

PARENTING: AGES 0-5

Biblical Training and Discipline

I. Biblical Training

a. What is Biblical Training?

Defined: The intentional effort of a father and mother to guide their children into God-honoring obedience through the means of Scripture, prayer, instruction, and modeling responses.

b. Why do we Train Our Children?

1. They will not drift toward the Goal of Godliness

Prior to conversion, they have a decided bias towards evil. After conversion, they will still struggle with indwelling sin, as we do. So seek to steer them loving into the pathway of grace.

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

2. Training prepares them to please God in the face of temptation

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Co 10:13

c. How Do We Train our Children to Obey?

1. Remember to train in age and developmentally appropriate ways (see Session 1 notes)
2. Model and demonstrate
 - Give examples of right responses
 - Give examples of wrong responses: looking away, floppy hand
 - Make these times fun
 - Exaggerate to make the point
 - Do this consistently
 - “If your brother does something you don’t prefer what should you say?”
3. Review/remind/repeat outside the boundaries of temptation
 - This is a way to lovingly teach them when their hearts aren’t tempted.
 - This equips them with a clear way of escape from sin.
 - “Today you will be with your cousin. What should you do if you want to play with his toy? What should you do if he grabs your toy?”
 - VERY IMPORTANT: Opportunity to protect them from harm: Robin’s message. So in our home, to teach them to “Play appropriately” in part means...
4. Clearly communicate expectations and standards
 - Do not step onto the street
 - Do not touch phones without first asking.
 - You must ask to be excused before getting up from a meal.
5. Boundaries should be reasonable
 - “You may never touch your brother” verses “Boys, please do not touch each other when you are in the car” verses “Boys, please fold your hands and keep them on your lap until we get there.”
 - Please keep your feet in front when you’re sitting at the table.
6. Words should be clear and defined

- Don't touch this.
 - Put your toys away, into the basket.
7. Work hard to encourage, praise obedience

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. Eph. 4:29

- Make a big deal out of obedience and progress.
 - Look for evidences of grace.
8. Correct behaviors and attitudes that are not biblical

II. Understanding Discipline

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Eph 6:4

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. 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? 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. 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. Heb 12:7-11

- a. Reproof**
- b. Spanking/The Rod**
- c. Forfeiting Privileges**
- d. Isolating Offenders.**
- e. Don't Make Spiritual Exercises Punitive**

III. The Place of the Rod in Parenting

“The Rod is a parent, in faith toward God and faithfulness toward his or her children, undertaking the responsibility of careful, timely, measured and controlled use of physical punishment to underscore the importance of obeying God, thus rescuing the child from continuing in his foolishness until death.”¹

Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. Pr 13:24

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. Pr 22: 15

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol. Pr 23: 13-14

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. Pr 29:15

a. The Rod Is: ²

1. A Parental Exercise
2. An Act of Faith
3. A Responsibility
4. A Physical Punishment
5. A Rescue Mission

b. The Rod Is Not:

1. Not the Right to an Unbridled Temper

“If you do find yourself more upset because your child has sinned against you than you are because he sinned against God, you must quickly and prayerfully get your heart in such a state that personal desires are temporarily set aside. You must be willing to lay aside your personal rights and forgive your child’s offense against you so that you may focus on fulfilling your parental obligations to him. Only then can you discipline your child with the assurance that your passion is not unholy anger.”³

2. Not the right to Hit our Children

¹ Ted Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995), 130.

²This entire section is taken directly from *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, Tedd Tripp. See pages 131-134.

³ Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press, 1997), 33.

