

Biblical Discipline in the Home

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References: Proverbs 23, Hebrews 12:11; Proverbs 23:13-14; Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 22:15; Psalm 94:12; James 1:5; Proverbs 31:28

Scriptural Foundations for Discipline

Thank you, Harold.

I want to, in this session, go through this material a little bit more quickly, and we have plenty of time for some questions. It's the area of discipline of our children, and it's an important area, but I want to go through it and leave plenty of time. Our three o'clock hour, that's why we want to try to wrap things up.

But you have in the first page a number of verses. I'm going to read some of them. I'm not going to read all of them—there's six or seven or eight of them—but I'm going to read some of them just to give you an idea, all through Scripture, how often we have teaching about how we correct our children.

So, in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 11:

[Hebrews 12:11 NKJV] Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Proverbs:

[Proverbs 23:13-14 NKJV]

- ¹³ Do not withhold correction from a child,
For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.
¹⁴ You shall beat him with a rod,
And deliver his soul from hell.

[Proverbs 13:24 NKJV]

He who spares his rod hates his son,
But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.

When I was bad, my mother would quote to me this verse:

[Proverbs 22:15 NKJV]

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

[Psalm 94:12 NKJV]

Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD,
And teach out of Your law,

Setting Boundaries and Early Correction

So we see in Scripture a number of places about the discipline, the physical discipline of a child. I know our society teaches in such a way—it's a strong emphasis on no physical correction of a child. And I think it's very, very important. I'll say this: I believe from our experience that if you discipline from the time they're young to maybe the age eight or seven, you will not have to do it very much from that time on. But when you set the boundaries and set what is right and what's wrong and your consistency and your correction, and sometimes physical correction, you won't have to do very much of that in the future.

Now, there was a time when our kids were young. They were 12 or 13 or 14. They were sitting around the dinner table, and I felt a little sad that particular day. I felt like I had been, as a father, I had disciplined and physically corrected my kids too much, and I felt bad about it.

So I said to them, I said, "Do you feel like when you were young that I corrected you too much and that I was too harsh of a father?"

And they all said to me—now, Alan, my son, got the most discipline because he was the worst of the kids, or wasn't that bad, but he got a little bit more than the others—and they said to me, "No, Daddy, I don't think you disciplined us very much at all."

You think sometimes you feel more badly about the discipline of your children than they really realize it, because they realize they're wrong, and they realize they need some

correction. And when you have a loving relationship with your children—if you have a harsh, whatever you want to call it, a bad relationship with them and you're always correcting them and they don't see a household full of love, then the correction is going to be harsher for them. But when there is a love involved in it and they realize it's the right decision, then I think they'll feel like there wasn't very much in my growing up, and they will forget a lot of the discipline that took place during their years.

So I want to spend some time thinking about discipline. Some things we'll go through a little more quickly; other things we'll spend a little bit more time on. But you have your handout in front of you.

Some general thoughts about discipline under point one: You set boundaries with your children. What's right? What's wrong? You can't hit your sister, and your sister can't pull your hair, and you've got boundaries. Certain things you can't do. Certain things you do in regard to your mother; certain things you can't do in regard to your mother. Certain things about food and dinner time and rules and all kinds of family rules that you have.

You set boundaries, things you can't do, and you're consistent about the correction and you're setting those boundaries. Children are happiest when they know the boundaries that they live under. They need boundaries, and they need to know—it's a security for them to know that these are the rules. Mommy is there, and Daddy is there. They will protect you; they will keep you. These are the boundaries. These are the boundaries that you have.

So you have boundaries about manners, your boundaries about what's allowed and not allowed, boundaries about respect for elders, for your parents, for elders, for Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa. So you have those kind of things.

You have rewards. You have praise for good behavior. You've got praise and a reward sometimes for good things you do. But what we **don't** want to do—and you can circle this and highlight it in yellow or whatever—you don't want to reward kids for not doing bad behavior. "Don't do this and act badly, and then, well, Daddy and Mommy will take you to Disney World." You don't want to reward bad behavior. So don't do bad behavior; you reward good behavior. Bad behavior, if they understand the rules and they're blatantly disregarding them, then there's discipline that needs to take place.

