

## Is Parental Discipline of Our Children a Thing of the Past?

**Proverbs 3:1-2:** (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep My commandments; <sup>2</sup>for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.*



Raising children never has been an easy task. Methods for parenting have varied dramatically based on what time in history children are being raised. Disciplining children in an “appropriate” way looks entirely different now than it did just a few generations ago. The culture we live in as we raise a family also has a powerful impact. We live in an age and culture of technology where much of life is easily lived through watching or typing onto the screen of our phone. This convenience carries a great potential cost. Are we allowing technology and social media to not only unduly influence our children, but ourselves as well? Are we Christian parents listening to social suggestions regarding what our children need to the exclusion of going back to the basic biblical principles for those answers?

We are not going to tell you how to raise your children. Instead, we will point you towards sound biblical principles that can become strong influences in your child-rearing decisions.



**AS CHRISTIANS, WHAT ARE WE SEEKING TO ACCOMPLISH WHEN WE RAISE AND EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN?**



In Proverbs 3, Solomon was giving instruction to his son. He wanted the same things that we as Christians want for our children:



## WHAT WE WANT FOR OUR CHILDREN:

- We WANT our children to live happy, long and successful lives:**  
Proverbs 3:1-12: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; <sup>2</sup>for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.*
- We WANT them to be honorable by holding that which is true with integrity and kindness:**  
*<sup>3</sup>Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. <sup>4</sup>So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.*
- We WANT them to believe in God and realize His power and guidance related to their daily life:**  
*<sup>5</sup>Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

● We WANT our children to be humble in following God's ways and have the courage to walk away from evil:

*<sup>7</sup>Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. <sup>8</sup>It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.*

● We WANT them to have a healthy self-image, be successful and not lose sight of God in the process:

*<sup>9</sup>Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; <sup>10</sup>so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.*

● We WANT them to always acknowledge and appreciate God's presence in their lives, so they can truly know right from wrong:

*<sup>11</sup>My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, <sup>12</sup>for whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.*

It is one thing to want these things for our children but is an entirely different thing to establish the environment necessary to provide such things for our children.

**WHAT DO WE NEED TO BE DOING? HOW SHOULD WE BE TRYING TO LIVE SO WE CAN GIVE OUR CHILDREN THEIR BEST OPPORTUNITIES?**



The following points are from a Christian perspective, ideally with two parents. These principles still apply to a one-parent household, but they may need to be implemented more creatively.

● We NEED to be faithful to one another as parents so we can mutually be faithful to our children:

Matthew 19:4-6: (NASB) *<sup>4</sup>And he answered and said, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup>and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? <sup>6</sup>So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.*

One key to raising children is to be *one flesh* - to be of one focus, one objective and to work together as one. Sometimes this is harder than we would like it to be, but this is a responsibility for Christian parents.

● We NEED to each be humble enough to be able to see things from another perspective:

Romans 12:3: (NASB) *For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

*Not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think* is a straightforward Christian principle that can be applied to raising children, as well as to other Christian relationships. We need to put this principle to work with our spouse. We cannot say to our wife or husband: *You need to do this my way; my way is the right way!* Our way together, after prayer and discussion, is the best way for our child.



**These are very high standards.** The following principles are set up with the phrase, “To the best of our ability,” because we are all different and imperfect but want to do our best.

● **To the best of our ability, we NEED to be living a life far away from our desire-filled world:**

Psalms 101:2-4: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>*I will give heed to the blameless way. When will You come to me? I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart.* <sup>3</sup>*I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not fasten its grip on me.* <sup>4</sup>*A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil.*

*I walk within my house in the integrity of my heart* - this integrity of our heart starts at home. We cannot relax our standards even in the privacy of our own home. *I will set no worthless thing before my eyes* - we need to stay far away from the surrounding desires of the world.

● **To the best of our ability, we NEED to supportively enter into our children’s failures and successes:**

1 Corinthians 12:26: (NASB) *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

Our children will fail and they will succeed. We need to be there with them to the best of our ability in the times of failure as much as in the moments of success. We must support them through both!

● **To the best of our ability, we NEED to be examples from the inside out when caring for others:**

Philippians 2:3-4: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;* <sup>4</sup>*do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

These are all Christian-living principles and parenting principles as well. As a good parent, we need to look out for our children’s interests before our own. We need to make sure we are not *dragging* them along in life but *nurturing* them along *through* life.

