



A Few Thoughts About Biblical Discipline



There are so many different approaches to discipline and it's certainly too broad of a topic to be covered in a short article, so here are a few reminders.

Don't provoke your children to anger (Ephesians 6:4). Kids are kids and they are just learning what to do. This doesn't mean you don't do anything your children dislike, but it does mean that you don't exasperate them so they lose heart.

- Don't expect more of them than they are capable of giving or doing. Expecting your toddler to sit still through a wedding is probably not going to happen.
- Don't use words (or tones) that demean or hurt. (*Can't you do anything right? Let me finish that for you. You are too slow.*) Yelling and criticism hurt.
- Practice what you preach. Hypocrisy is discouraging. Telling them no phone at table while you text or talk on yours confuses. Lying to children or making promises you don't keep exasperates.

Train your children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). *Discipline* and *disciple* come from the same root word. Dr. Henry Brandt, Christian psychologist said, "A parent is a partner with God in making disciples of their children." Parents are to teach their children and guide them until they eventually have the self-control to make the right decision on their own.

- Set clear boundaries and limits. Teach and train in non-conflict times. Loving limits provide security. Here are a couple of examples:
 - **Not:** "Don't go too far." **Yes:** "You can ride your bike to the stop sign."
 - **Not:** "Don't watch too much TV." **Yes:** "You can watch one hour of this show."
- Don't make too many rules or keep changing them. Have a few and be consistent on those. Don't allow them to blow bubbles in their milk on Monday, but scold them on Wednesday because you are angry.





- Expect immediate obedience. Children quickly learn if we don't expect immediate obedience. Be willing to follow through—get up off the couch and correct them.
- When rules are broken, deliver consequences. Different situations/different children require different consequences. Learn what works best with your child and lovingly follow through.

Spend time with your child. Play together. Make good memories. (Josh McDowell says, "Rules without relationship leads to rebellion.") Admit your mistakes. Ask forgiveness. Learn together.

