

Raising children in a Christian Home

Proverbs 13: 24, "If you refuse to discipline your children, it proves you don't love them. If you love your children, you'll be prompted, discipline them." Teaching is the greatest responsibility that God gives to us as parents. If a parent doesn't discipline a child it puts a big question mark up. Do these parents really care about the moral character and development of this child? If you love your child, you will discipline them. And so discipline of itself, lends itself toward teaching and learning. The Christian home needs to be a place where kids learn.

It's About Relationships

There are times when your child's misbehavior is in full gear. Their message to you is "Hey, I'm in control here." Different situations demand different actions. There's times you draw the line, such as when the little boy doesn't respect his mom or the little girl doesn't respect her dad, etc. There is that time to do that, but be cautious and conscious of this fact- It all is about relationships.

Relationships are so important. Failing to draw boundaries will create gaps between parents and children. What happens as these gaps begin to widen between kids. All of a sudden, you're living in two different worlds and your kid is talking to people they shouldn't be talking to. They're finding comfort from other people they shouldn't be getting comfort from. And you as a parent are on the outside looking in.

Children Want to Please

It's a surprise to most parents that their children really do want to please them. When you look at your son or daughter and say, "I'm very disappointed in what just happened?" You'll break them right there- they'll melt. They don't want that. They don't want mommy or daddy to be upset with them. What does that do to the relationship? It breaks it down.

Child's Commandments to Parents

My hands are small, please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture, or throw a ball. My legs are short, please slow down so I can keep up with you. • My eyes haven't seen the world as yours have, please let me explore safely, don't restrict me unnecessarily. • My feelings are tender, please be sensitive to my needs. • Don't nag me all day long. Treat me as you'd like to be treated. • I'm a special gift from God, please treasure me as God intended you to do, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to live by and disciplining me in a loving way. • *I need your encouragement, but not your praise.*

Importance of Acceptance

In the adolescent years, where they're going through all these changes, they find comfort in the peer group. What does the peer group do for your kid? The group accepts him with his hair, looking like an idiot. He accepts him with baggy pants. He accepts him with this or that or the other thing. Whatever way this kid strives to strike out and say, 'Look at me, I'm an individual, I'm not like my little sister, who's so goody two shoes, I'm different.' And rather than finding acceptance in the home, the kid finds acceptance in the peer group. And that's exactly what happens.

The truth of the matter is, the peer group can't do one thing for your kid. Except what? Accept them. And it's huge. It's powerful. You have a choice as a parent. Do you want that peer group to run your kid's life or do you want to have a piece of the action?

Learn to respond, don't react. Keep those channels of communication open, don't be so judgmental. It's a smart parent, who says to his kid as they grow up, 'You know, honey, no matter what you do in life, you know what I want to tell you, I'm gonna love you no matter what you do.' A believer may recognize that it sounds like Romans 8:39, " Nothing separates you from the love of Christ." That's our model. Love the kids anyway.

So, What's the Problem?

The problem is, most parents are authoritarians. 'Hey, you will listen up, you will do what I tell you to do. As long as you live in this house, you're going to do what I tell you to do.' Now see, that's the authoritarian parent. The other problematic parent is the one that is all over the place. They step three feet and they step on one of the children they're parenting. These are the permissive parents. They want their child to win at everything. They protect them from everything. They give them everything they want, and they live on guilt.

The smart parent figures out there's a difference between what a kid wants and what a kid needs. There's the wisdom. Now there's the permissive over here, we've got the authoritarian over here. In the mid point, we have the *authoritative parent*. The authoritative parent remains in healthy authority over children.

Love Them Anyway

Scripture says, he ran to him and he embraced him. That's a model of how God sees his followers. As damned as we are, as imperfect as we are from time to time, he loves us anyway. Will you love your kids anyway? If your kid really feels like you love them, there's no stopping that kid.

Discipline Suggestions

Consider discipline a privilege and not a chore. Discipline does not mean, wail on your kid, giving him spankings, timeouts, taking away privileges; that's what most parents do. The idea is to try to catch them doing something right, and then reinforce it. Keep the highest form of discipline in mind: **self-discipline**. Enable not to disable. A lot of parents, especially the permissive ones, who don't want their kids to fail, they do everything for the kids.

Use discipline for a correction. One of the ways to help you figure out the difference is that discipline moves right in on the act. "I'm unhappy with what happened. I'm unhappy the way that room looks. I'm unhappy about this or angry about that, okay?" Here, you're zeroing in on the act and not the actor. It's like separating the sin from the sinner. Proverbs 29:17, "Discipline your children and they will give you happiness and peace." So, how do you discipline children? You discipline them with love. If you love your child, you will in fact discipline them.