● **To the best of our ability, we NEED to be precisely in line with our spouse regarding our children:**

1 Corinthians 1:10: (NASB) *Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

Especially in the tough times, parents need to be in sync so that when the child is told something, they cannot go to the other parent for a different answer. Parental communication is essential.



## POSITIVE PARENTING PRINCIPLES:



**AS CHRISTIANS, THE FUNDAMENTALS OF WHAT WE WANT FOR OUR CHILDREN HAS NOT CHANGED OVER TIME. OUR ABILITY TO CONSISTENTLY DELIVER GOD-HONORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM IS UNMISTAKABLY LINKED TO OUR GENUINELY LIVING A TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE FROM THE INSIDE OUT.**

One of the greatest positive drives within our human frame is to see our children thrive. Now let's focus on doing it!

**We know WHAT we want for our kids, but HOW do we APPLY what they need to help them be truly healthy kids?**

You may have heard the saying, "The devil is in the details." From a positive Christian perspective, successful parenting is absolutely revealed in the details. This is not to say that we need to know everything or memorize a handbook to be a good parent. On the contrary, the details we are talking about have to do with finding and building on biblical principles.

We will put these principles in place by addressing some common parental concerns. They can be applied to all stages of parenting, with obvious adjustments in regard to age.

In each segment we will be looking at a different principle. Let's begin with "WHAT IF."

**Most parents worry about "WHAT IF!"** This kind of thinking makes us want to be protective, which is an appropriate response. Here are a few "WHAT IF" examples:

- What if they grow up and do not follow Christianity?
- What if they get bullied?
- What if they become a bully?
- What if they have emotional issues?
- What if they have learning issues?
- What if they have physical issues?
- What if someone hurts or abuses them?
- What if they have a bad accident?
- What if they do not fit in?
- What if they do fit in so well that they exclude others?
- What if they date someone that we do not think is good for them?
- What if they grow up and do not like us anymore?





This is a never-ending list. We need to rein in the “WHAT IFs” and put them into perspective in order to move forward.

**HOW DO WE LEARN TO DEAL WITH OUR “WHAT IF” CONCERNS?**



The fact is, some of our “WHAT IF” concerns DO happen. Here are some scriptural principles to put our “WHAT IF” thinking in perspective:



We are continually talking about parents rather than parenting - why? Parenting comes from the foundation within the parents.

**Trusting Jesus as our shepherd helps us realize our value to him and to God:**

Psalms 23:4-5: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Being cared for by our shepherd is a wonderful promise. Just reading this gives us a personal sense of relief. However, sometimes bad things do happen.



My wife and I have had some of our worst “WHAT IFs” actually happen. There are several; we will mention one briefly. At the age of 15, one of our daughters was badly abused by someone. It took years to get through that. It was a “WHAT IF” that as a father, I did not know what I would do if that ever happened. LORD, please do not let this ever happen. But it did.



A family overcomes assault through faith

What I learned was to walk with Jesus through what DOES come. Somehow, he got us through it and somehow, he gave us strength. *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.* We need to hold onto this promise of the LORD being with us, no matter what happens.

**With this value comes an umbrella of protective holiness for our families:**

1 Corinthians 7:14: (NASB) *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.*

God's hand is in our children's lives. It is amazing! Our children are loved and protected by God in this life because of OUR relationship with Him as

Christians. We need to understand the deep value of recognizing and claiming this protection for our children. If we are living that set-apart (sanctified) life, then God's hand is over our children. This is a special blessing that will help in our parenting.

**While this does not guarantee a problem-free life, it does open a door of peace-driven thinking to move forward:**

Isaiah 26:3-4: (KJV) <sup>3</sup>*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.* <sup>4</sup>*Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:*

*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace* - it is hard to achieve perfect peace, as there is always that little ripple of "self." We struggle to get up to that level of perfect peace because *in the LORD Jehovah is everlasting strength*. What a comfort! We are not promised a "problem-free life," but we are promised a peace-driven mind to manage our "WHAT IFs."



