

## The Correct Motive “we discipline you because we love you”

When we speak of discipline and punishment, we should always start at **Hebrew 12:5-11**, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth... that we might be partakers of his holiness.” (12:6, 10). The principle is “we discipline you because we love you”, and we ought to remind our children constantly of this principle, and especially when we have to discipline them. If it wasn’t for the Lord’s discipline, none of us would walk in His holiness<sup>1</sup>. Discipline has the function of motivating the immature person to change.

**1Jn 4:18** “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” The point here is that God as a father with his son works on two levels. Before there is true love, he chastises. This punishment is sufficient in itself to protect the child. But when there is maturity, the person should comply with his parent’s wishes because of love. With a 4 year old, we have to slap his hand if he is touching a white hot pot on the stove. It is a punishment that is less damaging to the child than a burn. But with a 40 year old child, if you ask him a favor and he wants a reward, or wants to know if you will chastise him somehow if he does do it, there is a grave problem in the relationship (no love). Fear and punishment work on the immature, but when a person has true love<sup>2</sup>, then fear and punishment should not enter into consideration. Parents seek to bring their children into maturity where they can live well pleasing lives before God without parental interference. But until then we make rules and punish or reward.

<sup>1</sup> **Heb 12:14** “follow peace with all men... without which no man shall see the Lord.”

<sup>2</sup> True love is always seeking to please the person that you love. It is unfortunate that many adult children never encounter loves towards their earthly parents, much less towards God.

**2Sa 7:14** *I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:* The biblical relationship between parent and child makes correction a parental obligation, if it isn’t there, the child is ruined.

**Psa 89:30** *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; 31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; 32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. 33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*

God chastises because of His love, but He does not chastise without mercy. But at the same time God does “*not suffer his faithfulness to fail,*” lit. he does not suffer his firmness to be untrue or fail. This phrase means that God is always the same in His rules and His standards. He never changes. God warns us of His principles and conditions, and even though God will grant pardon sometimes when disciplining, He is not going to change the rules for us. The rules stay the same always for all. Parents take note. God responds to repentance and abandonment of ruling breaking, nothing else.

For parents, take note that we are not God, and we should be careful about hollow warnings and threats, because this is unfaithfulness to your own rules which is wickedness. For example, the mother says to the child that if he touches a vase, “*I will spank you.*” He touches it. She repeats the warning 5 times each time saying, “*one more time and I will spank you.*” If you make a rule, enforce it or don’t make the rule. Don’t be a liar. The faithfulness of God gives us stability (He is always true and His promises and warnings are never “hollow”), and so should we impose the same on our kids. It will give them stability. **Mat 5:37** *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

### Respecting your parents is biblical

**Exo 20:12** *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy*

*God giveth thee. Lev 19:3* *Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.* God commands us to honor and respect our parents. To curse your parents is a grave sin (**Lev. 20:9**), and equally to steal from them (**Prov 28.24**).

### Children should obey their parents.

**Col 3:20** *Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.* It is the will of God that every child obeys their parents. In our day it is as if that point were up for debate. When a child disobeys his parents, he rebels against a God ordained authority, and it is sin. In the O.T. where civil and religious authority overlapped in Israel, “*If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them... all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die*” (**Deu 21:18-21**). Today we have to understand that we do not have civil and religious authority in one, but in that day this law shows the anger of God at disobedient children. This respect and reverence should never stop even when the child is an adult, and even after he separates to form his own father. **Pro 23:22** *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.*

### Religious Instruction

**Pro 22:6** *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* God has commanded<sup>4</sup> parents to make their children walk in the ways of God whether they want to or not. This means to explain, teach, and repeat principles of the Word of God. Equally it is involved in giving religious instruction through attending and participating in a good local church.

**What is child abuse?** (1) It is getting mad at the child and taking it out on the kid because the

<sup>3</sup> We assume that this “child” was an adolescent or young adult and not a small child.

<sup>4</sup> Deu 6:6-7; 11:19.

parent is mad at something unrelated to the child. It is simply ventilating the parents anger unjustly on the child when the child has nothing to do with the cause of the anger. (2) Abuse is when the punishment has nothing to do with improper conduct, but because the child is simply bothering you. (3) The abusive parent punishes without seeing the larger picture. We punish to form character and because we love the child, correcting what is unpleasant in the child according to God. (4) Abuse is to embarrass the child instead of helping him. **Biblical discipline is** (1) obeying God by disciplining, and because you love really the child. (2) It is changing bad conduct or character so as to please God, not according to the preferences of the parent. (3) Discipline is always linked to the conduct of the child. Disobedience is disciplined, obedience is rewarded. The point is to teach the child moral principles that are necessary to understand and obey to please God. (4) Discipline is always con instruction on the moral reasons why the conduct or attitude was wrong (Bible exposition of Scripture). (5) The goal is to correct and not cause suffering to the child. **Pro 19:18** *Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.* To be effective the child has to associate the unpleasant experience of the punishment with the incorrect conduct or attitude. The more forcefully and immediate the better.

**Recommendations:** (1) Never punish your child when you yourself are angry. (2) Never strike a child in the face, head, arms, or chest, but always in the seat of the pants. Never shake a child. (3) It is preferably to use a stick (**Prov. 22:15**). (4) Both parents should understand and apply biblical discipline in unity, and never argue over these things in the presence of the children. **Mat 12:25** *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.* (5) Never tolerate stubbornness or rebellion. Always discipline it.

## Principles in Disciplining

**Pro 3:11** *My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: 12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*

Love always obligates parents to correct their children's bad conduct. **Pro 13:24** *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.* The love and hate here is based on wishes and actions towards the child. God clearly declares, discipline is good, the lack of discipline is evil and bad for the kid.

**Pro 23:13-14** *Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.*

Children want to make a scandal when they are disciplined, but truthfully, it is for their own good, and biblical discipline is not cruel or brutal, but it is simply to spank them. Discipline is a factor that helps them from being uncontrolled later on in life. Parental discipline makes them respect authority, and the lack of this is a sure factor in causing them to rebel against civil authorities later on in life, and rejecting God on an eternal level.

**Pro 29:15** *The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. 17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.*

God has made it clear that discipline is good thing that puts order and peace in the home, where the family as a whole can rest from the temper-tantrums of ill willed children. It is normal for parents to give everything good to their children and avoid all bad things, but in this case, discipline is not bad for them morally and eternally. It is to find the favor of God for them.

**Psa 103:13** says that *as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* The idea is that of obedience, reverence, and respect are the way a child gets what he wants. Rebellion, temper-tantrums, and disrespect are punished.

# Disciplining our Children

## Biblical Principles on How to Discipline Them

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For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. **Hebrews 12:6**

There is the problem, and we will begin with this parallel between parents and their children, and between God and us. Many people reject totally out of hand any form of corporal punishment as a form of child abuse. In the end analysis, if we accept as incorrect that anybody that is punished physical (worse mentally or psychologically) then what of God's punishment? Many attack God with this by attacking punish as evil. In place of punishment they prefer distraction (time out, candy, games, or rewards) for evil behavior. But God as our Creator punishes us because of His profound love. Diversion is no substitute.