the Lord comes. The reason a possibility of growing weary exists is because of the presence of the discipline of the Lord.<sup>35</sup>

The reasoning the writer of the proverb gives for his exhortation is that the Lord disciplines (παιδεύει) the ones that he loves (ὃν ἀγαπᾷ).<sup>36</sup> The present tense of the verb indicates that this process is ongoing. There is here an intimate connection between discipline and love that is not necessarily intuitive.<sup>37</sup> The writer uses this quotation to demonstrate that discipline does not necessarily entail cruelty. Rather, just the opposite is true in this case. The motivation for this rebuke and instruction is love. Thus, where the Lord is concerned, the act of disciplining should not be viewed solely in negative terms. This discipline is further described in vivid and visceral terms as scourging (μαστιγοῖ). The scourging image confirms and emphasizes the physicality of this suffering and hardship.<sup>38</sup> The severity of the physical punishment is for the purpose of correction, a difficult but essential element of “discipline.” The one whom the Lord loves and receives, also experiences his discipline and instruction. Thus, the ideal son in the book of Proverbs is to accept the discipline of his father, and he is also to accept the discipline from the Lord.<sup>39</sup> The writer of Hebrews will apply this reality directly to his readers.

<sup>33</sup> The genitive κυρίου here is a subjective genitive. The Lord is the one doing the discipline.

<sup>34</sup> The verb ὀλιγωρεῖ involves neglecting and having “little esteem for someth[ing].” See BDAG, s.v. “ὀλιγωρέω.” In the LXX, ὀλιγωρέω translates the Hebrew word **זנז**, which entails the strong notion of rejection (cf. HALOT, s.v. “זנז”). Thus, growing weary of the Lord’s discipline approaches a rejection of it.

<sup>35</sup> The sense of ἐλεγχόμενος here most likely carries the idea of rebuke and correction for wrongdoing, but the word can also involve the concept of scrutiny and careful examination. See the lexical formulations in BDAG, s.v. “ἐλέγχω.”

<sup>36</sup> The γάρ here most likely supplies the grounds for the first element of the proverb in v. 5b. The word παιδεύει is the verbal form of παιδεία from v. 5.

<sup>37</sup> The word order perhaps anticipates the surprising nature of the assertion. The author forefronts “whom the Lord loves.”

<sup>38</sup> The word μαστιγοῖ here is one of the key differences between the LXX text that the writer quotes and the Hebrew MT. As Gheorghita, *Role of Septuagint in Hebrews*, 50, notes, “the Greek text incorporates a more overt reference to physical punishment, which is absent from the Hebrew text of Pr 3.” He argues that this addition functions as a “reinforcement of the Author’s thought in this section,” as μαστιγοῖ “brings to the fore the idea of physical suffering so dominant in this section.”

<sup>39</sup> Perhaps an important textual note here is that the MT of Prov 3:12b has a different ending emphasis than the LXX translation. In the Hebrew text, the proverb ends with the father-son image: “For whom the LORD loves He reproves, *Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.*” Here, divine discipline is directly connected to the father-son analogy (and provides another verbal link to the context of Deut 8:5). Cf. Michael Shepherd’s brief reflection on this text-critical situation in *The Text in the Middle* (StBibLit 162; New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 162, where he notes that “it is possible that the writer to

In Heb 12:7, the writer begins the second main portion of this passage. On the basis of the directly preceding quotation from Proverbs, the writer exhorts his readers to endure unto discipline: εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένετε. The first two verbal elements of this verse strikingly resonate with earlier parts of the paragraph. The concept of *paideia* which begins the sentence with εἰς παιδείαν is drawn directly from the quoted proverb of 12:5–6. At the beginning of the clause, the prepositional phrase is in an emphatic position. The concept of discipline is the anchor of the interpretive framework within which the readers are to make sense of their suffering and striving against sin. Though ὑπομένετε could be taken and translated as an indicative (i.e. “it is for discipline that you endure”), the exhortatory nature and structure of the paragraph point to its imperatival force.<sup>40</sup> As such, it serves as the second thematic peak of the paragraph unit and resonates with the other major imperative of the passage in 12:3.<sup>41</sup> It drives the remainder of the paragraph, rendering the quoted proverbial exhortation into a present imperative for the readers. There is most likely an implied object of ὑπομένετε that can be supplied by the context. The readers are to endure whatever hardship or trials that they might experience “as discipline” (εἰς παιδείαν) or as a component of their process of discipline.<sup>42</sup> The writer suggests that this mindset will infuse their seemingly unjustified and unnecessary hardship with meaning and purpose.