**Our lives will always be full of testing and that includes some "WHAT IFs" becoming "OH NOs!"**

1 Corinthians 10:13: (NASB) *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

If we are stuck in our "WHAT IFs," first we need to take it before the Lord in prayer and ask for help. If some of our "WHAT IFs" come to be, we need to look at the Scriptures and realize the Lord has us under His care. We can say to Him: *Lord, I know You are watching over my family and I know I can trust You with this because you will not give me, or my family, more than we can handle.* The "WHAT IFs" can be put into perspective when we look at them through the eyes of scriptural promises.



**LIVE IN THE PRESENT:**

**Protect your children to prevent what you can, but also protect them with the intention to prepare them.**

Most parents are very good at protecting their children, but are we **PROTECTING** them with the intention of **PREPARING** them as well?

Prepare them by adorning our life with godliness.

This gives us concrete principles to replace our wandering thoughts of **WHAT IF** and gives our children an environment that teaches God's presence and care:

**Deuteronomy 6:5-9:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup>These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. <sup>9</sup>You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.



Can our children see God is a priority in our everyday life? Do we pray with them? Do we share the beauty of God's future kingdom to show them what is on our heart?

This is part of protecting them. We are teaching them to see things through a higher lens. It is also part of preparing them because it shows them where to go so they can understand what is happening around them. When they are little they will not get it right off the bat, but we establish habits within them so that they live a life based on the assurance of God's loving care.

We protect and prepare our children best when we are focused in the present and watching for God's direction. Live in the present!

Falling into a "WHAT IF" mind frame takes us out of the present and throws us into a nebulous timeframe with an experience that may or may not happen.



In **Habakkuk 1**, the prophet was bewildered by the troubles of his day. He basically said to God: *You are the Almighty! Have you seen what is happening? Have you seen the chaos and destruction that has swallowed us up? Why do You not help? Why do You not deliver us?*

**Habakkuk 2** begins with him resolved to listen for the LORD's answer. He prayed in his frustration. He had been looking at what was happening and asking, "WHAT IF?"

**Habakkuk now watches, waits and accepts reproof so he can appropriately respond.**

**Habakkuk 2:1-3:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reprovved. <sup>2</sup>Then the LORD answered me and said, Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. <sup>3</sup>For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.

The LORD gave Habakkuk **PROTECTION** and **PREPARATION**. God said, *Record the vision* so that the one who is in the race will know that the answer is coming. It is coming - it may seem like it tarries, but it is coming. **HE IS PROTECTING THEM BY GIVING THEM HIS PROMISE. HE IS PREPARING THEM BY TELLING THEM HE HAS THIS IN PLACE.**



This is what we want to do for our children.

It is appropriate to be protective of our children. However, too often our protectiveness is only a shield and not an **EDUCATION**. How will they be prepared when things go wrong? How many times have we heard, “Oh, my kids will never do that,” and later find out they did? We need to teach them what to do if they are in a harmful environment, but we cannot protect every moment of their lives.

Shielding is good but not enough. **WE WANT TO EDUCATE WHILE WE ARE SHIELDING** so they have something to hold onto in a tumultuous world.

We need to put aside the “WHAT IF” thinking to live in the present with God’s presence with us.



### +++ **POSITIVE PARENTING PRINCIPLES:**



**AS CHRISTIANS, WE NEED TO ACCEPT THAT EVEN IF OUR "WHAT IF" THINKING IS NATURAL, IT CAN EASILY BECOME A DISTRACTION FROM OUR "WHAT NOW" NEEDS. "WHAT IF" IS OUT OF OUR REACH; "WHAT NOW" REFLECTS THE PRESENT PRIVILEGE OF PROTECTING AND PREPARING OUR CHILDREN. THE FUTURE IS FIRMLY IN GOD'S HANDS - BE AWARE OF IT BUT NOT CONSUMED BY IT!**

Yes, we need to be aware of future possibilities, but we cannot be consumed by them because we have the “WHAT NOW” mindset for moving on with whatever happens. Our children need us here and now in their lives, not in some nebulous “WHAT IF” future.

It is comforting to know that our children are special in God’s eyes. Now we just have to remember that every day!

**All of life’s “WHAT IFs” are one thing, but how do I manage my own inconsistencies as a parent right now?**

Realizing our own limitations as parents can be debilitating. We can get so tied up in what we are NOT good at and how we have failed that we cease to focus on the most important thing: **What can I do today, here and now, to parent my children in spite of my own shortcomings?** This takes both honesty and courage.



I am not a perfect parent (there is no such thing)! How do we make the right choices, manage our mistakes and not put undue pressure on ourselves in the process?

