

2024 Valley Bible Church Parenting Workshop

Topic 4 – Corrective Discipline

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Introduction

What is the Christian parent's source of authority? *The Bible.*

How would you explain moral and non-moral issues? *Moral issues are Biblical commands; non-moral issues are areas of freedom.*

What can be a temptation when applying Biblical general commands? *The application of general commands is an area of freedom so legalism and judgmentalism are temptations.*

What is your purpose in parenting and what does that impact? *To glorify God; Everything.*

What is the definition of successful Christian parenting? *It is not measured by the child's response, but by the faithfulness of the parents to God and His Word.*

What is your mission or goal as a Christian parent? *To make disciples of your children.*

What are some focus areas for the Christian household? *Parents striving for spiritual maturity, striving for a worthy walk, being deeply connected to a local church, and making purposed and opportune times to pour the Scriptures into your children.*

Since parents are the nucleus of the family what is the first parenting role to fulfill? *Your respective husband or wife marriage role.*

What are three parenting roles from Eph 6:1-4? *Unified authority, encourager, and nurturer.*

Any changes in your thoughts on parenting since last week?

Last week we looked at “bringing up” or nurturing. Parents are to nurture their children in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord”.

⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, **but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.** (Eph 6:4 NAS95)

“Discipline” means to provide instruction or to train, with the intent of forming proper habits of behavior, of providing guidance for responsible living, of rearing and guiding a child toward maturity. It is a ***broad term*** for whatever parents do to train, **correct**, and educate children in order to help them develop and mature. It is the overall training of children.

We know that our heavenly Father disciplines those whom He loves.

¹²For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights. (Prov 3:12 NAS95)

We also know that discipline can take many forms. Hebrews 12:4-11 shows that God uses different forms of discipline to train us. When “discipline” is used in Hebrews, it denotes training. It is the same word used in Ephesians 6:4.

⁴You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; ⁵and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE **DISCIPLINE** OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE **REPROVED** BY HIM; ⁶FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE **SCOURGES** EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES. ⁷It is for **discipline** that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not **discipline**? ⁸But if you are without **discipline**, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to **discipline** us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰For they **disciplined** us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. ¹¹All **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. (Heb 12:4-11 NAS95)

“Reprove” means to bring to the light (to reveal hidden things); to show someone that they have done something wrong and summon them to repent or to correct their wayward ways; to expose someone's sin in order to bring correction.

“Scourge” can mean a literal or figurative flogging. It comes from the Greek word for whip and is used to describe the flogging phase of Jesus’ crucifixion (John 19:1). God does not literally scourge us, but He does bring or allow painful things into our life to train us.

But also remember from last time, we saw that there are many ways to correctively discipline via encouragement. From 1 Thess 2:7-8 and 2:10-12, we saw words like “gentle”, “tender care”, “impart not only the gospel, but our very lives”, “very dear to us”, “exhort”, “encourage”, “implore”. We saw that there are many more examples of positive correction than negative in the Scriptures.

Today we want to look more deeply at corrective discipline, specifically physical corrective discipline. The Scriptures give much instruction on overall discipline. They also give examples of bad parenting. Please see the end of the lesson for a study on bad parenting.

To spank or not to spank?

In our first lesson, we noted that the Bible is authoritative (Matt 4:4, 7, 10) and fully sufficient for salvation and sanctification (Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21). It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks (2 Pet 1:3; Matt 4:4; Heb 4:12; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Pet 2:2; Psa 19:7-13; 119:9, 11; 119:24).

We also noted that the correct hermeneutic (art and science of Biblical interpretation) is the normal or plain, literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation. This method takes the plain literal sense while understanding the historical, immediate, and wider contexts; **type of literature**; and the uses of figures of speech. The consistent application of this hermeneutic to all of Scripture is needed to correctly understand Scripture. Also, Christians are free from the Old Testament Law.

What is your authority?

The Biblical support for physical corrective discipline comes from the book of Proverbs. When we come to study, interpret, and apply the Proverbs, we must understand the nature of Biblical wisdom literature. Proverbs are not commands or promises. They are wise sayings that are generally true. Believers should consider that doing them is wise, but not required.

