

WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS ABOUT PARENTING YOUR CHILDREN

This is a study that will expand your understanding in many different areas of raising, teaching and disciplining your children. In the spaces provided, write your observations from Scripture in order to expand your understanding about the point it supports. Look for what it says, what it means, and then ask, "How can I apply this to my home, family, self or children?" In order to be godly parents, we need to understand this balanced picture from God's perspective.

WHO ARE CHILDREN?

Children are a special gift from God and loved by Him:

Gen. 33:5	Ps. 113:9
Ps. 127:3	Mark 10:13-16
Gen. 1:27	Acts 2:39

Children are responsible to perform certain duties:

Prov. 1:8-9	Prov. 24:21
Eph. 6:1-3, 20	Heb. 12:9
Ecc. 12:1	Col. 3:20
Ex. 20:12	I Tim. 5:4
Deut. 30:2	Lk. 2:49-51 (Christ's example)
	I Pet. 5:5

Children are to mature in various areas:

Lk. 2:52

Children are "sinners":

We must take very seriously what the Bible says about this matter, if we are to raise obedient, happy children that love God. First of all know this, that children are born with a sinful, rebellious nature. They will not automatically do the right thing, but the wrong and selfish thing. Observe what the following verses say concerning this matter:

Gen. 8:21	Ps. 51:5
Ps. 58:3	Prov. 22:15
Prov. 23:14	Jer. 17:9
Rom. 3:10-12, 23	Isa. 3:5

For some examples of children (good and bad), study these references with your children. Write down negative or positive characteristics, rewards or punishments, benefits or consequences of behaviour that you see in each example given.

Gen. 22:6-10	I Sam. 2:12, 17	2 Chron. 34:3
Gen. 26:34-35	I Sam. 8:3	Esther 2:20
Gen. 45:9-10	2 Sam. 15:10	Dan. 1:6
Judg. 11:34-36	I Kings 1:5-6	Job 19:18
I Sam. 2:26	2 Kings 2:23	Lk. 1:80
I Sam. 17:20	2 Kings 19:37	Lk. 2:51
		2 Tim. 3:15

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Since the above is true, God places the parents in a very serious position of responsibility, not only to discipline, but to:

1. Be right with God in their own lives (Matt. 7:1-5).
2. Be the example to their children (I Kings 9:4; I Cor. 4:16-17; 2 Chron. 17:3).
Model God's principles. Illustrate what you teach.
3. Provide for their family (I Tim. 5:8) (materially, financially, spiritually....)

- 4. Train, instruct, nurture, discipline (Eph.6:1-4).
- 5. Teach them God's Word (Deut.6:4-7).

Write down further observations of parental responsibility from the following:

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| Prov. 1:8 | I Tim. 3:4 |
| Prov. 22:6 | Prov. 13:24 |
| Prov. 4:3-4 | Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13 |
| 2 Cor. 12:14 | Gen. 18:19 |
| Titus 2:4-5 | Ex. 10:2 |
| Prov. 1:8 | <u>Eph. 6:4</u> |
| Col. 3:21 | I Thess. 2:11 |
| Heb. 12:6 | Prov. 29:13 |
| Isa. 49:15 | Isa. 66:13 |

On a separate sheet of paper, begin listing specific ways in which you as a parent can apply the above principles to your child. How can I (love) (name)? When? Where? How? In what ways?

CHILD DISCIPLINE

We have seen from scripture that children are a special gift that God has entrusted to us as parents. They are held responsible for certain duties and accountable for their behaviour. (Rom. 14:12). They are also human, which means they are sinners with an automatic bend towards selfishness, rebellion and disobedience. God has given parents a very wide spread degree of obligation to children, all of which falls into the scope of two words, LOVE and DISCIPLINE. Ask God right now to give you His understanding, and wisdom in reaching this Biblical balance.

There are 4 Types of Parents:

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| 1. Neglectful (avoiding responsibility) | low in love and low in discipline |
| 2. Permissive (compromising) | high in love and low in discipline |
| 3. Authoritarian (iron hand) | low in love and high in discipline |
| 4. Authoritative (direct control)
(firm, fair, instructive) | high in love and high in discipline |

A child under parent type #1 is rebellious, has low self-worth, seeks peer acceptance, becomes a problem child in school, seeks attention, thinks his parent's faith is phony, wants to flee and is insecure.

A child under parent type #2 is spoiled, selfish, unable to accept criticism, never wants to leave home or strike out on his own, has a low self-image, no motivation, is feeling oriented, feels his parent's faith is hypocritical, tends to follow the same lifestyle of parents, is a drifter, has many fears and is insecure.

A child under parent type #3 is often a child abused, withdrawn, full of hate, has no self-worth, lacks motivation, is rebellious, views parent's faith as legalistic, rejects parent's lifestyle and faith.

A child under parent type #4 is balanced, secure, obedient and happy.

At this point take time to evaluate how you were raised. Do you fit into one of the above? Why or why not?

