

Raising Godly Children – 3: Godly Discipline

INTRODUCTION:

1. Today I would like to present another lesson in this series on “raising godly children.”
2. Before I do so I want to remind you of what we have previously considered.
 - A. The first lesson addressed raising children to be spiritually minded, favoring the things of the spirit over those of the flesh.
 - B. In our last lesson we talked about establishing a child’s proper view of the world, teaching them self-worth through humility and industriousness, or work.
3. In today’s lesson I would like to talk about proper discipline in the home.
 - A. That this lesson is needed today goes without saying.
 - i. We see the results of children not receiving proper discipline everywhere.
 - ii. We have a full-blown crisis because of it characterized by a lack of respect for God, morality, others, normality, and any sort of authority.
 - B. As Christians we are commanded to follow a different path (Eph. 6:4 – “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the **discipline and instruction of the Lord.**”).
4. It is my hope to present biblical truth combined with some observations that will help you in your work of raising godly children.

BODY:

I. Proper discipline is godly discipline:

- A. Godly discipline requires parents to use God’s word to lay down boundaries of behavior by *instruction, rebuke, and chastisement*.
 1. Of course, parenting at times seems like that is all it is...instructing, correcting, rebuking...but that is because it is a large portion of what we must do!
 2. Taking this responsibility seriously is vital to your relationship with your child (Prov. 29:17 – “**Correct** your son, and he will give you **comfort**; he will also **delight your soul.**”).
 - a. **Correct** (*yasar*) – to chastise, literally (with blows) or figuratively (with words); to instruct: — chastise, correct, instruct, punish, reform, reprove, teach
 - b. Godly parenting requires instructing of your child and giving that instruction “teeth,” if you will, through rebuke and punishment for disobedience.
- B. It requires parents to consistently make them face the consequences of their actions.
 1. When instruction and possibly a firm rebuke fail to correct behavior, consistent punishment must follow.
 2. This means avoiding *empty threats*, seeing they will undermine discipline.
 - a. Now, sometimes such threats are given to emphasize the seriousness of the offense. For, if you have been a parent long you have likely threatened your child with something like, “If you don’t stop that I will...
 - i. “...ground you for life!”
 - ii. “...skin you alive!”
 - iii. “...wear the living daylights out of you!” [not sure what “the living daylights” are, but somehow, I know what it means, maybe because I’ve had them *worn* out of me]
 - b. When as a parent you offer such threats, which may include the threat of a spanking, and your child still *disobeys*, if *no real punishment follows*, you are undermining discipline and eroding your credibility with your child.
 - i. This is why kids will go on and do what they want after the parents threaten them.
 - ii. For, why should parents expect their children to do what they as parents say if their children continually observe their parents not doing what they say?
 3. Despite a lack of favor in society, proper **discipline** often requires a good **spanking** (Proverbs 13:24 – “He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.”).

- a. Failure to do so results in raising a foolish and shameful child (Prov. 29:15 – “The **rod** and **reproof give wisdom**, but a child who (NASB) **gets his own way**/(ESV, NKJV) **left to himself**/(NET) **who is unrestrained** brings shame to his mother.”)
 - i. So, according to God, if you refuse to back up your words with “the rod,” you will raise a foolish child.
 - ii. For, by not following through you are allowing them to get their own way, to be left to themselves, to be unrestrained, which will bring you shame!
 - b. Though some believe they *love their children too much to spank them*, they are deceived!
 - i. True love will always do what is best for a child.
 - ii. Sometimes that means letting them face short-lived pain *now* for disobeying rather than facing *lifelong* pain for lack of correction.
- C. Godly discipline begins early.
- 1. You cannot hope to fix later the wrong you allow today (Proverbs 19:18 – “Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.”).
 - a. Discipline (*yasar*) – to chastise, literally (with blows) or figuratively (with words); to instruct: — chastise, correct, instruct, punish, reform, reprove, teach
 - 2. Why is early discipline so important?
 - a. Because the ignorance of children means harmful foolishness is already present in a child from early on and must be dealt with (Proverbs 22:15 – “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”).
 - b. So, you must enter parenting knowing that the early years are your child’s most impressionable years.
 - c. It is up to you to keep them from being filled with foolishness [disobedience, disrespect], and to instead fill them godly, life-changing wisdom [obedience, respect]!
- D. Do not be swayed by the world.
- 1. I hear worldly parents say, “I do not believe in spanking” or “spanking is child abuse,” or “I think children should be allowed to decide for themselves...”
 - a. After 40 years of observation I can say that most of those parents do not have to tell me these things because I have already discerned it from their children’s behavior.
 - b. Though we must take care not to be harsh or abusive in our discipline, proper application of instruction, rebuke, and the *paddle* will result in your child’s gratitude in maturity.
 - i. It will minimize the yelling and frustration and make for a better family experience (again Prov. 29:17 – “Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul.”).
 - ii. It will help insure your child lives a long and truly meaningful life (Prov. 23:13-14 – “Don’t withhold discipline from a youth; if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. ¹⁴ Strike him with a rod, and you will rescue his life from Sheol.”).
 - iii. Applying the rod of correction helps to keep your child from death!
 - 2. I have even heard Christians argue that these statements in Proverbs, etc., are no longer valid because the O.T. law has passed and been replaced.
 - a. This, however, shows a misunderstand the nature of the Bible’s wisdom literature.
 - b. These are not laws placed upon the Jews like the Sabbath, etc., but *timeless* expressions of godly wisdom.
 - c. Surely one can see that the wisdom concerning avoiding laziness, hasty words, pride, etc., did not lose their power or import with the coming of the N.T.!
 - d. The N.T. speaks of fathers, even God, using *painful* discipline for their children’s good (Heb. 12:6, 9-11 – “For the Lord **disciplines** the one he loves, and **chastises** [lit. flog, scourge] every son whom he receives.”... ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who **disciplined** us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all