The converse is also true, not doing the Proverbs is *unwise*, but not sin. The application of a Proverb is left to the believer to implement through prayer, seeking God's wisdom, and seeking the wise counsel of mature believers.

An example of a parenting proverb is Proverbs 22:6.

⁶Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Prov 22:6 NAS95) (see also Prov 22:7 on wisdom on borrowing money)

This is wisdom and generally true. There is no promise here about the salvation of your children. This is not a promise that your children will live exactly as they have been raised. It simply says that parents have a significant impact on their children. If you are faithful to train up your child, then they generally will remember that all their life.

Here are the proverbs that talk about physical corrective discipline. Let's make some observations.

²⁴He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently. (Prov 13:24 NAS95)

Regardless of our society's position, physical corrective discipline is not bad; it is not evil. It can actually be an expression of love. And to withhold corrective discipline can be the opposite of love or hate. Loving your children means you discipline "diligently". "Diligently" does not mean "harshly" or even "continuously". The word means to seek, seek early or earnestly, look early or diligently for.

¹O God, You are my God; I shall **seek** You **earnestly**; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. (Psa 63:1 NAS95)

This is simply encouraging that discipline be done when it is needed.

Do you think Biblically about physical corrective discipline?

¹⁵Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him. (Prov 22:15 NAS95)

Physical corrective discipline addresses foolishness that is bound up in the heart of a child. "Bound up" gives the picture of something that is tightly tied to the heart.

Foolishness isn't mistakes or childishness. Proverbs describes the foolish one as the one who does not fear God and one whose heart rages against God and the one who has no regard for God. This is rebellion.

³The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the Lord (Prov 19:3 NAS95)

¹The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” (Psa 14:1 NAS95)

We see this later in Proverbs where both physical corrective discipline and words of corrective discipline address self-willed-ness in a child.

¹⁵The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. (Prov 29:15 NAS95)

This proverb shows us that physical corrective discipline does not stand alone in addressing self-willed-ness. Physical corrective discipline is only a small part of the overall discipline and instruction for your children. Administering only physical corrective discipline leads to provoking to anger and exasperating children. Physical corrective discipline should be accompanied with a clear warning, instruction, and correction that orients the child back to God and away from their rebellion.

Children will often do childish things like spill their purple grape juice on your white carpet, make a mess at dinner, break a precious family heirloom, say rude things, wet the bed, draw on a wall, cut their own hair, etc. Childishness, even when childish acts make your life inconvenient, is not addressed with physical corrective discipline. However, when your child looks at you and smiles and pours out his grape juice on the carpet a second time, that is not childishness, but rebellion.

¹³Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. ¹⁴You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol. (Prov 23:13-14 NAS95)

Physical corrective discipline is not and should never be something that harms the child. Since it addresses rebellion, it shows a child their sin.

If you are going to choose to use physical corrective discipline, here are some potential principles derived from our own walk with God.

- Ensure that you have clearly communicated your expectations for your child. God communicates clearly in His Word what he expects of His children. God also gives His children areas of freedom. Give your child age-appropriate areas of freedom.
- Ensure you take the time needed to be walking in the Spirit before administering corrective physical discipline. Be prayerful for yourself, for your child, and for God’s glory. A child does childish things. And an unbelieving child adds to childishness by also being a dead, blind, captive, sin-slave who is walking according to Satan’s world system. Even if they have made a profession of faith, they are immature in that walk with Christ. So, rebellion is not unexpected. But rebellion against your rules tends to move you towards anger. So, ensure you are walking in the Spirit and not angry or impatient.

- Ensure you know the situation as best you can. Did the child rebel or make a childish mistake? Is a sibling manipulating you into disciplining their sibling? Did you inadvertently set the child up for being disciplined (e.g., carrying your great grandma’s tableware to the table)?
- Communicate clearly why your child is being disciplined. They are being disciplined because they chose to rebel, because they disobeyed God. The specific act is less important than the overall rebellion.
- Love your child throughout the process which is how God deals with you.
- Finish the physical discipline with a reminder of what the rule is and how they might follow the rule in the future.

