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Train Up a Child – Raising Our Children as the Lord Raises His

05 – The Discipline of the Lord

August 29, 2021

Sermon Text: Hebrews 12:3-17

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12:3-17

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

How do we “train up a child”? How does the Lord train His children? Just what is “discipline”? These are the things we are considering in this series on raising up our children as the Lord raises up His children.

Last time we looked at the role of the Law and how the Lord uses His Law to lead us to Christ. And we said that as parents we must do the same. We must teach our children God’s Law and bring its blessings for obedience and

sanctions for disobedience to bear upon our children.

Rom 4:15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

Paul of course, meant in this statement that Christ having become a curse for us on the cross, the Law’s demands on us were met and thus God’s wrath was removed from us. But notice that there is another aspect to this verse that bears upon parents and children where the Law of God is not taught or enforced. A permissive atmosphere in other words. What is the result? Well, *there is no transgression*. That is, the child is able to sin without consequence. As a result, he does not see his sin nor does he see his need for Christ. A permissive philosophy like this is not love. It is not how God raises His children.

Now, let’s take a closer look at this subject of *discipline*. What is it? I propose this definition:

Discipline is training someone to do what they do not want to do.

Discipline is the process and method of training a child to do what is right, when in his sinful state he does not want to do what is right.

Incidentally, we are addressing the subject of *child discipline*. What is very, very pathetic is when you have an adult who has never been disciplined and as a result he or she has never matured, has never grown up, and like a little child lives for himself indulging his sin. [NOTE: Discipline, godly and right discipline, does not in itself a guarantee that a child will grow up to love God and others. There are many people who have been raised by godly parents and yet they reject Christ. However, as we have seen and will see further, *the application of God's Law always has positive results, even if those results are simply that sin is restrained by threat of punishment for disobedience*].

Alright then,

Discipline is the process and method of training a child to do what is right, when in his sinful state he does not want to do what is right.

Listen to these scriptures and notice how they show this. Also, notice the nature of this discipline and the other words used for it:

Pro 3:11-12 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his **reproof**, (12) for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.

Pro 13:24 Whoever spares **the rod** hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

Pro 19:18 Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.

Pro 22:6 **Train** up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Pro 22:15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but **the rod** of discipline drives it far from him.

Pro 23:13-14 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you **strike him with a rod**, he will not die. (14) If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol.

Pro 29:15 **The rod and reproof** give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

Pro 29:17 Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.

Deu 8:2-5 And you shall remember the

whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. (3) **And he humbled you and let you hunger** and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. (4) Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. (5) Know then in your heart that, **as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.**

Job 5:17-18 “Behold, blessed is the one whom God **reproves**; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty. (18) For **he wounds**, but he binds up; **he shatters**, but his hands heal.

Rev 3:19 Those whom I love, I **reprove** and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

Jer 31:18 I have heard Ephraim grieving, ‘You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for you are the LORD my God.

1Co 11:32 But when we are judged by

the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Psa 118:18 The LORD has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.

There are many important principles in these verses, but for now I just want us to notice that *discipline is unpleasant. It is painful. It can come in different forms – reproof, withholding so there is a lack of something, wounding* – these are the kinds of terms the Bible uses for it.

One common word for discipline that you see here is *reproof*.

2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

2Ti 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

Rev 3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

Interesting, isn’t it? God’s Word reproves us. It corrects and trains us in what is right. Faithful preaching of His Word will do the same. One chief

reason we must study and read our Bibles regularly is because the Word is a chief instrument by which God trains us to be righteous and corrects us.

Now, consider this word “reproof” or the verb, “reprove.” Check out its definition:

“Expression of strong disapproval. Rebuke. Reproach. Censure. Correction. Charging with wrongdoing. To bring to light, expose. To convict with the goal of bringing recognition of wrongdoing. To accuse.”

Now, this is not a pleasant process. This is discipline. It is putting a person’s sin right in front of their eyes with the goal of showing them they have sinned and calling them to confess it and repent of it. God does this to those whom He loves!! It is no mark of love when a parent will not reprove their child in this manner.

I do not enjoy reproving someone. Reproof is not fun to receive nor is it to be something we enjoy dishing out. There are people who enjoy rebuking and accusing and often they do so falsely. These kind are called *revilers* and they are very wicked.

But the Lord reproves those whom He loves and if we are going to raise our

WHAT IS DISCIPLINE? 4

children the way God raises His, then we must reprove them when they do wrong. Sometimes this wrong can be just childish foolishness – like some careless action – leaving a tool out in the rain and it rusts. Other times the reproof is going to be much stronger because the child willfully did wrong, willfully and knowingly sinned.

Reproof is powerful *particularly when it is given by a parent whom the child knows loves him.* We haven’t talked much yet about how vital it is that our children know we love them (though the exercise of discipline is one means by which they come to know we love them) – but when a child knows his mom or dad loves him, a rebuke from them stings.

Now, once again we come to the role of God’s Law. When a child sins and thus breaks the Law, he or she must hear the Law charge them with wrongdoing. He must hear the consequences pronounced by the Law and even feel them! The goal of all this is to bring the child to a recognition of their sin...and to repentance.

Let’s listen once again to a pathetic example of a father who did not rebuke his evil sons:

1Sa 2:22-25 Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were

doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. (23) And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. (24) No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. (25) If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?” But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.