On the basis of the Proverbs passage, the writer calls his readers to endure unto discipline. He thus strikingly connects the concepts of endurance and discipline. The cause of their hardship and trial could be the result of striving against sin, persecution for faith in Christ, or any other type of unpleasant circumstance. Whatever hardship the readers are going through, they are to view it as discipline from the Lord. This discipline will train them to be who the Lord has called them to be. Just as Christ endured undeserved hostilities (12:3), so too the readers must also endure as divine discipline (12:7) any similar hostilities, specific hardships, or possible consequences of sin.

the Hebrews is aware of both readings and seeks to make use of the two together” and also that the MT of Prov 3:12b “is the only one that compares YHWH to a father.”

<sup>40</sup> J. Harold Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Hebrews* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1998), 518, surveys the proponents of both the indicative and imperative rendering. Westfall, *Discourse Analysis of Hebrews*, 265 n. 93, takes ὑπομένετε as an imperative, arguing that “the high level of second person plural imperatives in the passage makes an imperative more likely.” O’Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 464, follows the same logic. So, too, Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 421–22. Contra Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 650; and Johnson, *Hebrews*, 320–21.

<sup>41</sup> The one whom the readers are to consider (ἀναλογίσασθε) in v. 3 is the one who has endured (ὑπομεμενηκότα). Like him, they must also endure. This verbal resonance connects the two major imperatives of this passage.

<sup>42</sup> This reasoning appears to be behind the NIV’s rendering of v. 7a: “Endure hardship.” See also the similar renderings of the NASB, NRSV, and NJB. O’Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 465, recognizes that commentators/translators tend to supply an implied paraphrase to clarify the “highly compressed” exhortation, but notes that “the main idea is that endurance is part of their training in faith.” Cf. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 421, who notes that the meaning of this clause “can be conveyed only through paraphrastic expansion in light of the immediate context.”

Continuing his thought and drawing out another element of the Proverbs quotation, the writer explains that God is dealing with and identifying the readers as sons: *ὡς υἱοῖς ὑμῖν προσφέρεται ὁ θεός*. The phrase *ὡς υἱοῖς* is drawn directly from the quotation in 12:5.<sup>43</sup> God himself (*ὁ θεός*) is the subject of this dealing, which connects with the idea of the discipline *of the Lord* (*κυρίου*) in 12:5 as well.<sup>44</sup> Regardless of the origin and nature of the hardship the readers experience, they can nonetheless rest in the fact that it is God himself who oversees this process as a disciplining father. Their identity is defined by their relationship to the one who disciplines them. The readers might suppose that God had abandoned them because of their pain or hardship. The writer states that, on the contrary, God is not rejecting them. He is disciplining them. For the writer, there is a vast chasm separating the two notions.

In 12:7a, the writer declares that God deals with the readers as sons, and in 12:7–10, the writer expands various elements of that statement. Indeed, the rest of the paragraph is a reflective development of the quoted Proverbs text (12:8–10) with a focus on the natural place of *paideia* within the father-son relationship and the fittingness of this image to explain the nature of divine discipline. Finally, the writer sums up the discussion regarding discipline in 12:11 by making a general comment on the character and effect of this *paideia*. After quoting and illustrating a passage from the book of Proverbs, the writer concludes this discourse unit by penning a proverbial articulation of his own.<sup>45</sup> He begins his summary statement by describing and emphasizing “all discipline” (*πᾶσα παιδεία*).<sup>46</sup> He keys in on the common and natural perception of this discipline. All discipline seems for the moment (*πρὸς μὲν τὸ παρόν*) to be marked not by joy (*χαρᾶς*) but rather by sorrow (*λύπης*). However, these sorrows ultimately do not have staying power. The writer immediately points his readers to the future time following the present time of sorrowful discipline. This future time involves the fruit of the discipline they have received, namely, the peaceful fruit of righteousness. This reward of peace and righteousness is yielded or produced by the discipline of the Lord to which they have submitted themselves.