EXPOSING WRONG PHILOSOPHIES

Many have compiled lists of "Things Not to Do With Their Child" or "How to Raise A Delinquent". You could probably make up a similar list, but think about and discuss the following:

- 1. Give your child everything he wants and let them have their way.
- 2. Laugh when he curses and picks up bad habits.
- 3. Never tell them what's right or wrong (you'll violate their "rights").

4. Criticize each other in front of them. Talk behind other's backs - builds respect!
5. Let them control you and the home and most of all the TV.
6. Don't make them do any chores or take responsibility.
7. Blame all your problems on the boss or someone else. Don't ever say "I'm wrong".
8. Never tell them about God's Word or the importance of church fellowship and worship.
9. Don't ever spank, discipline, or punish their sunful behaviour.
10. Don't ever encourage their strengths, gifts, abilities or accomplishments.

Obviously you've observed the absurdity of these and the list could go on, but God's Word gives us a different idea of parental responsibilities in regard to discipline. Over and over again it tells us that children need a secure and balanced structure of love and discipline. Look at what Scripture says about - How I should discipline.

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| Prov.22:6 | Prov.23:13-14 |
| Prov.10:13 | Prov. 29:15 |
| Prov.26:3 | Prov.29:17 |
| I Sam.7:14 | Prov.13:24 |
| I Sam.14:13 | Prov.19:18 |
| Prov.26:3 | (early.. as soon as they begin testing you) |

Notice what "pain" and suffering bring

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| Prov.20:30 | Heb.5:8 |
| Heb.12:11 | Ps.119:67,71,75 |

Observe the right motive and example for discipline, correction and guidance

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| Prov.3:11-12 | Heb.12:5-11 |
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Discipline is never to be out of anger (but out of love - above verses)

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| Prov.14:17 | Prov.16:32 |
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Discipline should be done in a humble manner for the purpose of restoring

- Gal.6:1

Establish personal responsibility for sin: What did you do?

- Rom.14:12

Reaffirm your love

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| 2 Cor.2:5-8 | I Cor.4:21 (Note Paul's authority) |
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Discipline in order to edify or "build up", not to break down. Teaching them God's ways.

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| 2 Cor.10:8 | I Cor.8:1 - "love edifies" |
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Discipline because "Mom and Dad are accountable to God"

- Heb.13:17

Discuss the following:

1. You can't "beat" anything into a child. You want to remove whatever it is from within them. (The rebellion and foolishness that the rod drives away). This is however the time for corrective instruction and teaching of what needs to be put in its place (Eph.4:20-32).
2. What is the difference between child abuse and using "the rod"?
3. How can I communicate to my child the reason, value and purpose of discipline?
4. How can we practically apply God's balanced pattern of behavioral motivation to the people of Israel in regards to "blessing" (reward) and "cursing" punishment?
5. Work out a step by step plan as to how you will instruct and discipline your child on the first offense, second offense, and third offense. (Instruct, warn, correct). What will you do at what point?

Another very helpful tool in child discipline is from Jay Adam's "Christian Living in the Home" book published by Presbyterian and Reformed, and Wayne Mack's book, "Homework Manual for Biblical Counseling, Vol. 2, Family and Marital Problems". It is a very helpful and effective tool called "A Behavior Contract".

BEHAVIOR CONTRACT

RULE	Desired Behavior	REWARD	PUNISHMENT
I.	Chores Room cleaned Dishes Trash Lawn mowed	personal satisfaction, training for life, commendation by parents, acceptable TV programs	Denial of privileges until work completed, extra work.
II.	General Obedience	Personal satisfaction, no rod, harmony and unity and happiness in home	Rod, privileges denied.
III.	Cooperation with respect and concern for other people	Personal satisfaction, training for life, usefulness, friends, happiness, help from others	Isolation, essays, guilt, enemies, bad patterns, privileges denied
IV.	Truthfulness Honesty, Integrity, Industry, Dependability		
V.	School work done well		
VI.	Cooperation and cheerful participation in family projects, family devotions, and church activities		

EPHESIANS 6:4 - The Bottom Line, Fathers

"Fathers, do not exasperate or embitter your children, do not provoke your children to anger (see page 6). INSTEAD, bring them up in the nurture/discipline and admonition/instruction of the Lord." I've deliberately combined several translations of Scripture to expand this strong, inclusive command. There are two Greek words here that Paul uses, "paideia" and "nouthesia" which are very extensive in their definitions through Scripture.

1. "Paideia" means instruction, training, education and teaching (2 Tim. 3:16; Acts 7:22; Prov. 5:12). It is also used in Heb. 12:8, 11 as discipline, correction and guidance. The word takes in quite a bit, all of which is to be based on the phrase "... of the Lord," which implies - of His Word.
2. "Nouthesia" means counsel, admonition and warning (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; Acts 20:31). Look at Deut. 6:4-25 and I Thess. 2:3-15 and write observations on how Moses and Paul carried out these two responsibilities. Use these principles as guidelines to evaluate yourself.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH SPOUSE