What’s your biggest struggle in administering physical corrective discipline?

Summary

God’s Word provides all we need to discipline and instruct in a way that honors Him and serves our children well. Corrective discipline is only a small part of the overall disciplining of our children. The Word of God says that physical corrective discipline is wise, but it is not a command. Physical corrective discipline must be carried out in the same way we should live the rest of our lives (i.e., Spirit-filled and loving).

Discussion

Discuss the following questions/topics with your table.

1. Discuss with your table – spanking, yes, or no (remember this is a non-moral issue!)?
2. Your 8-year-old has clearly disobeyed. You are angry and offended that they would disobey you so defiantly. They have been sent to their room and are waiting for you to come “deal” with them. What needs to happen before you go into their room? What needs to happen when you go into their room?
3. Your 15-year-old wants to date. What questions would you ask of them? What biblical truths would you share to guide their thinking?

Additional Study

Look through the age-appropriate ideas regarding discipline below.

Are you purposeful in disciplining your children? In what ways?

Do you have other ideas for age-specific discipline?

How can the age-specific areas be utilized with children of different ages?

Look through the examples of bad parenting below.

Do you see any of the negative characteristics in your parenting? If you do, repent, go to the Word of God to have your mind renewed, and do righteousness.

What are some cautions and encouragements you can take from the negative examples?

Age-Appropriate Ideas Regarding Discipline

Here are opinions put together from a parenting conference held at Valley Bible Church. It is meant to be a resource provided by godly, seasoned parents. It is not God's Word.

0 - 1.5 yrs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Live and speak the gospel to your children.– Speak to your child. Your voice inform them that they are either in danger or being defiant. They should be able to tell the difference in your voice.– Love on your child a lot, but don't be afraid to start to have rules that are for their safety (like not squirming on the changing table).– Ensure there is significant positive encouragement. Praise your child when he/she is responding in a way that honors God.– Openly discuss God's Word at purposed and opportune times.– Physical corrective discipline is less effective, but can begin to be implemented very gently for unsafe rebellion.
1.5 - 4 yrs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Live and speak the gospel to your children.– Work very hard at understanding the difference between childishness and rebellion. Teach the child that rebellion is sin.– Ensure there is significant positive encouragement. Praise your child when he/she is responding in a way that honors God.– Often and openly discuss God's Word at purposed and opportune times. Take opportunities to explain the difference between the world and the Biblical worldview.– Have simple, consistent rules (e.g., don't say "no" to mom and dad, don't hurt sister, don't throw food on the floor, etc.).– Multiple forms of corrective discipline can be used: patient admonishment, timeouts, removal of privileges, physical discipline, etc.– Teach, remind, and discuss motives when your child is entering an area of temptation.
5 - 9 yrs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Live and speak the gospel to your children.– Continue to work very hard at understanding the difference between childishness and rebellion. Teach the child that rebellion is sin.– Ensure there is significant positive encouragement. Praise your child when he/she is responding in a way that honors God.– Often and openly discuss God's Word at purposed and opportune times. Take opportunities to explain the difference between the world and the Biblical worldview.– Discipline may include teaching, verbal correction, rebuking sin, physical correction, taking away privileges and freedoms, etc. Thought and prayer should be given to consider which will deal with the heart most effectively. Physical discipline can be used still, but typically only for serious rebellion.– Discuss choices and consequences, and how to think biblically about temptations.– Learn their strengths, weaknesses, motives, and desires then offer biblical instruction on how to deal with those.