This is difficult because we want to be perfect parents, but there is no such thing. We can, however, give it our strong intention and effort.



## DEALING WITH NOT BEING *a perfect parent*



Be **PRAYERFUL**:



Realize that **PERFECTION**

is not possible,



but **PERSISTANCE** in learning is!

This is the key - we cannot be perfect, but we can be better! Even when we fail, we can get up and try again.

### **Pray with humility and then get up and try again:**

Proverbs 24:16: (NASB) *For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again...*

Part of the righteousness of the man who falls seven times is the fact that he gets up again. It is the same with parents - we fall but need to get up and try again. Our children depend on our efforts and perseverance.

### **Realize we have Jesus to ALWAYS lean on as we humbly pray and learn from our failures:**

1 John 2:1-3: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>...if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup>and he himself is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. <sup>3</sup>By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.*

We are so thankful for the assurance that Jesus died for the whole world. Even if tragedy strikes and our children do the unthinkable by taking their own lives, we know we will see them again. The sacrifice of Jesus secures this. In our world today, this is a much bigger “WHAT IF” than ever before. We first breathe and realize that Jesus has secured a resurrection for us and our loved ones with his sacrifice as the ransom price for Adam. We can take some of the pressure off and work on the “WHAT NOW!”



Losing a child to death for any reason is one of the worst things parents can experience. We will get into one of the toughest of the “WHAT IFs” - suicide - next week.

### **Always go back to God’s word for the principles needed to overcome our own weakness when we feel we have failed as a parent:**

2 Timothy 2:15-16: (NASB) *<sup>15</sup>Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. <sup>16</sup>But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness...*

God’s word will not tell us how to deal with something modern like social media, but it gives us the principles we need to properly handle such challenges. *Thou shalt not have social media in thy house!* While this is not a scripture, the principles of righteousness, godliness and our efforts to be like Jesus will help us keep its use at a minimum.

## DEALING WITH NOT BEING *a perfect parent*



Be **PRAYERFUL**:



Understand the differences between

**PERSONAL CONTROL** and  
**MUTUAL COMPETENCE**



Acknowledge how **CONTRIBUTION**  
fits into both scenarios

### PERSONAL CONTROL



With an infant, we have 100 percent control over their lives. Our competence as parents is easily measured by the control we carefully take.

We put the infant down for naps, feed them, change them, entertain them and enjoy them! We respond to and supply all of their needs.

As they grow through and out of this most helpless and vulnerable stage, we need to grow into a stage of parenting with less **PERSONAL CONTROL** and more **MUTUAL COMPETENCE**. We are teaching our children to eventually become independent individuals, but we start at a very basic level.

### MUTUAL COMPETENCE



At this point, **MUTUAL COMPETENCE** requires a major contribution on our part and a minor contribution on theirs. We are working on building *their* competence. This is measured by the budding competence of the child as they learn responsibility and understanding contrasted with the lesser external role of the parent. The object is to change the balance over time.

The Apostle Paul showed us the difference between the **PERSONAL CONTROL** and **MUTUAL COMPETENCE** stages of parenting in the letter to the Hebrew Christians. His message was a profound parenting principle:

*With maturity comes freedom and privilege*

Paul focused on the need for greater **PERSONAL CONTROL** on his part due to the lack of **COMPETENCE** these Christians were displaying. We will see his example of allowing them to demonstrate **COMPETENCE**, but then having to put more of his own **PERSONAL CONTROL** back in place when they showed unexpected immaturity.

**Hebrews 5:12-14:** (NRSV) <sup>12</sup>For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic elements of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food; <sup>13</sup>for everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness.



Paul, as the mentor and “parent” of these adult Christians, is asking what they were doing. They were not taking the responsibilities of the word of God they should have been taking at their supposed level of growth. He had to back off their “diet” because they did not have as much **COMPETENCE** as they should have had at this time.

**These Christians needed greater external control in their lives, as they had not matured as expected:**

*<sup>14</sup>But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.*

The reward for solid food is that they would be able to distinguish good from evil. They would be mature at that point.

We are building this same awareness in our children, starting with the complete control we have over them when they are very young. While it can be hard to let go of that control, we need to engage in this process, always working to build our children’s confidence and competence.