We never, never—and I know of a mother who says to her daughter, "Don't correct your children for two years. Don't do any correction at all." I don't think that's correct. I'm not correct about correction. I think you correct right away. A baby bites somebody, maybe bites a young child or scratches and bites—you correct that. You stop that behavior. So you tell

them, "No." Tell them when they say no, you tell them, "This is correct." You've got to correct that child. At a young age, you begin correction.

Now, a little statement I have on the bottom of the first page: Whatever disciplinary method you use, however you're going to do it, it must be uncomfortable for your child. It's got to be uncomfortable. I know people that spank their babies with their diapers on, and they hardly cause any discomfort to the child. They have a big diaper, and they're spanking their bottom, and they can hardly feel anything because it doesn't cause them much discomfort. It's got to cause some discomfort to the child. So a spank on the hand or whatever it may be—some discomfort to the child.

Disciplinary Stages and Practical Methods

So the next page, some stages: How do we go about disciplining our child?

Stage one: minor wrong behavior—throwing toys, arguing with your sister, taking toys out of their hands. You talk with them. You tell them that's bad behavior. You can't do that—a rebuke. That doesn't work. You take them at a young age; you take them out of the situation. You're at a park in a sandbox, you're fighting, throwing sand at some other child—you take them out of the situation. This is stage one, very beginning.

You teach them about correct behavior: "Next time you go to the playground, you can't throw sand or take toys from other children." You correct the behavior. Thank you.

You don't reason, and you don't scream at your child. You don't have to scream at your child. You speak softly with consistency, and you tell them what's wrong. And at times when it's necessary, you correct them. And when it's times very necessary, you physically correct them. But here in the stage one, you tell them what's wrong. You tell them what you don't do. You remove them from the situation. And you tell them at this point in their age, the reason for it is under point six: Because Mommy said so. Because Daddy said so. That's why. That's all you need. You don't have to reason with them. You're the authority, and you say that's the reason at this young age. And so when they're between one and two, this is what you do, can say to them. This is how you begin to give discipline to the child.

Then stage two, when there's open disrespect, openly disobey clear boundaries: "Don't hit your brother." Repeatedly commit the same offense, even though less egregious offenses, discipline mother's command, instruction. They tell—the mother says to do something, they disregard it completely: "Stop playing with a computer game. Don't say those bad words." Then you have corrective action.

So stage two: You send them to their room without any electronic devices in the room. Don't send them there with a cell phone. Don't send them there with a computer game. I'm going to take that all away from them. Okay, to send them to their room, and they have nothing to do but sit there and think about what they did wrong.

You take away privileges at the second stage as correction: no computer time, no cell phones, no computer games. Take it all away.

Be consistent. Don't tell them you're going to correct them and then don't correct—and you don't correct them. Be consistent. When you say correction is going to take place, be consistent and follow through. This is probably one of the biggest problems. A lot of parents like to tell them and talk tough, but they don't do anything. They're not consistent. And they get home from the park, and they get home from wherever, and they don't do anything about it. And the child learns, "I can do whatever I want, and if I just wait long enough, I'll get away with it."

Number six: So at this point, at 9 to 17 or around this point, there's no more spanking. You can't take your 9-year-old or 10-year-old or 11-year-old to your room and spank them. You had to do this work way before that. They've got to see you as an authority.

So now there's other things you do. You take away greater privileges: Can't go to a friend's home. Can't go to a school get-together. A loss of privileges, whatever they may be. Can't have your cell phone for a month or two weeks. You can't have computer time. You can't have whatever it is. You find out whatever privilege they want and think they really like. It's got to feel uncomfortable for them. A financial penalty—they'll get an allowance.