10 - 13 yrs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Live and speak the gospel to your children. – Continue to work very hard at understanding the difference between childishness and rebellion. Teach the child that rebellion is sin. – Ensure there is significant positive encouragement. Praise your child when he/she is responding in a way that honors God. – Knowing and understanding your child is more important than ever. – Puberty results in emotional challenges for both girls and boys. Be understanding, but approach emotional situations from a Biblically. – Keep lines of communication open and active. Use these conversations to guide them through their struggles and experiences. Ask heart-level questions in order to understand your child and then impart biblical wisdom. – Often and openly discuss God’s Word at purposed and opportune times. Take opportunities to explain the difference between the world and the Biblical worldview. – Sins become more serious at this age. Typically, physical discipline comes to an end. It is good to communicate when that has taken place and why. – Lovingly helping the child use biblical truths to avoid further wrong choices. – Discipline consists mainly of training by reasoning through what God’s Word says and how to live it out in real life situations, teaching them to prepare for upcoming issues and choices, verbal correction, rebuking sin, and removing privileges or freedoms.
14 - 18 yrs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Live and speak the gospel to your children. – Ensure there is significant positive encouragement. Praise your child when he/she is responding in a way that honors God. – Often and openly discuss God’s Word at purposed and opportune times. Take opportunities to explain the difference between the world and the Biblical worldview. – Don’t stop teaching, training, loving, and disciplining children during these ages. Critical issues like cultivating a relationship with God, relationships, sexual temptation, money, work ethic, college and/or career direction, and are all issues that need to be discussed and dealt with at this phase. – It is good to spend extended one-on-one time with them. – Freedom can be granted or restricted based on their responsibility with it. – Communication is critical! Ask heart-level questions in order to understand your child and then impart biblical wisdom. Openly discuss God’s Word often. The family dynamic is becoming a group of equal sinners, saved by grace, loving each other, and working together to become doers of the Word.
Adult Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Live and speak the gospel to your children. – Children who are not under your authority (i.e., they are living independently) are not required to obey you any longer. – Keep communicating with them and offer biblical and practical wisdom when it is asked for or when you feel that they need it. – Remember, your advice may not be heeded and that is not wrong.

Biblical Examples of Bad Parenting Styles

The Scriptures give precepts and principles for parents, but also give examples of parenting styles, particularly bad styles. Let's look at some of them.

The Permissive Parent

For an example of a permissive parent, we look at the account of Eli the priest from 1 Samuel 2. We could also look at the account of Samson and his parents (Judges 13-16).

Eli's sons took by force the best sacrificial meat before it was offered to the Lord (1 Sam 2:12-17) and they sexually exploited the women at the tabernacle where the Israelites came to worship (1 Sam 2:22).

Eli told his sons that they should not do evil. The account notes that his sons, "would not listen to the voice of their father." Even though Eli spoke, he took no action to stop his sons from continuing in their evil behavior (1 Sam 2:23-25). God judged Eli severely for his permissive parenting because he honored his sons more than he honored God (1 Sam 2:29).

²⁹Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded *in My dwelling*, and **honor your sons above Me**, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?' (1 Sam 2:29 NAS)

Some characteristics of permissive parenting:

1. Equates firmness/discipline with meanness, therefore avoids discipline.
2. Gives few boundaries and inconsistently enforces the ones they give.
3. Gives verbal reprimands (or threats) but takes little action to correct sinful behavior.
4. Succumbs to the manipulation and whims of the child.

In what ways is your parenting style permissive?

The Uninvolved Parent

David is an example of an uninvolved and permissive parent. David had at least 6 wives and as many as 19 sons in addition to daughters. He spent much time away in battle and in ruling the kingdom. He was busy, but that does not mean he had to be uninvolved in the lives of his children. However, the Biblical accounts indicate he was not involved with respect to discipline and instruction of his children. Some examples are:

David refused to become involved in justice for his daughter Tamar after she was raped by her brother Amnon.

²⁰Then Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now keep silent, my sister, he is your brother; do not take this matter to heart." So Tamar remained and was desolate in her brother Absalom's house. ²¹**Now when King David heard of all these matters, he was very angry.** ²²But Absalom did not speak to Amnon either good or bad; for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar. (2 Sam 13:20-22 NAS)

Absalom spent the next two years hating and plotting vengeance against his brother. It appears that David was concerned about Absalom killing Amnon, but did nothing about it (2 Sam 13:26-27). Absalom eventually plotted and through deception killed Amnon.