**COMPETENCE** was missing in those Hebrew Christians, and it caused a dangerous situation for their spiritual wellbeing that needed correction.

## DEALING WITH NOT BEING *a perfect parent*



Be **PRAYERFUL**:



Understand how we can remain  
**COMPETENT** while having our  
**CONTRIBUTIONS** diminish

Again, when we feel uncertain, we need to bring it to the LORD in prayer to understand what the balances are supposed to be. Sometimes parents feel that if they do not exert a lot of control over their children, they are not as good a parent. It is often better to control less and guide more. This gives them the strength to resist evil when they are on their own. We can always back off like Paul had to.



I am not a perfect parent and never was. When I look back on the parenting of our three children (three terrific adults at this point), two were very hard to raise. They would tell you this. Our middle daughter was not; she was very compliant and was very different. I made a mistake in being so involved with the difficulties of the other two that I did not give as much attention to that middle child as I should have. I look back with regret on that. I assumed too much and could have done much better. My daughter has become a wonderful, mature adult in every way possible, so I am grateful for that. But I realize that maybe I expected more competence before she was quite ready. We need to be careful. Learn from our mistakes.



Going from **PERSONAL CONTROL** to **MUTUAL COMPETENCE** requires us to teach with continuity and consistency:

Proverbs 22:6: (KJV) *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

This is such a simple verse but gives a powerful lesson. Do not teach based on how we feel; teach based on what our children need.

Going from **PERSONAL CONTROL** to **MUTUAL COMPETENCE** requires:

- emotional control on our part, and
- daily wisdom from above in order to provide proper guidance.

Teenagers will get mad at us. Our very existence is sometimes enough to make them mad!

Ephesians 6:4: (NASB) *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

*Do not provoke your children to anger - we want to raise them up with something bigger and stronger - the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We are not perfect parents, but we need to do our best to rise above ourselves and focus on these admonitions.*

Going from **PERSONAL CONTROL** to **MUTUAL COMPETENCE** reminds us to see our children as children and help them up the ladder of maturity:

Colossians 3:21: (NASB) *Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.*

In other words, teach your children with grace, strength, maturity and love. Know that with such guidance, even if they do not like you at the moment, deep down they love you. Train them, praise them, discipline them, coach them, and be an example to them. Give them grace and space to grow, just like God gives us.

## +++ POSITIVE PARENTING PRINCIPLES:

AS CHRISTIANS, OUR PARENTAL FAULTS AND FAILURES CAN AND SHOULD BE HUMBLY BROUGHT BEFORE GOD THROUGH JESUS. HAVING DONE THIS, WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THE PROCESS OF HELPING OUR CHILDREN GROW. NO MATTER WHAT STAGE OF LIFE THEY ARE IN, OUR JOB IS TO, AS BEST AS WE CAN, ENCOURAGE GOING FROM OUR PERSONAL CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES TO MUTUAL COMPETENCE IN THEIR LIVES.





This reminds me of the phrase “lead by example.” This leads to a way of teaching my son how to be competent. How? By taking care of the elderly, being consistent in our faith, giving to those in need - these demonstrate values we hope our son will grow into. We took care of three parents in our home, so I hope our son will take care of us some day! We should take time to enjoy our kids, be it sports or other activities, or taking them to Bible camps and on vacations. With our son being an only child, we gave him space to grow by allowing him to invite a friend to come with us on trips. It was great to see them get out on their own, trying to make decisions and have fun, hopefully within the parameters that we taught him.

It is all part of the release, moving towards **COMPETENCE** rather than **CONTROL**, with the goal of our child becoming **MATURE**.

While this transition from control to our children’s competence is difficult, it is one of the greatest gifts we can give them!

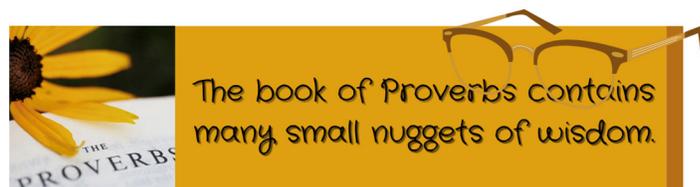
**When it comes to disciplining our children, should we as imperfect parents even go there? What if we cause more harm than good?**

The subject of parental discipline is a difficult one. As Christian parents look at the Bible, they can easily focus on a wide variety of scriptures that seem to give leeway to be overly strict or overly permissive. While we will not attempt to deal with this variety of texts today, we will focus on some key scriptures for guidance.