<sup>43</sup> The *ὡς* here implicates the readers as sons, rather than merely drawing a comparison between the readers and those whom God deals with as sons. Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 647, comments that “Scripture addresses the readers, not as if they were sons, but *qua* sons, in their real status.”

<sup>44</sup> The emphatic position of *ὁ θεός* at the end of the sentence highlights the “clear evidence of God’s fatherly care” (O’Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 465).

<sup>45</sup> Here the writer makes a statement on “all discipline” in more general, almost proverbial terms. Thus, this sentence functions well as a summative statement concluding this paragraph unit. Westfall, *Discourse Analysis of Hebrews*, 265, describes it as a “gnomic statement” about discipline. She also notes that “the summary forms a cohesive tie between *παιδεία* (discipline) and the athletic imagery in vv. 1–2 and 4 with the word *γεγυμνασμένοις* (trained), and signals that the athletic metaphor is still active” (265–66).

<sup>46</sup> As the first element in this sentence, the phrase *πᾶσα παιδεία* is in an emphatic position. There is also a striking case of alliteration in the first few phrases of the sentence that makes use of a reiterated “p” sound: *πᾶσα δὲ παιδεία πρὸς μὲν τὸ παρόν*. The author uses a similar device to begin the prologue (1:1). These features heighten the prominence of this summary statement.

Indeed, the reward is only for those who have been trained (*γεγυμνασμένοις*) by the difficult discipline mentioned throughout this paragraph unit. This training includes the notion of intense training over an extended period of time.<sup>47</sup> Those who receive the peaceful fruit of righteousness are those who have been brought into a state of “being trained.” Building on the endurance language in 12:1–13, the writer encourages the readers here to endure as “trained” sons, as those who have maintained their training. This idea of training resonates with and builds on the prominent theme in 12:1–2 of running the race set before believers. In the last verse of this paragraph, the writer implies that the only hope that believers have for being able to endure the running of this race is if they have been trained by the discipline of the Lord. Thus, the content of this paragraph is integrally connected to the rest of chapter twelve and to the entire discourse.

In sum, the writer’s discussion of *paideia* in Heb 12:3–11 is dominated by the terms, images, and theological development of the quoted text from the book of Proverbs. Accordingly, the further question can now be raised: from where does the writer of Proverbs draw his understanding of *paideia*? Or put another way, within what conceptual framework does the writer understand the father-son image and its connection to the nature of *paideia*?<sup>48</sup>

#### IV. THE NATURE OF DISCIPLINE IN THE PENTATEUCH

One of the pressing questions under consideration relates to the way in which the writer understands the text he quotes from the book of Proverbs. As noted above, Croy’s study points to the Greco-Roman background for *paideia* as the interpretive grid for understanding the quoted words of Proverbs 3 in Hebrews 12, and his analysis has influenced many interpretations of the concept of discipline in Heb 12:3–11. Virtually every interpreter of Hebrews 12 at least provisionally interacts with Proverbs because the writer directly quotes this passage. However, there is another intertextual connection to consider. For it is possible that the writer draws his conception of *paideia* not only from the book of Proverbs but also from the Pentateuch. Curiously, although Deut 8:5 mentions *discipline* in remarkably similar terms as Hebrews does, most commentators do not consider or even note the implications of this connection.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, to explain the writer’s understanding of

<sup>47</sup> In extrabiblical literature, *γυμνάζω* commonly means to “exercise naked,” oftentimes in a gymnasium as preparation for some form of physical competition. See BDAG, s.v. “*γυμνάζω*.” Cf. Croy’s discussion of *γεγυμνασμένοις* and its contribution to the “agonistic” (athletic) imagery of this passage in *Endurance in Suffering*, 158–59, 207–9.

<sup>48</sup> To illustrate the conceptual divide at this point, note how two commentators explain the presence of the father-son image that the writer uses to exposit the quotation of Prov 3:11–12. For Lane, “the background to the argument is furnished by the OT” (*Hebrews 9–13*, 422), while Johnson argues that this filial expectation rests on a “Greco-Roman cultural assumption” (*Hebrews*, 321).