³²Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, responded, "Do not let my lord suppose they have put to death all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead; because by the intent of Absalom this has been determined since the day that he violated his sister Tamar. (2 Sam 13:32 NAS)

Absalom then fled to Geshur for three years. Apparently, David was actually grateful that Absalom dealt with Amnon, which is strange since Absalom committed murder, not justice.

³⁸So Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur, and was there three years. ³⁹*The heart of King David longed to go out to Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead.* (2 Sam 13:38-39 NAS)

Even after David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, David refused to meet with him to resolve the issues and never saw Absalom for another two years.

²⁸Now Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, and did not see the king's face. (2 Sam 14:28 NAS)

David's failure to become involved in the life of his children ultimately resulted in Absalom conspiring to take the kingdom from God's anointed by subterfuge (2 Sam 15).

Another example of David's uninvolved involvement, was when he was old and his son Abonijah attempted to make himself king and David refused to discipline him.

⁵Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him. ⁶**His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, "Why have you done so?"** And he was also a very handsome man, and he was born after Absalom. (1 Kings 1:5-6 NAS)

Some characteristics of uninvolved parenting:

1. Has little to no involvement with the children.
2. Has few expectations put on the children.
3. Has no meaningful communication with the children.
4. Places other activities above involvement with the children.

Are you involved in the lives of your children?

The Overprotective Parent

The overprotective parent is full of fear and insecurity and therefore attempts to control circumstances over which truly only God has control. This is a manifestation of ungodly fear and is unreasonable and irrational in light of our relationship with Christ and is not rooted in an abiding trust in God. Worry has been called misplaced, ungodly concern about provision, performance, or reputation (see for example Matt 6:25-34; 10:19; Luke 10:41; 12:11; 12:22-32). Worry dwells on and is preoccupied with some fear. Worry weighs down the heart and chokes out the Word of God.

²⁵**Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down,** But a good word makes it glad. (Prov 12:25 NAS)

³⁴"Be on guard, **so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life**, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; (Luke 21:34 NAS)

²²"And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, **this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.** (Matt 13:22 NAS see also Mark 4:19 and Luke 8:14)

God is faithful, fulfilling every promise. He is steadfast, unchanging, perfectly reliable, and utterly dependable. God is sovereign. All things are under His rule and control; nothing happens without His direction or permission. Nothing takes Him by surprise. The purpose of God's plan is His glory (Psa 19:1; Eph 1:4-6, 11-12; Rom 9:23; Rev 4:11). In working all things for His own glory, God causes all things to work together for the good (sanctification) of His children.

²⁸And 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. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; (Rom 8:28-29 NAS)

In light of these truths, we should never worry. When we worry, we are not taking God at His word, we are not trusting Him. In essence, we are calling Him a liar.

Examples of parents who allowed their children freedom by trusting in God are Elkanah and Hannah with Samuel (1 Sam 1-2), Jesse with David (1 Sam 16:11), and Joseph and Mary with Jesus (Luke 2:41-52).

Some characteristics of overprotective parenting:

1. Places age-inappropriate limitations on activities and circumstances to protect the child from imagined harm (physical, emotional, or spiritual harm).
2. Arranges the family's activities to ensure the child is "safe".
3. Constantly communicates with the child about the dangers of the world.
4. Fails to give the child the freedom to make mistakes and therefore grow in wisdom.

Are you worried about the physical, emotional, or spiritual safety of your children?

The Authoritarian Parent

A Biblical example of an authoritarian parent is King Saul. Saul was an angry, threatening, and vindictive man.

³⁰Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?" ³¹For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now, send and bring him to me, for he must surely die." ³²But Jonathan answered Saul his father and said to him, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" ³³Then Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him down; so Jonathan knew that his father had decided to put David to death. (1 Sam 20:30-33 NAS)

Some characteristics of authoritarian parenting:

1. Rules the children with an “iron fist”.
2. Overly strict and uses anger, yelling, threats, and harsh discipline to maintain control.
3. “Orders” not “rules” oriented with little or no explanation.
4. Focused on behavior manipulation and not heart level change.

Are you focused on changing behavior through manipulation or heart level change through Biblical character?