**What does appropriate Christian discipline of our children even look like?**

**Proverbs 29:15,17-18:** (NASB) <sup>15</sup>The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. <sup>17</sup>Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul. <sup>18</sup>Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law.

We are NOT saying to beat your children. That is not what these scriptures are about and is not what the Bible advocates!



*Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul* is followed by *Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained* (the King James Version uses *perish* instead of *unrestrained*). We can conclude this is talking about correcting, but also about giving the child vision and guidance. This is what discipline is for - not beating the child but correcting his/her path and guiding so they can “see” the righteous way to go.

We are supposed to discipline, but we need to think of the end goal of discipline rather than expressing our own anger or frustration.

## DISCIPLINING



Be **POSITIVE**:

As you discipline,



**RESTRICT** and **RESTRAIN**

to help your child

**RESET** and **REFRAME**

We have to **RESTRICT** and **RESTRAIN** our children at times, for safety as well as for guidance. In addition to stopping the behavior, it also helps them **RESET** their own perspectives, helping them **REFRAME** their direction. This is why we say to be positive in correction. Even if it is difficult, be positive!

Necessary Christian-based discipline comes in degrees, as some children respond faster than others.

**While this is a spiritual principle, it absolutely should be mirrored in our family discipline as well:**

**Hebrews 12:5-8:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, My son, do not regard lightly the discipline (tutorage, training) of the LORD, nor faint when you are reprov'd (admonished, spoken to) by Him; <sup>6</sup>for those whom the LORD loves He disciplines (educates) and He scourges (to flog, literally or figuratively) every son whom He receives (accepts). <sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

*But if you are without discipline...then you are illegitimate children and not sons - if we are not being disciplined by God, we are not His child.*

As parents, we are thus to give appropriate discipline like our Father gives us. What is "appropriate discipline"?

These verses give the big picture and then break it down into different stages. Let's look at that breakdown:

- *do not regard lightly the discipline (tutorage, training) of the LORD*



**The whole process of helping one to grow**

Think of a coach disciplining the athletes on his team so that they can grow. It is hard work and a big process. It is not just physical but also mental, learning fundamentals and all that goes into effective training. *Do not regard lightly* the overall teaching of God and the overall responsibility of teaching our children.

- *do not faint when you are reprov'd (admonished, spoken to) by Him*



**Scolded with words or a look; this disheartens the child**

Part of the discipline process is that God will “scold” us (most likely through Scripture or our fellow Christians) when we go wrong. As parents, we need to speak to our children firmly so they understand right from wrong. Some might need only a look to remind them of behavior expectations.

- *those whom the LORD loves, He disciplines* (educates)



The action of discipline may not always feel like love

“Action” is the key here. First, we use words, and then there are times when actions are needed. It might be a “time out” or removal from the situation. The child might need to take a breath, sit quietly away from the stimulus and settle down and regroup. The LORD disciplines us - sometimes by educating through Scripture, or through others telling us to rectify whatever we did. As parents, we need to help our children rectify what they did as well.

- *scourges* (to flog, literally or figuratively) *every son whom he receives* (accepts)



Scourging seems harsh, the opposite of acceptance

This is an even firmer discipline. “Flogging” is not a pleasant thought, but it is also a figurative term. When we need hard guidance, it may not feel like we are accepted or loved by our Father. But these scriptures affirm that because He loves us, He disciplines us.

With a smaller child, this might be firmly taking their hand to lead them to do something, even if they fight the move. Depending on their age and the circumstances, this might include a “time out” in your lap for a discussion or an affirmation of your love.

Sometimes the LORD has to stop us from the destructive tendencies of our own will, encouraging a change from a fleshly to a spiritual Christian perspective. Sometimes, we too have to guide our children from their own will to what is appropriate. It might take a firm stance to do this. It is because we accept them and love them, and we want them to mature into strong, faithful individuals.

The point is that some children can respond more easily, and some need a stronger stand or more persistent correction to reset their thinking and behavior.



Be **POSITIVE** This is not about being angry and vengeful. Appropriate discipline must be positive.

**Why? Here is the desired result of all of this:**

Hebrews 12:11: (NASB) *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*



Parental discipline should ALWAYS be for positive reasons! If done in a negative, vengeful way instead of a teaching tool, it becomes a restraining tool. That is NOT what we want.