<sup>49</sup> For example, recent commentators that do not mention or cite Deut 8:5 in their comments on Heb 12:3–11 include F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 342–46; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 646–56; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 315–23; David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, 576–83; Gareth L. Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 611–28; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation; Nashville:

discipline, many draw instead on the conceptual framework of the Greco-Roman understanding of *paideia* (and usually directly cite Croy's study).<sup>50</sup>

Despite this reticence, there are at least two reasons for considering the nature of discipline in the Pentateuch at this point. First, the writer of Hebrews draws extensively on texts, themes, and images from the Pentateuch throughout his letter. One might say that if the conceptual framework of Hebrews is the textual world of the Hebrew Bible, then the Pentateuch is the geographic center of that textual world. In particular, the writer draws on the book of Deuteronomy in strategic ways. Fittingly, too, Deuteronomy is already itself an interpretive reflection on the texts and events of Israel's history. The author of the Pentateuch as a whole and the writer of Hebrews thus share a similar compositional strategy. To our point, they are both using the image of the wilderness generation in order to exhort a future generation of readers to endure over time in faithfulness.<sup>51</sup>

Second, the concept of discipline in the book of Proverbs is possibly informed by the development of the concept in the book of Deuteronomy. The textual links between Proverbs and the Pentateuch increase the plausibility that the concept of discipline in the Pentateuch informs the writer of Proverbs. So, it is already well established that the book of Deuteronomy and the wilderness image are widely used by Hebrews. Further, the Proverbs 3 text that Hebrews 12 quotes might itself also be drawing on a strategic text from Deuteronomy. In this light, we can examine the intertextual currency between Proverbs and Deuteronomy that might fund an exegetical payoff in Hebrews 12. The goal of what follows is not to explicate these connections fully. Rather, the aim is to demonstrate that there are enough textual connections between Hebrews, Proverbs, and Deuteronomy to warrant giving further consideration to the OT as the prevailing conceptual backdrop for the concept of *paideia* in Hebrews 12.

Holman Reference, 2015), 379–86; and Albert Vanhoye, *The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary* (New York: Paulist, 2015), 199–203; O'Brien quotes the text of Deut 8:5 but does not comment on it, give any reflection on the context of Deuteronomy, nor discuss its possible connection to the book of Proverbs (*Letter to the Hebrews*, 464). Moreover, in his subsequent discussion, he lists Deut 6:7 along with other references in relation to the OT motif of parental discipline, but again, does not comment upon the context of Deuteronomy. Lane quotes Deut 8:5 and then summarizes the OT connection between discipline and sonship. He also argues that “the proper framework for understanding the character of divine discipline is the covenant, which binds God and his children together in a familial relationship” (*Hebrews 9–13*, 420; cf. 421). This particular point is enhanced when Heb 12:3–11 is directly connected to both Prov 3:11–12 and Deut 8:5. Cf. Thiessen's survey of ancient Jewish interpreters who make a connection between the wilderness period and the notion of “educative discipline” (“Hebrews 12:5–13, the Wilderness Period, and Israel's Discipline,” 369–73).

<sup>50</sup> Commentators who do not draw upon the context of the book of Deuteronomy (or cite Deut 8:5) often interact at length with Croy's study and/or highlight Greco-Roman cultural parallels.

<sup>51</sup> For an extensive study on the relationship between Hebrews and the book of Deuteronomy, see David M. Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation in Hebrews: A Study in Narrative Re-presentation* (WUNT 2/238; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). Allen examines quotations (pp. 44–71), allusions (pp. 71–91), and echoes (pp. 91–104) to Deuteronomy. Significantly, he also notes “non-citational” intertextual connections on the level of genre, rhetoric, and compositional strategy. Allen concludes that Hebrews does not just “use” Deuteronomy but “becomes a new Deuteronomy” (p. 225).