discipline seems **painful** rather than pleasant, but **later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**")

II. Godly discipline requires unity:

- A. A child must not be allowed to play one parent against another.
 - 1. Children will, almost always, try this to get their way.
 - a. If one parent says no, they go to the other parent. If they answer differently, it is used against the dissenting parent as leverage to get what they want.
 - b. This ploy can take a more sinister turn in many families, where the mother or father will allow a child to do something *behind the back* of the other dissenting parent!
 - i. This is likely done because one parent feels the other is being unreasonable and that what they *do not know will not hurt them*.
 - ii. And the parent doing this may feel this “our little secret” situation will give them a special bond with their child.
 - 2. Allowing a child to play one parent against the other does lasting damage!
 - a. It teaches a distorted view of the nature of the marriage relationship and of parenthood.
 - i. Fathers and mothers have the common responsibility of raising their children to respect their authority for their child’s good (Eph. 6:1-3 – “Children, obey your **parents** as you would the Lord, because this is right. ² **Honor your father and mother**, which is the first commandment with a promise, ³ **so that it may go well with you** and that **you may have a long life** in the land.”).
 - ii. It mars the child’s view of trust in the marriage relationship, teaching them that you can do *whatever* as long as the other person does not know about it (Col. 3:9-10 – “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, ¹⁰ and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him”).
 - b. It *destroys your authority as parents* by providing the child the means to *manipulate their situation* to get their way!
 - c. It destroys the sense of trust concerning the decisions of the other parent.
- B. Situations must be addressed in unified fashion by...
 - 1. Showing unified respect for the other parent by asking whether the child has asked the other parent and what they said.
 - 2. Rebuking the child for playing this game and punishing them if it continues, emphasizing that as parents you seek to be one in your approach to raising them.
 - 3. If you learn differing answers have been given, *discuss the matter without the children present* and reach a unified solution (while knowing that the father has the final say—he will be held accountable as the head – Eph. 5:22-23).
 - 4. So, determine now to give your child the proper view of parenting and marriage by standing together in your decisions, seeking to provide unified and reasonable guidance for the family.

III. Godly discipline requires tenacity:

- A. In other words, we cannot stop disciplining our children once they reach a certain age.
 - 1. I know that when our children get older, move out, and have their own life and family we are limited, but not powerless, as to what we can do as parents.
 - 2. To claim no disciplinary responsibility toward a child living at home and depending on you because he/she is now 18 is wrong.
 - a. Yet, I have observed Christians doing just that, who allowed their child to enjoy the benefits of living in their home and/or enjoying their support while rejecting the Lord and living in immorality.
 - b. Well, to that I say:
 - i. They are not too “grown up” seeing they are still depending on you.
 - ii. Does being 18 means we have the go ahead to let them slide off into hell?
 - iii. We cannot let the state determine when our parental responsibilities end.

- B. To do this makes us as parents *enablers* for our child to live a sinful lifestyle, which I do not believe God will ignore.
1. This is sometimes justified by “it is better to have them at home or around rather than not so We can influence them,” etc.
 2. But that is strange reasoning when the point one is trying to justify is that because their child has reached a certain age they can no longer do anything about their sin.
 3. Also, consider how Eli the priest was severely punished because he did not discipline, or seek to restrain, his older sons (1 Sam. 3:13 – “And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.”)!
 - a. Their rebellious acts were cause for stoning; but he *did* nothing (Deut. 21:18-21).
 - b. Though we are not to stone our children today, we must not give them a free ride, nor a cordial acceptance, when they choose to live in sinful rebellion to God and to you.
 - c. There must be penalties for rebellion and sin, even if it means enduring the immediate pain of separation from an ungodly child (1 Cor. 5:1-2, 5 – “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. ² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you... ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”).
 - i. If God expects this to be done among brethren to save souls, surely parents cannot ignore this instruction.
 - ii. Yet, and in a way I understand it, sometimes parents cherish their relationship with their children over their children’s soul. And we must not do that.

CONCLUSION:

1. Parenting is a difficult job. But it is one that if done with godliness will have enduring rewards (Prov. 22:6 – “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it!”).
2. I hope I have given you truth by which you can be guided to success in your efforts to raise children that will please the Lord and bring you joy, which is the ultimate success as a parent.
3. To do this, of course, requires that Christ be your Lord and Savior and the center of your life. So, will you come to Jesus in F-R-C-Bp?