We want to build, not break! God does not want to break us; He wants to build us up in our holy faith. We do not want to break our children; we want them to break bad habits, but not break them. It is all about nurturing, learning and stimulating them towards maturity. Loving communication should always precede and follow such learning experiences.



One of the big lessons of my life in learning to discipline my own children was that I had resolved early on that I would never discipline them when I was angry. If I was angry, I would put off the discipline and walk away, calm down and ask myself, why I was doing this. It is not to make ME feel better, but to teach them to BE better. Then I could walk back into the room and be calm and firm. For me, that worked wonders.

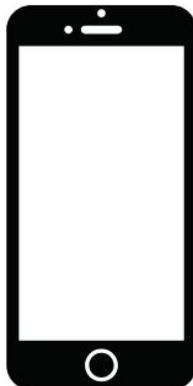
This kind of discipline cannot happen if we are driven by anger, frustration or impatience. We need to be driven by teaching and nurturing for their overall well-being. This is how God disciplines us. Let's learn from our heavenly Father.

**Always remember, a child is NOT equipped to function as an adult!**

**1 Corinthians 3:1-3:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup>for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

*Are you not walking like mere men* - they were walking like “mere” fleshly men, not having grown appropriately into *spiritual men*. We are responsible to help our children grow in appropriate ways.

When we act in a childish way, it may be appropriate to have the reins of freedom pulled from us because we are not worthy on a spiritual level. This is sobering to think about. This is an important principle to apply when our child is of an age to understand what we are doing and why.



We should be firm, not angry. And how's this for a consequence - “Give me your phone!” What a serious consequence!

If our children cannot function without their phone, what does this say about the world we live in, and what should we do about this?

Discipline is about helping them see something bigger and more wholesome - sometimes at the expense of what they might like more in the moment. That is why we went through the progression of discipline in Hebrews 12 so we can learn how to use it appropriately as parents.

Discipline is a difficult job. We talked about the “WHAT IFs” of parenting and the “I know I’m not a good parent” doubts. Now the difficulties of discipline, which is hard to do correctly because once again we are dealing with self-doubt. What if I make a mistake? What if I am too hard or too soft? Is it okay

then to discipline later if I missed a circumstance? We need to do the best we can for the moment we are in and work from there.

## the bottom line

Psalm 127:3: (NASB) *Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.*

*Children are a gift of the LORD* - we have been given that gift and the responsibility to nurture that gift into something special in the sight of God. We must recognize and rejoice that our children are under the protection of God just as we are.



## POSITIVE PARENTING PRINCIPLES:



**AS CHRISTIANS, OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO APPROPRIATELY DISCIPLINE OUR CHILDREN IS A SERIOUS MATTER. THIS FIRMNESS MUST ALWAYS COME FROM LOVE AND ALWAYS BE DESIGNED TO STIMULATE UNDERSTANDING AND GROWTH. WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK YOURSELF IF YOU WOULD WANT GOD TO DISCIPLINE YOU WITH THE SAME ATTITUDE YOU ARE DISCIPLINING YOUR CHILD.**

Do I want God to be angry with me the way I am angry with my child? If not, then I should not be angry with my child in that way. We should know and use scriptural principles when disciplining our children.

We covered the basic ideas on parental discipline. In the next episode, we will continue with the general subject:

“How Do We Best Support Our Kids Through Their Hardest Times?”

We will ask four questions:

- How do we, in a very practical way, teach our younger children to love God?
- How do we keep open and honest relationships with our children as they become young adults and beyond?
- Bad things do happen to good people! How do we as parents handle it when something bad happens to our children?
- Contradiction, strife and even rebellion are potentially a part of a Christian’s parenting experience. How do we handle this?

In this episode, we tried to lay the groundwork and scriptural principles for each of us to rely on in all aspects of our parenting. This may be difficult at times, but it is such worthwhile work. Parent your children as God parents you!

*So, is parental discipline of our children a thing of the past?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on July 25, 2022 Ep.

1239: How Do We Best Support Our Kids

Through Their Hardest Times?

### Bonus Material and Study Questions

A sneak peek at the basis for our next raising children episode:

**Bad things do happen to good people.**

Preparation and awareness for when bad things happen.