The book of Deuteronomy presents itself as the last words of Moses on the plains of Moab addressed to the second generation of Israel after the exodus (see Deut 1:1–8).<sup>52</sup> This setting envisions the entire “book of Moses” as a form of direct address to the sons of Israel. Within this rhetorical situation, in Deuteronomy 8, the author directly addresses the purpose and result of Israel’s wilderness wanderings. The author states, “You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not” (Deut 8:2). In this wilderness, the Lord both tests and provides. The author continues, “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know” (8:3). This was so that Israel would know that “man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD” (8:3). Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

For the author, the obvious conclusion is that God did not abandon them in the wilderness but was guiding them in discipline: “Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son” (8:5).<sup>53</sup> Here, the wilderness experience is a hardship but also a means by which Israel could see the hand of the Lord guiding them and teaching them as a Father guides and teaches a son.<sup>54</sup> Hence, the “discipline” image is directly tied to the filial relationship.

Significantly, the father-son discipline image is immediately followed by a guiding command (8:6) and a stern warning about the consequences of neglecting those guiding commands (8:11–20). Within the broader context of Deuteronomy 1–11, the passage about Israel’s experience of divine discipline in the wilderness is preceded by one of Deuteronomy’s most famous passages, the *shema* of Deuteronomy 6: “Hear O Israel, the Lord is your God, the Lord is One.” This declaration is connected to the very same father-son image. As 6:1 begins, “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. also Deut 29:1, “These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb.”

<sup>53</sup> In the LXX translation of Deut 8:5 (καὶ γνώσῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὡς εἶ τις παιδεύσαι ἄνθρωπος τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ οὕτως κύριος ὁ θεός σου παιδεύσει σε), the verb παιδεύσαι translates the Hebrew term רָס which can have the sense of “chastise, rebuke” or “to teach, bring up” (see HALOT, s.v. “רָס”). Worth noting here also is that the three key words of Prov 3:11–12 and Heb 12:3–11 are “son,” “discipline,” and “Lord.” Each of these concepts appears in Deut 8:5 (emphasized in quotation above).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Thiessen, “Hebrews 12:5–13, the Wilderness Period, and Israel’s Discipline,” 369: “Deuteronomy views the events of the exodus and wilderness wandering as a disciplinary period, meant to train the people in obedience to the law.” Thiessen connects Deut 8:5 to Heb 12:7–11, but he does not see an intertextual link between Deut 8:5 and Prov 3:11–12. Further, rather than a dual understanding of *paideia*, Thiessen argues that Deuteronomy “emphasizes the instructional nature of the wilderness period, not the punitive aspect of that time period” (p. 369).

LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life” (6:2).

The great commandment that follows the *shema* pictures a lifelong all-encompassing obedience to the Lord. The logistics of this great commandment are depicted within the father-son relationship: “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (6:7). Moses continues by pressing the image into the individual realm, “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (6:8–9). After further warning not to forget these realities and another rehearsal of the events of the exodus and the disobedience of the wilderness generation, Moses returns to the father-son image: “When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘what do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean which the LORD our God commanded you?’ then you shall say to your son, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand’” (6:20–21).

The following section between 6:20 and Deuteronomy 8 continues this exhortation to remember God’s dealing with Israel in the past generation, his reiterated guiding commands, and warnings regarding the response of the people in the future. Accordingly, Moses’s characterization of Israel’s wilderness experience in Deut 8:5 as the discipline of the Lord is set within the discourse context that is established in Deuteronomy 6. In Deuteronomy, then, the experience of Israel in the wilderness is both a negative and positive image. They are *wandering* in the wilderness because of their direct, repeated, and willful rebellion.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, they are also experiencing the provision of the Lord, their Father. To articulate this dual function of the wilderness experience, Moses uses the concept of discipline in the context of a Father-son relationship, an image that is deemed capable of such a multifaceted meaning.

Though we cannot fully develop the structure and shape of the book of Proverbs, it is significant that the narrative-like structural context of Proverbs 1–9 depicts a discourse setting that remarkably resonates with the father-son imagery of Deuteronomy 6–8 where, as we have seen, the father teaches and guides the son through an extended father-son discourse. A unique feature of the introductory chapters of Proverbs 1–9 is the repeated direct address, “My son.”<sup>56</sup> The purpose of the father-son discourse in this section is the instruction and guidance of the son. The father explains that there are two paths: One path leads to Lady Wisdom’s house of life (Prov 9:1–12), the other path leads to Lady Folly’s lair, her house of

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<sup>55</sup> Texts that demonstrate Israel’s wilderness wanderings were considered negative in the Pentateuch itself include Numbers 14, Psalm 95, and Hebrews 3–4. In Hebrews 3–4, the author uses Psalm 95 as a means to highlight both the promise of wrath (for those who fall away in unbelief) and also for the promise of rest (for those who hold fast to the promise of future rest). In other words, Hebrews utilizes texts associated with the wilderness generation in multiple places in order to correct/warn but also to encourage/guide.