1. Don't expect children to be adults or function on adult levels of responsibility.
2. Unrealistic expectations, your inconsistency and double standards provoke children to anger. What else does?
3. Distinguish between willful defiance and childish irresponsibility.
4. Parents must be supportive of each other in backing up what they say.
5. Define boundaries to your children before you all of a sudden enforce them.
6. Pray with your child when you discipline them letting them know Who you're answering to.
7. Expect them to push you to the limits. Expect the "struggle" too. It's not easy.
8. Values are "caught" not taught.
9. Children see an average of 15,000 hours of TV and 12,000 of the school class room.
Who is teaching your children? What are they learning?
10. Children want their parent's time more than their "gifts".
11. What are your children going to remember when they leave your home?
12. Prepare your children for adolescence (Dr. James Dobson has good material available).
13. Discipline them while there is hope (Prov.19:18). As long as they are under this roof.
14. Your children will treat mom the way dad treats her (and vice versa).
15. Always explain why they have been punished.
16. Clarify that their sorrow is to be for the sin, not for the consequences or the fact that they've been caught.
17. Condemning or commending your child will affect them for life.
18. Use Scripture to support what's right and wrong and build the atmosphere in daily family devotions where they can discover it for themselves.
19. Bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ early in life (2 Tim.3:14-17).
20. Treat them the way Jesus Christ would (observe warning) Matt.19:13-14.
Matt.18:1-6
Rom.14:13-21
21. Realize that what you've done to them you've done to the Lord!
Matt.25:34-40
22. Take time to listen to your child. Take an interest in what they're interested in.
23. Help them to learn how to study God's Word. Sunday School alone won't do it for you.
24. Design special family projects or hobbies that you can all do together.
25. You alone bear the responsibility for your children before God. How can you do it apart from God's principles?

To make this study effective in your life, list 10 ways in which you can apply some of these principles within the next 12 hours. Go over this study on a monthly basis to evaluate progress and continue practical application.

Recommended Reading for more thorough study:

- "How to Develop Deep Unity in Marriage" - Dr. Wayne Mack
- "Christian Living in the Home" - Dr. Jay E. Adams
- "Homework Manual, Vol.2 (Marital & Family)" - Dr. Wayne Mack
- "Nurturing Children in the Lord" - Jack Fennema
- "Withholding Not a Correction" - Bruce A. Ray
- "How to Raise a Child for God" - Andrew Murray
- "How to Grow a Child for God" (pamphlet) available from Christian Counseling Center,
1 Lakeside Plaza, Lake Charles, La. 70601

HOW TO AVOID EXASPERATING YOUR CHILD

Dr. Fred Barnshaw

For each item circle the appropriate number

Weak Strong

- 1) EXASPERATION THROUGH PHYSICAL ABUSE (punching, kicking, slapping shaking, throwing, beating, shoving...) (Ex.20:13; I Cor.13:4-8; James 1:19-20)
- My primary emphasis when my child misbehaves is discipline (to change his attitude or behavior) not punishment (vengeance or getting even with him for disobeying me).
- 2) EXASPERATION THROUGH NEGLECT (or ignoring them) (Deut.6:7,8; Prov.5:16,17; 27:8, I Sam.2:22, II Sam.14:28-29)
- I spend an appropriate amount of time with each of my children and consistently seek to communicate and be sensitive to him at all levels - mentally, emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually.
- Our family is consciously attempting to create a "Family Museum of Memories" for our children.
- 3) EXASPERATION THROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE (by such words as: clumsy, no good, stupid, sloppy, dummy; by actions, expressions, by tone of voice) (Eph.4:29; Prov.15:1; 16:21,23,24; Col.4:6)
- I am very careful not to embarrass or humiliate my child before others.
- 4) EXASPERATION THROUGH FAILING TO UNDERSTAND (or listen, putting out "busy signals", allowing no input) (Prov.18:2,13,15; Js.1:19)
- I consistently listen to my child with my heart, and I try to see things from his perspective.
- I consistently ask my child's opinion about things and value his input.
- 5) EXASPERATION THROUGH TOO HIGH AN ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR EXPECTANCY: (demanding too much intellectually, emotionally, spiritually...) (Gen.33:13; Prov.22:6; I Cor.13:11)
- I am consistent in keeping my expectations for my child's attitude and behavior commensurate with his mental, physical, social, and emotional growth levels.
- 6) EXASPERATION THROUGH SETTING UNREALISTIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:
- My performance expectations for each of my children is at a level that challenges him to high achievement, but is realistic in that it is not above his ability to attain scholastically, athletically, artistically and so on.
- My expressions of acceptance and love for my child are not dependent on how he performs but for him as a person.
- 7) EXASPERATION THROUGH FORCED ACCEPTANCE OF PARENTAL GOALS AND VALUES:
- I consistently teach and live my value system, work ethic, biblical precepts, and spiritual ideals so that my children see that what I believe is real and not hypocritical.
- 8) EXASPERATION THROUGH UNACKNOWLEDGED PARENTAL MISTAKES (Prov.28:13)
- I openly admit to making mistakes and errors in judgement to my children and apologize to them whenever appropriate.
- I do not berate my children but rather encourage them to openly recognize their own mistakes and to try to use these mistakes as launching pads for learning.

Of those eight ways to exasperate a child, one has greater potential than all others for damaging a child's sense of self worth. Can you pick out which one it is?