3. Not Venting (Anger) “Frustration”
4. Not Retribution

IV. Thinking Wisely About Spanking

a. Age ranges

1. Begin 1 - 2
2. Regularly 2 – 6
3. Decrease 6 - ???

b. Given with a right motive

1. Love for God/ Obedience to God
2. Love for the child

c. On the basis of clear, prior and understood Instructions

1. For clear disobedience and persistent defiance
2. Disobedience: when instruction and training have made the standards clear enough to enforce
3. Defiance

d. Should usually be administered by the father, If he is present

1. Leadership/Servanthood
2. Support/ Reinforces Mother's Authority

e. Given in private

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. Mt 18:15

This protects the child from unnecessary humiliation.

f. Given as soon as possible after the offense

1. This prevents the child forgetting the sin.
2. The discipline must be connected with the offense.
3. Avoids guilt
4. Prevents confusion

g. Clarify the issue

1. State clearly what they did
2. Explain why they are receiving a spanking
 - a. "I love you and when you disobey, God commands me to love you by teaching you wisdom. When we disobey god's ways, there are consequences."
 - b. "The Bible says....and you've been taught...."
 - c. "Daddy/ Mommy said"
 - d. "If you disobey (mommy and daddy), you disobey God"
 - e. Helping them to see the need of a savior: Why did you sin?
 - f. The need for a savior: "Can you stop without the Lord's help?"

h. What to use

1. Sturdy, but flexible instrument
2. Able to cause discomfort without harm or injury
3. Prevents associating hands with correction/ punishment

i. Received willingly (age appropriateness)

1. "Come to Daddy/Mommy"
2. "Lean over knees or bed"
3. "Must receive, be still"
4. "Crying yes, No screaming in anger"
5. "No comments or criticizing"

j. Administered calmly and with self-control

k. Followed by affection/hug (but not yet completed)

"Hold the child until he or she stops crying. This communicates love and affection. It connects the pain of discipline with physical affection. This connection will be very important when, in later life, God takes over your child's discipline."⁴

l. Reconciliation

1. Acknowledge that they have sinned. "I was wrong"
2. Identify the sin by its biblical name. "I was angry, selfish, etc..."
3. Identify the biblical behavior to demonstrate a commitment to change. "I should have asked and not hit my brother"

⁴ William P. Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parenting* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 169.

4. Ask daddy/mommy for forgiveness for disobedience/violating standards. Make sure they are asking for forgiveness for their sins
5. Commit to go to all offended parties and ask for forgiveness. (Make this a part of the process of reconciliation with God)
6. Ask for forgiveness from God (Prayer, see below)
7. Encourage them to trust the gospel and ask Jesus for faith to trust and obey him.

m. Involves prayer

1. "Father, I was wrong when I ...will you please forgive me for..." - (specific behavior and heart attitude)
2. Confession of Need for a Savior
3. Thank Jesus for coming and dying on the Cross. Ask for the Spirit's help to believe in the gospel, and receive power to change. (I cannot change myself; I need You.)

n. Requires assurance

1. Forgiveness
2. Love
3. Acceptance

o. Followed with lavish affection

1. Express Gratefulness
2. Affirm Reconciliation
3. Commend for Receiving Correction

p. Concluded when the child is reconciled

1. Comforted
2. Peaceful and Affectionate
3. Communicating

q. May require follow-through

1. Humbly and respectfully ask other offended party(s) for forgiveness
2. Obey violated command or principle

r. May include a follow-up assignment

NOTE: Bible study, memorization and prayer must not be introduced as "punishment" but as a means of renewing the mind and changing the heart in order to bear godly fruit.

For Discussion, Evaluation and Application

1. Where do you see evidences of God's transforming grace in your life and the lives of your children?
2. Why is an understanding of the gospel so important to a proper foundation and motivation for training our children?
3. As you consider the child training just received, would it be a heartfelt conviction for both you and your spouse that your child training and instruction is rooted in the application of Scripture?
4. Describe the difference between principle and practice. Are there any adjustments that you need to make in applying this distinction to your parenting, or to your observations about others?
5. Fathers, ask your wives to evaluate your leadership in training your children. Which aspects of your training process are not a result of biblical principles? Wives, ask your husbands for their evaluation.
6. Which aspect(s) of your spanking process could use improvement? Please explain. What steps will you take to begin a process of change?
7. What specific sin has been frequently exposed in your heart as you have pursued the process of training your children?
8. With whom will you regularly discuss the things that God has spoken to you through this material for the purpose of fellowship, prayer, encouragement and accountability?
9. What are your top two or three prayer requests for yourself as a parent, desiring to train your children for the glory of God and for their good?
10. What are your top two or three prayers requests for your children as you pursue the privilege of "training them up in the way they should go"?