<sup>56</sup> See, e.g., Prov 1:1, 10; 2:1; 3:1; 4:10; 5:1; 6:1, 20; 7:1.

horrors (Prov 9:13–18). The drama of discipline in Proverbs 1–9 relates to this depicted choice: Which path will the son choose?

Along these lines, there are a number of suggestive verbal links between these two literary contexts that complement the thematic connections. In Deuteronomy 6, directly after the *shema* and the great commandment, Moses urges, “You shall *bind them* (קשר) as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead” (Deut 6:8).<sup>57</sup> Again in Deut 11:18, Moses states, “You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall *bind them* (קשר) as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.”<sup>58</sup> This same expression shows up in Proverbs 1–9 in a strikingly similar context, namely, the father-son discourse containing instruction and guidance. In Prov 3:3 (the beginning of the paragraph quoted by Hebrews), it says, “Do not let kindness and truth leave you; *Bind them* (קשר) around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.”<sup>59</sup> In a similar command (to listen to the instruction of the father and mother), Prov 6:21 says, “*Bind them* (קשר) continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck.” Prov 7:3 similarly states, “*Bind them* (קשר) on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart.”<sup>60</sup>

These suggestive verbal links provide at least a possible text-imminent connection between the concept of discipline in Proverbs and the Pentateuch. Both envision discipline as a process that involves both instruction and correction, guidance and rebuke. Especially in Deuteronomy 8, the discipline image is already tied directly to the image of the wilderness generation and also the analogy of the father-son relationship. Each of these theological and textual features from Deuteronomy and Proverbs are utilized in the development of Hebrews 12. In light of this intertextual profile, the writer’s quotation of Prov 3:11–12 seem less like a distracting imposition and more like a fitting and strategic hermeneutical move. The way the author expands the Proverbs 3 quotation in his exposition fits remarkably well with the broader context of Proverbs 1–9 and also Deuteronomy 6–8. While it is possible, as Croy argues, that a completely pagan Greek audience would have missed these connections and imported Greco-Roman Stoic notions of *paideia*, we might also say with some confidence that readers familiar with the Pentateuch and the Proverbs would be reading within an entirely different matrix of meaning, one where the concept of discipline naturally entails both guidance and correction, one that is set within the analogy of a father-son relationship, and one that directly recalls the experience of Israel in the wilderness.

<sup>57</sup> MT: וְקָשַׁרְתֶּם לְאָזְנוֹתַי עֲלֵי־יָדַי וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינָי: (Deut 6:8, BHS).

<sup>58</sup> MT: וְקָשַׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם לְאָזְנוֹתַי: (Deut 11:18, BHS).

<sup>59</sup> MT: קָשַׁרְם עַל־צַוְרוֹתַי כְּתָבָם עַל־לִבִּי לִבְדָּ: (Prov 3:3, BHS).

<sup>60</sup> This statement shares language from the New Covenant passage in Jeremiah as well (Jer 17:1; 31:33). One further example shows up in Prov 22:15, “Foolishness is bound up (קשר) in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.” Though this instance employs the terms in a different way, interestingly this is one of the places where discipline (מוֹסֵר) is explicitly mentioned in Proverbs.



## V. THE DRAMA OF DISCIPLINE IN HEBREWS

To bring this intertextual escapade back to Hebrews, I think there are several important exegetical observations that point toward a dual function of *paideia* in Hebrews 12. To sum up the previous discussion, the semantic range of *παίδεια* includes both punitive and non-punitive aspects and is capable of a dual function if the context permits this usage. Further, if the OT intertexts that the writer makes use of also understand *paideia* in this particular way, this gives warrant to the notion that Hebrews utilizes the concept in a similar manner. Finally, if a dual conception of *paideia* fits well within the flow of the discourse in Hebrews 12, then this way of understanding discipline carries more weight. I would like to conclude by briefly noting the features of Hebrews 12 and the letter as a whole that resonate with this basic understanding of what *paideia* entails.

