

The Marvelous Institution of Marriage, Part 6

Principles of Training & Admonishing Children

June 4, 1995

Review

We have already considered the fact that children are a tremendous blessing given by the Lord. We have also seen that parents have a significant impact on their children and that the parents (especially fathers) are to teach their children to love the Lord. And love for God is obedience to His commands with a joyful heart.

We also discussed the fact that in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, Paul divides our thoughts into two types: those that are obedient to God and those that aren't. When we consider how we are to discipline our children we must be careful that we are making decisions based on God's principles rather than what seems good to us at that time. For example, consider the following excerpts adapted from the English cleric, Arthur Hildersham, who addressed parents in 1624:

OUR WISDOM	GOD'S WISDOM
But God is love, and it is His love and patience that allow me to bear my child's corruption and not strike the sweet thing.	Proverbs 13:24 <i>24 He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly. (NKJV)</i>
Oh, but I cannot endure to hear him cry.	Proverbs 19:18 <i>18 Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction. (NKJV)</i>
Would you have me be cruel to my own child by striking him?	Proverbs 23:13 <i>13 Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. (NKJV)</i>
Oh, but his faults are nothing but the innocent play of childhood. Besides, won't this teach him to be mean?	Proverbs 22:15 <i>15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him. (NKJV)</i>
I will stifle his genius and creativeness if I correct that way.	Proverbs 29:15 <i>15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. (NKJV)</i>
Oh, but my child will hate me, not love me, and lose his comfort.	Proverbs 29:17 <i>17 Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul. (NKJV)</i>

Quoted from *Growing Kids God's Way*, pp. 213 & 214, 1993, Gary & Anne Marie Ezzo

- **Training and admonition are of the Lord**

Ephesians 6:4

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (NKJV)

- Fathers, you are the central figure in the training and admonishing of your children. You must not simply be present or give your approval to its existence, it is yours to perform. You wisely will seek the help of your wives, but it is *your* responsibility.

- Training and admonishing are not something that you must devise, they are something that God has given to us as tools for rendering godly children unto Him. Training is the persistent and consistent inculcation of truth, principle and virtue. It applies to behavior, thoughts, desires and intentions. Admonition is a tool for training by the consistent correction of error or transgression.

- **Training and admonition must be delivered in faith.**

Proverbs 22:6

6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it. (NKJV)

Psalms 103:15-19

15 As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more. 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, 18 To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them. 19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all. (NKJV)

- God's sovereignty is exhaustive in that His rule is over all things—even your children. He has built all of them such that they will need this type of instruction. We should never be embarrassed or look down on others in our fellowship when their children sin—they all do. However, parents should be ashamed if they don't do anything about it. We are administering discipline in faith believing God for the sanctification and growth.

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- **Chastisement, when painful, is fruitful.**

Hebrews 12:5-11

5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (NKJV)

- The fact that discipline is unpleasant or painful is in no way an excuse for not doing it. God has built the world in such a way that this is true. Pain is a gift from God for instruction—a gift to be used wisely and in faith. Despite its unpleasantness, God has declared that it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

- **As our Father does, Godly parents will consider the frame of their child.**

Psalms 103:13-14

13 As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. (NKJV)

- Your training and admonition must not be one size fits all or one size fits none. You are responsible for knowing the development of your children, dealing with them there, not necessarily where others think they should be. You are to render the children unto God, not others. However, instruction from others who have demonstrated faithfulness is

extremely helpful. Regardless, you must know how your children receive discipline, what their physical development is and their spiritual condition.

- It is important to differentiate between skill and moral behavior. Our children are not born mature, but, regardless of their age, they do demonstrate some level of maturity. Parents must not confuse immaturity for rebellion and vice versa. Rebellion is sometimes cute but should never be tolerated. Moral behavior is expected because it is our love for God to obey His commands. It is sin to rebel against parents or to lie etc. However, it is not necessarily a sin to not be potty trained at age three. Parents must evaluate whether they are encouraging a skill which is a function of growth, development and practice or are their children are demonstrating rebellion. It is not always easy to tell the difference; that is why it must be done in faith.
- When administering discipline always keep their physical and emotional conditions in mind. Over disciplining will provoke them to wrath and will exasperate them. Never use humiliation as a discipline tool. Be careful of how you discipline in front of others; in general don't do it.

- **Christian parents must distinguish between principles and methods.**

Romans 14:1-4

1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. (NKJV)

- We are to receive those whom God has received. Disputes over things that are doubtful establish our own barriers of fellowship that violate God's. If God gives us principle (and He does), the method for how we obey God is not always the same. Just because someone has chosen a method different than your does not give opportunity for you to correct them toward your method. The exception to this is when God gives us the principle *and* the method—but still it is never our method.

PRINCIPLE	METHOD
Parents should train and teach their children	Private school or home school, Ezzos or no Ezzos
Parents should discipline their children	Hand or rod, paddle or belt
Love your neighbor	Concern or meddling
Husbands should provide for their families	Teacher or engineer, musician or banker, insurance or not
Mothers should feed and care for their children	Nursing or bottle, cloth or disposable, schedule or not
Christians should be stewards of their bodies	Jogging or no jogging, eating grease or no grease
We are to worship God	Hands up or no hands up, psalms or hymns
Husbands love your wives	Gifts or no gifts, flowers or kind words