She has been a terror from the time she could walk, before she could walk. In the nursery, she throws toys at other kids. Recently, she threw a toy, hard plastic toy, at the nursery worker, hit her in the head. Her mother was in the nursery at the time. She didn't do anything. She told her daughter to apologize, and her daughter at less than three or around three refused to apologize. Can you imagine a three-year-old, when the mother says, if you do wrong, to apologize to a nursery worker, and she refused to do that?

So what I see there is someone's not disciplined in that home. Now this child may have some emotional disorder. I don't know exactly what to see. She's very young, but she's very disobedient. I think we've got it.

We bless our children when we correct bad behavior. We need to have that corrected. James 1:5:

[James 1:5 NKJV] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

We ask the Lord this when and how and so forth, but we need to discipline our children.

So I think that's the end of our correction. So that's the end of our sheets.

Now, more could be said about discipline. I'm just going to end by this, saying a little bit of how we did it. You don't have to follow us. You can do it as you feel comfortable, but I think there is a place for physical discipline.

So if one of our children did wrong, sometimes I wasn't there; I would come home. Faith would say, "Wait until Daddy comes home." I would come home. I found out what it was. It was serious enough that it requires some spanking. So I say to Alan, I would say to him, "Go to Daddy's bedroom. Close the door." So he goes to Daddy's bedroom, closes the door. I let him wait for a little while. It felt like—it was good for him to wait there. It's a little tension, little fear, but I want him to wait there and think over what he had done.

I go into the room, and I would say to him, I said, "You were bad today. You did this and this and this." And I said, "That's wrong behavior. You know what we expect. You know what's expected in this household." And then, depending on the situation, I would spank him, whether it be on the hand or the bottom or wherever it would be, I would do that. I would spank him, and then I would say to him, said, "We don't want that behavior." And I would say, "I'm going to leave this room, and I want you to come out in a few minutes." And then I would say, "Is that right?" He said, "Yes, Daddy."

So that's how we did it. And we didn't have to do it many times. But I think—I didn't think we did it too many times, but I remember times that we did do it.

So I think there's a necessary component. We need to discipline our children. We need to do it at different times. Sometimes you just hit their hand. Sometimes, if they're saying bad words and they're real young, you can hit their mouth. But you want to show them that you're an authority and that's wrong behavior, take away privileges, doing different kinds of things.

Well, I'm going to stop there. I'm going to invite Roy to come up, and we'll have some questions that you might have.

Questions and Answers

Okay, any questions about the discipline of children?

— Because it's a little bit bad. Is that a little bit over? Just some...

— Is it overly harsh, you mean? Overly strict?

— Yeah.

— I know some parents that won't let them sleep over at all. We have some that won't let them do that at all. So I don't know how often we did that.

— We had to do it in the family.

— Very well, I think, right?

— Yeah, yeah, we would have to know the family very well. That's a good way to put it. We had to know the family very well before we would do that.

— Sometimes your child...

She may think she wants this thing, but she finds it very awkward to be there. And I know cases where they call up the mother and father and say, "Pick me up. Just feel uncomfortable here." And they don't sleep over. So I think it has to be a really good family and one you know really well.

How many times did we do that? When they were older, we didn't let them. When they were young, certain families like Linda Weldon, you know, a good friend. Yeah. When they were teenagers, we didn't do that.

Someone has to do the discipline. Now, I personally believe that the father should do the majority of the discipline. I feel like the father is the disciplinarian of the family. The mother is the nurturing, loving, support, providing meals and support to the—I don't feel like the mother naturally is comfortable in that role of discipline. Small correction, but not the heavier discipline.

So the father should do the heavier discipline. Now, if there is no father in the picture, then the mother is going to have to do some of that discipline, and it's going to be harder for her, because I don't think it's natural for the mother to do that kind of discipline. But it has to be done.

So we had a single mother come to me at our chapel. So she said that it's very hard to do that because if only the mother at home, she has no helper, nobody helping her, but this is a balance. How to give you either that old work, the child may hate you. When you're older, you're going to take away certain privileges. So if you're 12 or 13, when you get to that old, you're going to take away certain privileges, certain things they can't do. And I know it's harder.