In Hebrews 12, discipline relates to running the race. Both in 12:1–2 at the beginning of the chapter, and in 12:11 at the end of our passage, there is a connection between the athletic imagery and the process and result of *paideia*. One of the central insights of Croy's study is to demonstrate that the athletic imagery runs throughout this major section.<sup>61</sup> In particular, the "race set before us" in 12:1–2 is connected to the "training" language of 12:11. The concept of discipline is set within the parameters of this metaphorical field. In 12:11, in particular, both aspects are brought together as the writer considers "the one who has been trained" by the discipline of the Lord.<sup>62</sup> Further, the race of 12:1–2 has a finish line, or ending point in Hebrews 12, namely, the better mountain, Mount Zion in the heavenly kingdom (12:22–24). As the writer states there, the runners are "coming to" in the language of arrival at the ultimate end point. This final destination depicts an eschatological end point to the race metaphor that begins in 12:1–2.<sup>63</sup> The training of *discipline*, then, takes on an eschatological significance. The God who deals with them as sons now also stands at the finish line.

Additionally, in Hebrews 12, the running of this race relates to striving against sin. Those who argue for a primarily non-punitive interpretation of *paideia* in Hebrews 12 also have to argue that the concept of striving against sin is also absent. One commentator goes so far as to say that "there is no hint in 12:4–11 of any sin for which the community are receiving divine recompense."<sup>64</sup> In my view, while it

<sup>61</sup> See Croy, *Endurance in Suffering*, 37–76

<sup>62</sup> Thiessen concludes in this regard that the athletic imagery of 12:1–13 is not generic but "evokes a specific context—the contest endured by Israel in the wilderness" ("Hebrews 12:5–13, the Wilderness Period, and Israel's Discipline," 379). Rather than an "offensively banal" bit of advice, "through such language the author signals to his readers that they are to re-envision their lives so as to place themselves in the wilderness, a place where God's people have always found themselves" (p. 379).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Westfall, *Discourse Analysis of Hebrews*, 274, 281–82: "The spatial deixis is the primary feature that characterizes the unit. All the processes in chapter 12 take place in the heavenly or invisible kingdom. The author equates the goals of the race with the goals of discipline.... The athletic contest is part of a festival assembly that is taking place in the kingdom of God."

<sup>64</sup> Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation in Hebrews*, 80. Allen then dismisses 12:4 as "best understood as the sinful action of those acting against the community (so Braun, *Hebräer*, 408–9; Lane, *Hebrews*, 418–19;

is not over-emphasized it seems there is just this, a *hint* of sin against which the readers are striving. The first charge in 12:1 is, “lay aside every encumbrance and the sin (ἁμαρτίαν) that so easily entangles us.” In 12:3, Jesus endures hostility against himself by sinners (ὑπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν). Significantly, too, in 12:4, the Proverbs 3 quotation is introduced by the statement, “You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin” (πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι). Here, “sin” is left general, perhaps to include its many forms. Further, the quotation of Proverbs 3 is immediately introduced with the gentle rebuke of, “You have forgotten.” To our point as well, it is important to note that these instances of “sin language” are directly connected to the major athletic imagery of the passage (the race to be endured involves throwing off the “sin” that so easily entangles). While these features are not enough to give *paideia* a purely punitive interpretation, it certainly seems to be enough to establish the fittingness of a dual understanding of the concept of discipline. This strategic exegetical question deserves further analysis.

Finally, the dual concept of discipline as both corrective and educative fits the thematic trajectory of the exhortation sections of the letter in several ways:

1. *A dual conception of discipline resonates with the negative exhortation-image of the wilderness generation.* The image of the wilderness generation forms an important part of the conceptual backdrop for the exhortation sections of the letter. Though some see the wilderness generation only in Hebrews 3–4, the image perhaps pervades the entire letter. Thus, the discussion of *discipline* in Hebrews 12 resonates with the textual trajectories of the other exhortation sections. In other words, the prevalence of the wilderness generation image throughout Hebrews increases the likelihood that the intertextual context of Deuteronomy informs the concept of *paideia* in Hebrews 12.

