

REFLECTIONS

March 2, 2008

From the Archives of April 10, 2005

**the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes everyone he accepts as a
son."**

Hebrews 12:6

God's Classroom

Continuing education has never been very high on my list of exciting things to do. But "CE" is a requirement for maintaining accreditation in most trades and professions. So regardless of how I feel about it, I know CE serves to refine how we apply what we already know and to enhance our abilities by teaching us new skills that will prepare us for challenges that lie ahead.

One reason I have never been fond of CE is that it calls me beyond the comfort of my usual routines. I feel content where I am, so why should I have to learn something new? In short, I do not like the classroom even though I know the education is essential to the preparation for the challenges that I am yet to face.

God imposes CE on each of us. These are the learning experiences that come from health issues, financial problems, relational challenges, loss of loved ones, and other encounters of life. Although they are painful, the lessons from God's continuing education refine how we apply what we already know, and prepare us for challenges that lie ahead.

When God imposes CE, He almost always removes us from our usual state of mind and takes us into places or circumstances that make us feel uncomfortable or even lost—like a desert experience. God's most profound sessions are held in the desert. Moses was exiled to the desert for 40 years—and that was *before* he led the Israelites around in the wilderness for 40 more, finally guiding them to the Promised Land. John the Baptist was in the desert for most of his adult life before anointing the Son of God. Paul was in the desert for three years sorting out the messages from his experience on the Damascus road before sharing the love of God with the world. Even Jesus was in the desert for 40 days in preparation for his encounter with Satan.

As God prepares each of us for the roles He has chosen us to play, we are often called into desert experiences. It's God's classroom. But even as God uses desert experiences to refine us and reshape our lives...

He also gives us victory from those trying times.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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