**When bad things happen; as you shield them in hard times, show them the way through those hard times.**

**How do you prepare a kid for the horrible realities of our world like school shootings?**

Hebrews 12:12-15: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup>Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup>See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

**Contradiction, strife and possibly rebellion are potentially a part of the parenting experience.**

- Communication
- Enforcing constructive discipline

**We want our children to know where to find the highest sources of the principles and integrity:**

2 Timothy 3:14-15: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup>and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:26-28: (NASB) <sup>26</sup>In the same way the spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the spirit himself (*itself*) intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; <sup>27</sup>and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the spirit is, because he (*it*) intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup>And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.





## Practically teaching our younger children to love God.

**Our children will honor us and through us learn to honor God when we live the example of maturity and integrity we want for them:**

**Proverbs 4:1-6:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding, <sup>2</sup>for I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my instruction. <sup>3</sup>When I was a son to my father, tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, <sup>4</sup>then he taught me and said to me, Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live; <sup>5</sup>Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. <sup>6</sup>Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; love her, and she will watch over you.

There is something to be said about passing wisdom down from generation to generation. One of our most troubling problems today is that we think we are so enlightened that we simply toss the wisdom of generations past, labeling it as outdated and even damaging.

**Learning how to keep open and honest relationships with our young adult children.**

**God show us that we need competent characters, and He gave us the tools to make us capable:**

**Ephesians 4:11-15:** (NRSV) <sup>11</sup>The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

**Capable Parenting is revealed in the equipping of our children for the work of adulthood:**

<sup>13</sup>until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

**Capable Parenting is tested in the length of the process necessary for children to mature:**

<sup>14</sup>We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup>But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

**Capable Parenting is crystallized when it does not back down from its driving principles.**

**Children have little spiritual and physical strength and need Capable Parenting.**

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# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 1238: Is Parental Discipline of Our Children a Thing of the Past?

<https://christianquestions.com/program/1238-christian-parents-discipline/>

See:



*While this episode is aimed at those responsible for raising children, it should be noted that these principles are also applicable for everyone who mentors or teaches newer Christians in their fellowship.*

1. What are we seeking to accomplish when we raise and educate our Christian children? List the six points in Proverbs 3:1-12 and explain. Which do you think are the most important for *you* to see in your children?
2. What should husbands and wives strive for in their relationship to be of most benefit to their children? To the best of our ability, what are four things we need to be doing in our lives to give our children the best opportunity for growth? (See Matthew 19:4-6, Romans 12:3, Psalms 101:2-4, 1 Corinthians 12:26, Philippians 2:3-4, 1 Corinthians 1:10)
3. What are some of your “what ifs”? Do they overwhelm you? How do we combat this? Why shouldn’t Christians expect a problem-free life? If one or more of our “what ifs” become “oh nos!” how does 1 Corinthians 10:13 help us? (See Psalms 23:4-5, 1 Corinthians 7:14, Isaiah 26:3-4)
4. Why is it important to educate our children even while we are protecting them? How should we prepare them for their future protection and peace of mind? (See Deuteronomy 6:5-9, Habakkuk 2:1-3)
5. How can we deal with NOT being perfect parents? What are steps we can take that will help when we inevitably fail at some aspect of parenting? (See Proverbs 24:16, 1 John 2:1-3, 2 Timothy 2:15-16)
6. Explain “personal control” vs “mutual competence” - what is the idea of the changes in this balance as a child grows? What is the goal of these changes? Can these changes go both directions? What was the problem Paul had with the Hebrew brethren? Describe his relationship with them. (See Hebrews 5:12-14)
7. How do we enable our children to grow from 100% our personal control, to mutual competency and eventually maturity/reduced contributions on our part? What is necessary on the part of parents? (See Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21)
8. What is the purpose of discipline? Why do we *restrict* and *restrain* our children? Why should we rejoice to see God’s discipline in OUR lives? (See Proverbs 29:15,17-18, Hebrews 12:7-8)
9. What are the progressive disciplinary steps found in Hebrews 12:5-6? Explain fully:  
*a) do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord...    b) do not faint when you are reprovved by Him...*  
*c) those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines...        d) and He scourges every son He receives...*
10. What is the essential mindset when disciplining anyone? Why? (See Hebrews 12:11, Psalm 127:3)  
What aspects of your parenting (or mentoring) do you see need work? What are you doing that is positive?