2. *A dual conception of discipline resonates with the positive exhortation-image of the suffering son.* The concept of discipline resonates both with the drama of disobedience seen in the wilderness generation and also the drama of faithfulness seen in the sinless suffering of Jesus in his incarnation. Both images are woven into the warp and woof of the letter’s exhortation sections. Especially if the “consider him” of Heb 12:3 is directly connected to the “endure discipline” of 12:7, then the discipline discussion resonates in a unique way with a major Christological theme of the letter (thus giving it a further bit of prominence). A dual conception of discipline also helps readers understand the writer’s point about the nature of the Son’s suffering in Heb 5:7–10. The “obedience” that the Son “learns” through suffering can be helpfully understood within the scope of a dual conception of discipline. *Paideia* includes *correction* for disobedience but also *training* in obedience. With this multiplex function in mind, the connection between the endurance of the Son who strove against sinners (12:3) can be directly related to the life and ongoing endurance of the sons who strive against sin (12:4).

3. *A dual conception of discipline draws the readers of the discourse directly into the drama.* Running through this network of textual paths is the “race set before” the readers. In Heb 12:1–13, the writer joins the language of striving against sin with the metaphor of training for and running a race (that ends in the eschaton). Within this metaphorical force field, the concept of *paideia* is well suited to weave both of these elements together. The readers are to endure discipline as sons, not enemy combatants. The correction for disobedience shares a family resemblance to the training for obedience.<sup>65</sup> To our point, these are just the dual elements that are needed in order to persevere to the end: correction when other paths are taken (whatever those might be) and also training and endurance to keep pressing on (in the race and in maturity). Rather than narrowly specifying a single direction of association, it seems like the writer maintains and makes use of both of these meaning-full connotations.

An intertextual approach to Hebrews 12 allows a reader to see this section of the letter as a central development of the writer’s argument. In Heb 12:3–11, the writer seems to draw on both Proverbs 3 and Deuteronomy 8. In intertextual terms, the writer directly quotes Prov 3:11–12 and his exposition of this text echoes the drama of discipline in Deuteronomy. The wilderness generation is seen by the writer in both positive and negative terms. This makes *paideia* a particularly strategic and fitting concept to employ in some of the writer’s final words of exhortation. The book of Hebrews is a written sermon sent to a group of believers undergoing persecution and the temptation to waver in their faith. They were a people experiencing spiritual exhaustion from external and internal factors. Noting the multifaceted and intertextually informed matrix of meaning within which the writer sets the concept of discipline enables this concept to become a perfect description of the intended audience of the letter: those who experience divine discipline, those with whom God is dealing with as sons. For some interpreters, only the non-punitive interpretation of *paideia* allows this passage to resonate with the letter’s overarching purpose. However, I have attempted to show that it is precisely the dual function of the punitive *and* non-punitive aspects of *paideia* that makes it strike at the heart of the letter’s hortatory aim.

As interpreters of this passage, readers are left with the lingering textual question: What does it mean to experience the discipline of the Lord? Are we being corrected, or is this training? Is there sin we need to address, or is there sin we need to avoid? The term and concept of *paideia* evokes just this series of questions. In some ways, this language of “discipline” in Heb 12:3–11 may seem an abrupt introduction. However, if the above analysis is basically correct, then the writer is not introducing a new concept *per se* but is rather once more drawing from the deep well of the Pentateuch. Further, this particular range of questions is precisely the kind of reflection that the writer of Hebrews aims to encourage through his “word

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<sup>65</sup> To give an everyday illustration, think of the hands of a father. The hands that help his daughter learn how to walk down the hallway are the same ones that will stop her from bolting down the stairs or into the street. Think of his voice of instruction. The same voice that says, “Yes, daughter, say Daddy,” is the same voice that says, “No, daughter, never say anything like that to your Mother!”

of exhortation.” As the writer himself notes, *paideia* is a particularly apt concept to provoke these particular elements of his *paraklesis*. Endurance, training, and discipline: these are the interconnected concepts that the writer uses to spur his readers onward.