God has given the family unit a husband, a father and mother, and they have their own roles. And there's their needs. They're needed. You know, a single mother or a single father, it's... There's certain things that are lacking in a single father, certain things lacking in a single mother. But I know it's very difficult, but it really has to be done. And you have to find a way to discipline or bring some correction. The child has to feel some discomfort. You're the authority, and they have to feel some discomfort about what they did. So there's got to be some correction. And at 12 years old or around that age, you've got to begin to take away privileges.

If your child is over 12, you have to make sure that he doesn't do what he likes to do. If this makes him feel uncomfortable, then it's hard for a single parent, whether it's a father or a mother, a single mother or a single father. God has arranged for the husband and wife to take care of the child together. If you are single, you must do it. If you are older, you can stop him from doing this and that. You must make him feel uncomfortable doing this. So the discipline must be carried out.

Any other questions? Either online or... Oh, here's one. Thank you.

— She is sitting next to me and talking about other things. But she has been talking about many things since she graduated from the university. How can I guide her?

— You said son and daughter?

— Yes, son and daughter. My daughter is in the university now. She said before she went to the university, she and her daughter, they always talk from their hearts. They talk almost every person. But after she went to the university, she did not talk with her heart anymore. So that's why. She said, could you tell her how to improve that?

— Where's the university? Is it a distance away, far away? Is the university far away from you?

— Yes.

— Where is it?

— It's in the UBC.

— Oh. Well, I would make opportunities to keep on that relationship, keep on talking, either talk on the telephone, or if it's close enough, just make time to have a meal and get together. Have coffee and keep on kind of pushing through.

I think there's a time maybe it's a little difficult. You push through. You find out. Maybe you can find out what's going on. But just keep on that relationship. Don't give up on it. Just keep on the relationship, even though you feel it's not as heart-to-heart, close as you once were. Keep that relationship.

Now, you know, we talk to our kids. Our kids all live far away. So we live in Florida. The closest one is in New Jersey, and then two others are in Detroit, Michigan. So pretty far away physically. But you talk on the telephone; they come to see us, we go to see them. We try to kind of find out what's going on in their lives. So keep on working, keep on working in that. Sometimes it's a little more difficult, but keep on pushing and working in that.

Now, there's a verse in Proverbs 31. Go ahead.

— He said that he would not give up even if he was not taught. He said that he would keep going and keep going. He said that he meant to keep in touch and keep it from stopping. He said that his children live in Honolulu. One of his children lives in Xinzexi. The other one lives in other places. He said that they would often visit him and often communicate with him. He said that he could not stop communicating.

— So there is a verse in Proverbs 31:28 where it speaks about a mother and daughter, mother and children:

[Proverbs 31:28 NKJV]

Her children rise up and call her blessed;

Her husband also, and he praises her:

So a mother was speaking to an older believer and said, "My children, they don't praise me. They don't show any appreciation for me." And he said, "Just wait until they're older. Just wait until they're a little older."

And I think that's true. Right now, maybe it's difficult, but you keep on working at that, and you will find that your children appreciate you much more when they're older, especially when they're married and have children, or even before that.

— Some Christians in the Bible say to others, "My child doesn't respect me, doesn't respect me, and doesn't respect me." But this is because they wait for a certain age. When this person is a certain age, when he grows up, he will respect you and communicate with you. Especially when the child is married or has a child, he will start to respect you.

— Any other questions? There are other questions.

— I have a question. Before it was asked, so I believe discipline must be applied. But how are most of the times? Is it? I think discipline is the fear of breaking the relationship.

— ...as a way to solve problems or something. I don't think that's good. But I think when everything else, when you have a good relationship, you're being—you're doing the things

you should do, discipline, I don't think, when it's done properly and the withholding of privileges, I don't think it will break. I've never seen that.