1Sa 2:27-29 And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? (28) Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. (29) Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’

You can be sure that these evil sons had been doing their wickedness for a long, long time and Eli just let it happen.

When he did confront them, it was not a “strong expression of displeasure,” but a spineless and empty act.

Notice this carefully – *to refuse to rebuke our children when they sin is to honor them above the Lord.* It is childolatry. The children become idols. It is parenthood on steroids. It is self-serving and incredibly selfish because a parent like Eli is feeding off the approval of his children rather than gaining God’s approval. It is fearing our children rather than fearing God.

It is a good thing to give praise and reward to our children when they do right. God’s Law blesses for obedience. But when that Law is broken, there must be the curse. Consequences.

So carefully consider this matter of *rebuke*. It is our job as parents to show our children their sin when they sin, to confront them with what they have done and how they have broken God’s Law, to put their wrongdoing right in front of their eyes so they see it. We must not be lazy or fearful about doing this. How pathetic it is to see a child doing wrong, and to have the parent just stand by and do nothing – like an Eli.

Sometimes those consequences need to literally be painful. Look at Proverbs again-

Pro 23:13-14 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you **strike him with a rod**, he will not die. (14) If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol.

Pro 29:15 **The rod and reproof** give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

These verses are amazing. Some parents seem to believe that application of the rod – spanking – is going to harm the child. But the opposite is true, if the rod is applied in the context of Godly discipline.

There have been all kinds of programs and books and conferences designed that claim to deal with this matter of “the rod.” Most of them are bogus and unbiblical. *We don’t need to have a book and some expert theological study about what “rod” means.*

Pro 10:13 On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense.

Pro 14:3 By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.

Pro 26:3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back

of fools.

It is obvious. The rod means corporal punishment. Spanking. I was raised in an era when wise parents applied the switch or the wooden spoon. Guess what? You will not kill the child. What you will do, and get a firm hold on this – *is you will save his soul from hell.* If you leave a child to himself, if you fail to apply the rod when he needs the rod – such as when he defiantly disobeys you or when he knowingly disrespects the authority God has placed over him, then he needs the rod. We have seen that the child is a sinner. He is a rebel against God and God’s Law. He is selfish and doesn’t want to obey. If you leave him to himself, if you let his sin go unchecked and unpunished, then his sin will grow stronger and stronger, he will not be driven to see his need for Christ, and he will end in hell.

And that is why the Bible says this – hear it again:

Heb 12:6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Positive Discipline

Now, not all discipline is what we might call *negative. That is, it is not all punishment for wrongdoing.* We also

see in Scripture that discipline is called *training*. Train up a child.

Think for example of military boot camp. Boyd could give us plenty of examples about this. So could Frida. Yes, sometimes there is negative punishment as part of the discipline – for violating the rules. But the bulk of this kind of discipline is positive.

How to clean a rifle. How to shoot a rifle. How to crawl under barb wire with bullets whizzing over your head. How to fight. How to kill. How to salute and how to wear your uniform. How to march – marching is largely a way of teaching discipline in a group setting and how to follow directions. Getting up at 4am. Making your bunk and stowing your gear is a specified manner.

This positive discipline is also a way of ***training a person to do what they do not want to do.*** But they must learn it for their own good.

Now, what happens to a child if he grows up without this kind of training? He becomes this:

Pro 6:6-11 Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. (7) Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, (8) she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.

(9) How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? (10) A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, (11) and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

How many people are worthless sluggards today because they were not disciplined as the Lord disciplines those whom He loves?

Pro 13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.

Pro 19:24 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth.

Pro 21:25 The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.

Pro 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.

And these are by no means the only verses in Proverbs about the sluggard. It is a very, very evil sin. Do you see this attitude of *entitlement* in the sluggard? He craves. He desires. But he expects that all will be handed to him – surely he cannot be expected to work for it!

And you cannot tell the sluggard anything. You cannot help him because he knows. He knows. He regards himself as wise, so you cannot instruct him. Most of the people living on streets under tarps today are there because they are sluggards. There are probably some exceptions, but I suspect those are rare. Most expect that those who have what they don't have, owe them. It is an evil and perverted mindset and sadly it is being reinforced by many in our culture and government today.

Here is an example of the Lord's positive training/discipline. We read this scripture earlier but listen again now:

Deu 8:2-5 And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, **that he might humble you**, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. (3) **And he humbled you and let you hunger** and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, **that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone**, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. (4) Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. (5) Know then in your heart that, **as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your**

God disciplines you.

So still another way the Lord disciplines His children is *to let them experience the wilderness. Hunger. Thirst.* And then He provides for them so that they will be humbled and learn that it is the Lord on whom they must entirely depend.

Therefore, one of the worst things a parent can do is to give their children anything they want. To never let them experience need or lack of anything. We call this spoiling the child and it really does spoil them – it spoils their soul. I have seen parents give their children what they really could not even afford to give them, but they just would not say no to them.

Just think of the trials that the Lord put the Israelites through in the wilderness. He purposely let them hunger and thirst and be hemmed in by enemies – to humble them and to teach them to trust in Him for everything. This is discipline. It is training. Training in righteousness.

Eph 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), (3) “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” (4)

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Next time we will plan to consider just what the opposite of godly discipline is – this business of *provoking children to wrath*. We need to find out what that means.