

PARENTING 0-5

Biblical Principles

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

I. Our Children are a Gift from God

Behold children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward, Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. Psalm 127:3-5

II. Our Parenting Must be Done "in the Lord"

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:1-4

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Colossians 3:18-21

A. Parents are under authority

“As a parent, you have authority because God calls you to be an authority in your child’s life. You have the authority to act on behalf of God. As a father or mother, you do not exercise rule over your jurisdiction, but over God’s. You act at his command. You discharge a duty that he has given. You may not try to shape the lives of your children as pleases you, but as pleases him...

Understanding this simple principle enables you to think clearly about your task. If you are God’s agent in this task of providing essential training and instruction in the Lord, then you, too, are a person under authority. You and your child are in the same boat. You are both under God’s authority. You have differing roles, but the same Master.”¹

B. Fathers don’t exasperate

- Unreasonable Standards
- Inconsistent Discipline
- Harsh Responses
- Self Righteous Training or Instruction

III. Our Call is to Nourish, Discipline, and Instruct

A. Nourish - “bring them up”

- “Let them be fondly cherished...deal gently with them.” John Calvin
- “Rear them tenderly” William Hendrickson
- “Love should be the silver thread that runs through all your conduct.” (JC Ryle, Duties of Parents, pg. 4)

¹ Ted Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995), 28-29.

B. Discipline – “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”

1. Discipline begins with teaching our children about God’s authority

“Embracing God’s plan for authority is necessary to understanding the world God has made. One of the first places children encounter authority is in their parents. God has commanded parents to govern their children, and for children to obey their parents. As we teach them to understand authority and submission, we are preparing them to obey God by living obediently and joyfully under all the authorities God has given. Unfortunately, the dominant culture we live in has rejected God’s plan for authority. One of the dangers we can fall into is to insist that our children obey without ever helping them picture the world in such a way that their obedience makes sense.”²

2. Discipline is loving
3. Discipline involves restraining sinful behavior and enforcing God’s standards
4. Discipline begins with reproof and instruction.

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.
Hebrews 12:7-11

The Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.
Proverbs 3:12

5. Discipline involves the rod

A fool despises his father’s instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.
Proverbs 15:5

6. Discipline must be consistent

² Tedd Tripp, Embracing God’s Plan for Authority, The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood website.

- Discipline for:
 - Sinful outbursts
 - Acts of unkindness
 - Direct disobedience
 - Transgression of clearly communicated standards
- Instruction precedes discipline and makes it effective (more to come on this)
- Every time of discipline is a gospel opportunity, given in age appropriate doses

“The central focus of parenting is the gospel. You need to direct not simply the behavior of your children, but the attitudes of their hearts. You need to show them not just the “what” of their sin and failure, but the “why”...You must help them see that God works from the inside out.”³

“Your concern is to unmask your child’s sin, helping him to understand how it reflects a heart that has strayed. That leads to the cross of Christ. It underscores the need for a Savior. It provides opportunities to show the glories of God who sent his Son to change hearts and free people enslaved to sin.”⁴

C. Instruct – “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”

1. Toward A Godward Orientation
 - Knowledge of His Word
 - Knowledge of the Gospel
 - Love and obey God
2. Toward a Parental Orientation
 - Receiving instruction and discipline
 - Honoring Dad and Mom
3. Towards a Respect for Others
 - Honoring Adults and those in Authority
 - Kindness toward other children

³ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, Shepherd Press, Second Edition, 2005, pg.xxi

⁴ *ibid*, pg 6.

IV. Our Training Should be Age Appropriate

Guidelines for Issues of Training: Due to developmental differences expectations may need to vary widely from child to child.

A. 9 – 20 months:

- Basic issues of self control
- No tantrums
- Understanding no
- No physical harm to others
- Bad attitudes

B. 20 months - 3 years:

- Lots of training
- Learning to receive instruction respectfully.
 - “Look in daddy’s eyes when I speak to you.”
 - Respond to clear instruction with a “Yes daddy”, or a “Yes mommy”
 - Insist on full honorable attention when instructing (no looking away, no rolling of the eyes, no angry faces, no playing with toys)
 - Respond, immediately, completely and cheerfully
- Coming when called
- Responding to no
- Learning to say please/thank you
- Changing attitude when adjusted /No tantrums
- Respect for adults and adult environment. (Not interrupting adults). “Come into the room with your eyes and ears first, not your mouth”
- Kindness to others
- Greeting adults
- Work on whining

C. 3-4 years

- Don’t grow weary in doing good (all of the above)
- More Training
- Practice of worship/prayer/basic gospel
- Simple biblical instruction (Gospel centered instruction on issues like sin, God, and the need for a savior).
- Much discipline

D. 4-5 years

- Don't grow weary in doing good (all of the above)
- More training
- More instruction on issues of the gospel, the heart, sin, and their need for a savior.
- More verbal interaction on issues of the heart

Looking Ahead: Ages 6-8

- Children are a gift from the Lord
- We are to train them in the Lord
- Don't grow weary in doing good (all of the above)
- Discipline with the rod is typically less frequent
- Many reminders
- More substantive instruction and dialogue on issues of the gospel, the heart, sin, and their need for a Savior.