Now, I'm sure it could happen if a father is too harsh, continually too hard. But I think often some of the mothers that I know feel like almost the fathers are too harsh, but I don't think they are. Mothers need that the fathers do their role, and the fathers let the mothers do their role. But I don't think discipline done properly, done lovingly, when the child has done wrong and been defiant, I think is the... I don't think it will break the relationship.

— They say to the housekeeper, if the child does something wrong, you must go to the housekeeper. They also emphasize that they think it can destroy the relationship between the child and the child. They mainly want to know the love of the mother and then go to the housekeeper. It is to be born from the corner of love. I found that very interesting. And there's even more difficulties when it comes to teenagers, because when the subspecies are applying, they can be very rebellious, and it could be that you cannot really do some effective discipline anymore. What would you suggest?

— Teenagers. Teenager and rebellious teens. I think you have to start before they get to the teenager rebellion part. When they get to the teenager rebellion part, they're going to be very rebellious. And I think part of it is spending time with them. I think going maybe on vacation or spending time, go away with them, spend time so forth, and find out what the root of the rebellion is.

Now, sometimes I know a few cases where there is rebellion, there is a little friction between the parents. It's never really been because of discipline, but I think it has been because of lack of involvement in their lives. They haven't spent enough time together. And I know workaholics working, working, working, being away, traveling, never home. That's where the rebellion has come in, in the places I've seen it.

— He said that when the child is in the middle of the year, he has to wait for the child to reach the age of rebellion. But what he meant was that the children were not too busy with their parents' work, and they left, and things like that. So he said that you need to spend more time with your children, and spend more time with your children.

— It's a difficult, difficult area. But I think it's important from the very beginning. It's possible sometimes you get a situation where you've got a broken marriage, and then you remarry, and you've got all kinds of mixed-up relationships, and sometimes the kids are very rebellious in that setting.

— This is a very difficult issue. Sometimes children are rebellious because their parents' marriage is broken, or they are married again. It's a very difficult issue.

— Do you have time for one more question?

— I have a child who has been educated by me. He was educated when he was young. When he grew up, for example, my son is 27 years old. When I talked to him, I saw him in a certain way. He immediately reacted to me. She said that if you discipline a little bit over, it's too hard. She said that children may hate you, but she said her son is 27 years old now. This just happened a few days ago. When she visited her son, her son said that she has knee-jerk reaction. When he saw her, he felt very uncomfortable. So what should she do?

— She thinks it's because of discipline? She thinks it's because of discipline?

— Yeah, because he was young, he disciplined him too much.

— Well, I don't think—well, I don't know the situation, you know, so I can't really say and speak about it, but I don't think that discipline usually will cause that kind of reaction. I don't know what the reason is, but I know many, many, many families that do discipline, and I don't know that kind of response. In fact, I think they're very close usually. I know many families that are very close relationships. Now, if there may be other problems, so I don't know all the—but I don't think discipline is a problem.

Okay, well, thank you for all the questions, and I hope this day has been really helpful to you. I know it's a difficult thing raising children, training of children, and just being either a Sunday school teacher or a grandmother or a mother and father, a single mother, a single father—very difficult in a lot of ways. But I think the biblical principles in the Word of God are very important. I think praying for your children, teaching your children, loving your children, spending time with them, listening to their problems, listening to their lives, what they're going through, and then through their years disciplining them in the proper way consistently—it needs to happen. Discipline is very important. The Bible speaks a lot about it, and so it's very important.

Well, let's close in a word of prayer.

Closing Prayer

Our God and Father, we thank You for our time together. I thank You, Father, for each one that's here in each family unit. Father, we recognize that raising a family, raising children, training children can be very difficult. Thank You.

We realize, Father, there's so many pressures in this world. There's so many competing influences on children's lives in media all around us. So, Father, we pray for each family unit here. We pray, Father, You would give them wisdom and give them help as they raise their family, as they train their children.

So, Father, we pray this. We thank You for this assembly. We thank You for hosting this conference and lunch that was prepared. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.