

Hebrews 12:7-11 | It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:7-11 | Parents as Kings

This is our first week of looking at the final office in which parents operate over their household, and this is as kings and queens of the home. We have seen how parents are to be prophets, telling children their story, priests interceding for them so they might receive God's blessings, and here we see parents call to kingly rule in the home. So first we must look at how Christ executes this office of King as our redeemer.

WSC Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, and there is no one who won't be finally conquered by him. The gospel is the announcement that Christ is the king of kings. But while we were in rebellion against him, he subdued us to himself. At the end of the age when he returns in judgement those who are not subdued to him now will be conquered by him eternally. So to be saved is to have a rebellious heart which Christ has subdued. Only Christ can do this by his Holy Spirit because only he can transform our hearts and make us a new creation.

How wonderful to be under the rule of Christ. Most stories we tell are of wicked kings who need to be overthrown. This of course happens. But we need to remember the fundamental goodness of being under the rule of a good king. We see a glimpse of the rulership of Christ in the rule of Solomon at the golden age of the united kingdom of Israel. Remember when the Queen of Sheba comes to visit King Solomon? She is so amazed by the wonders she sees in Jerusalem, the prosperity, the worship, the order, the wisdom, that "*there was no more breath in her*" (1Ki 10:5). Here is her report.

1 Kings 10:8-9 | Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁹ Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness."

To be under great rule is like being under the rule of Christ. There is joy and blessedness. It is a wonderful thing to have our rebellious nature subdued by Christ to be under his rule. The Lord has delighted in us to place us under the rule of Christ. Last week we saw how priests are to be mediators of blessing and so to a good king is a blessing. One of the qualifications for eldership within the church is the mans ability to rule his own household.

1 Timothy 3:4-5 | One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; ⁵ (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) (KJV)

We are required by God to rule over our homes. That means having our children in subjection to us. Just as Christ subdues us to himself. We are to rule and bring our children into subjection. Therefore we ought to do this in the way that Christ rules us. The father should have a gravity in the home. Fathers are like the sun, mothers are like the moon. This is of course, Joseph's dream. But we consider the ordering of this gravity in the home brings things into a harmonious rule. But harmonious rule is the result of discipline. As Kings in the home parents are responsible for the discipline of their family. And we must embrace this word with all of its connotations.

Imagine if you were to walk into Solomon's court and the soldiers take their place, and the trumpets resound, and the king enters, and the cupbearer arrives. These things do not just happen, they are an exercise in discipline. So too is a well ordered home not something that just happens it is an exercise in discipline.

1. God's Discipline

Hebrews 12:7-8 | It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

The discipline of the Lord is evidence of our sonship. In fact if God were to leave us without discipline it would be a sign that we were not his sons. It would be a sign that we were illegitimate children. Discipline is a necessary element of God's care for us. The scripture just plainly assume that father's discipline their sons. If a father doesn't discipline his children he is treating them as though they are not his children. This means that when children do not receive discipline from their parents they are in affect being taught that they're parents do not care for them.

The discipline that the scriptures are calling christians to endure is the difficulties of life and the pains of being trained to resist sin. God disciplines us so that we might learn to endure the sufferings of life and the struggle against sin. In fact, the difference between being in Christ and treated as sons rather than being out of Christ is that the sufferings of this life always have the quality of discipline from a loving father.

The sufferings that we endure as Christians in our struggle against sin is not the type of thing that wears us down, but rather what builds us up. And we are under the hand of a master disciplinarian. We can have harsh caricatures of disciplinarians who are overbearing and therefore crushing. But this is not the discipline of the Lord. The discipline of the Lord always accomplishes what the Lord sets out to do in us.

Hebrews 12:9-10 | Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

So in considering our own discipline from our heavenly father, we ought to consider what our discipline is like. It is of course analogous to the discipline of our heavenly father. Our discipline is in one sense an imperfect training ground for our children to learn to receive with respect the discipline of our father. This is the argument of Hebrews, if we even respected the discipline of our earthly fathers, how much more should we respect the discipline of our heavenly father. We will receive his discipline and it will lead to life.

This text brings me to my first point regarding what God's expectations are for our discipline of our children. Look at how positively the scriptures reference the parent who disciplines according to what *seems* good to them. Its very important to meet even this threshold. Often times biblical discipline can be thought of as some hidden technique that must be discovered and perfectly executed. But God understands our limits and knows that we do not have the ability to perfectly discipline our children such that their hearts are perfectly changed for their good. God does that, and he uses our imperfect discipline to accomplish his perfect discipline. Since God perfects our discipline, we ought to share God's aim for discipline, that our children might share in God's holiness.

Hebrews 12:11 | For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Discipline is an act of faith because it looks to a promise toward what can't be immediately realized. I want to describe two elements of discipline. Physical and verbal.

2. Physical and Verbal Discipline

Proverbs 22:15 | Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 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.

Proverbs 29:15 | The Rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

The bible is very clear on the necessity of corporal punishment for raising children. We should think of this as a kingly role of subduing the child to ourselves. They are born with a rebellious will and intention just like you are, and this must be restrained. We are not merely speak thinky things. We are embodied creatures. Now of course this is not a license to take out your anger physically on your children. Nor is this a requirement to always spank your child for every minor infraction. But you cannot read this and conclude that there is no place for spanking in disciplining a child.

The purpose of corporal discipline is to provide a controlled dose of pain in order to train your child to avoid the large dose of pain that comes from patterns of sin. Our children ought to relate disobedience to their parents with pain. Because this is what it leads to. We desire for our children to receive the promises the Lord associates with obedience. And Long life and prosperity are promised from God towards those who honor their mother and father. How can we seek these blessings for our children if we don't seek to train them with what God has called us to?

This is a controversial point. But we must follow the clear teachings of scripture. Corporal discipline is an act of love for our children, but refusing corporal discipline when necessary is an act of hatred. It is to treat your children as illegitimate. Also God does this. God throughout the old testament, sends his people into exile, sends plagues, sends famine and drought. This is the loving father chastening his people. But this type of physical discipline is only possible within the context of verbal discipline.

Proverbs 1:8 | Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not
your mother's teaching,
Proverbs 3:1-2 | My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart
keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace
they will add to you.
Proverbs 4:1 | Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that
you may gain insight,

So much of our corporal punishment is ineffective because it is now grounded in the far more prolific instruction of the proverbs to teach your children. Your children should be taught and guided and coached. They should have been told beforehand what is good and what is bad. What is to be expected and what will lead to good and long life. The proverbs should also be taken as a thing you should do. Fathers should talk to their children like this. Our kids should feel prepared. Watch out for those types of people. Don't make a deal to quick. Don't date women like that. Don't be loud in the morning.

Imagine being a child who has grown up in a home that has equipped them for life. Disciplined out of them their tendencies. Surrounded them with the love of Christ. Given to them words of coaching and wisdom and encouragement. Happy are those children. Blessed by the Lord are those children.

