

## Proverbs for the Marriage and Family, “Parenting: Going Beyond the Behavior”

10.22.23

Has this scenario ever happened in your home...you have a child misbehaving and acting out and you say, “What is your problem...(as the vein in your head gets bigger and bigger as you get louder with every word)...you continue, “Stop hitting each other. If you hit her one time, you’re going to be in big trouble.” What have we just parented? Behavior... Stop hitting. Well, that’s a good thing to say...but, why is he hitting her? You say, “Probably because she made him mad.” Is there something more? What if this is happening a lot? Why? Why is this becoming a pattern? Is the hollering going to fix it? Is that really the “heart of the matter?”

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That’s what we’re going to seek to find out today. This morning we continue in our series:



“Proverbs for the Marriage and Family,” and we begin what is really part 1 of a 2-part message on “Parenting.” This morning, we remain on our deserted island (challenge), Bible only



and that’s really important for this message...because it has the potential to be the most controversial of the 11 in this series. Why? Because we’re going to be talking about discipline today. That can be controversial. But discipline is vital if we’re going to train the heart...to get to the heart of the matter of obedience with our children. No...we’re not training dogs...we’re training people...people with souls...and that takes the Word of God to guide us. And church, we simply must admit we can’t use worldly methods to train godly children. Author Tedd Tripp says this:

**“Superficial parenting that never addresses the heart biblically produces children who do not understand what makes them tick. They will never understand the internal struggles that lie beneath their behavior.”** Tedd Tripp, *“Shepherding a Child’s Heart”*

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Remember, as we’ve talked about from Malachi 2, what does God want...godly offspring! God wants godly offspring, but this is not easy. In fact, it’s the hardest thing I’ve ever tried to do...being a parent, that is. It’s been said: “Parenting is like driving a car down a country dirt road, if you ever take your hands off the steering wheel, you’ll wreck.” ☺ It’s true! It’s refining for us! And so, we come to this wonderful little verse...

**Proverbs 13:24**

***24* Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.<sup>[a]</sup>**

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It can also be translated: “disciplines him early.” But I know...some are thinking: “What an old-timey verse.” Sure, it is...the whole Bible was written a long time ago...but remember we’re on our Deserted Island with only the Word of God to guide our thinking. And we must remember God doesn’t change and His Word doesn’t change...EVER! It’s divinely inspired and inerrant. God is the same yesterday, today and forever...and we’re not smarter than God, and we’re not better parents than God...and we don’t know better than God when it comes to raising kids. Yes, childrearing methods come and go like fad diets, but God’s Word remains the same. And this message will challenge the premise that God’s Word doesn’t change, even though the culture does. And oh, has the culture changed.

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Just ask a teacher what they have to deal with...it’s all they can do to teach because of the lack of respect and lack of discipline they encounter in the classroom and they encounter it because respect and discipline aren’t being taught, nor is it expected in many homes. Church family, I would argue, the lack of discipline is one of the greatest problems in America today, and this lack of discipline has contributed to a general disregard of authority in our land...just ask a police officer. Sociologists tell us the majority of those in our prisons is because of the lack of loving parental role models and effective discipline in homes.

I believe that’s true and I would also argue: “Disrespectfulness and the lack of discipline manifests itself not because of what parents do, but because of what they don’t do.” You see, it’s easier not to discipline for a while, but then it’s 10,000 times harder to get things under control! You’ve got to shape them when they’re little and the cement is wet...later is a jackhammer and you’re starting all over.

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So why has discipline and respect fallen out of favor in America? Could it be because of the godless, humanistic philosophy that’s been taught in our country over the last 50-60 years? Think of it. In 1950 the major problems occurring in our schools were running in the hallways and chewing gum stuck under desks. Today we’ve got school shootings and drag queen reading hour. For the educational elites who set the curriculum, they don’t even consider teaching respect any longer and that, coupled with the lack of teaching in the home...viola...you have America in 2023.

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And this leads us to the need of being reminded why discipline and respect are so desperately needed. Children are sinners, because they’re born sinners. Oh...they’re cute and they have these wonderful cherub faces...but, children...as much as we love them, are still sinful. And that’s contrary to the popular teaching today that all kids are inherently good...but that’s totally false and unbiblical. We’re inherently sinful and we have to be trained. We all know that we don’t have to teach a five-year-old how to be selfish and disobedient. They’re born knowing how to do that. And that’s

the heart of the matter, because Romans 6:23 tells us: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” And that brings us back to the Proverbs. Here’s another one:

**Proverbs 22:15**

<sup>15</sup> Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.

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And...there’s that word again, “rod.” What does it mean and why is it used in the Proverbs so much? Let’s take a little journey through Proverbs... **Turn to Proverbs chapter 10**...and as you do, I know what some of you may already be thinking... I want New Testament, not all of this Old Testament stuff. The Word of God is the Word of God...old and new...but, I’ll give you some NT...

**Ephesians 6:4**

<sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

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We’re told in the Word of God to bring up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord...Old and New testament. **Now see Proverbs 10, verse 17**. Let’s begin our journey through Proverbs.

**Proverbs 10:17**

<sup>17</sup> Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.

**Proverbs 12:1**

<sup>1</sup> Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.

**Proverbs 13:1**

<sup>1</sup> A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

**Proverbs 13:18**

<sup>18</sup> Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.

**Proverbs 13:24**

<sup>24</sup> Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.<sup>[a]</sup>

**Proverbs 15:10**

<sup>10</sup> There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; whoever hates reproof will die.

**Proverbs 15:32**

<sup>32</sup> Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.

**Proverbs 17:25**

<sup>25</sup> A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.

**Proverbs 19:18**

<sup>18</sup> Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.

**Proverbs 23:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. <sup>14</sup> If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol. <sup>15</sup> My son, if your heart is wise, my heart too will be glad. <sup>16</sup> My inmost being<sup>[d]</sup> will exult when your lips speak what is right.

**Proverbs 29:15**

<sup>15</sup> The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

**Proverbs 29:17**

<sup>17</sup> Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.

**Proverbs 30:17**

<sup>17</sup> The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.

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Yikes...can you tell these principles about respect and discipline are serious? They are! You know, I thought about King David and his 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm:

**Psalms 23:4**

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,<sup>[c]</sup> I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

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The rod brings comfort! Do you see that? Discipline is comfort. How about that? So, what is the rod? Well, the word “rod” in Hebrew is "**shebet**,"

**Shebet, (rod): branch, twig, offshoot or switch. (Strong's Hebrew Lexicon #7626)**

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Now, we're on our deserted island with only the Bible as our guide...remember that. Okay, the “shebet” is an actual, tangible instrument, but as we just saw it's not a heavy instrument and I believe it's a neutral instrument. Again...is a branch or twig...in our house it was a small, thin, little wooden spoon with Eph 6:1 on one side of the handle and Eph 6:4 on the other side of the handle.

**Ephesians 6:1**

***<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.***

**Ephesians 6:4**

***<sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.***

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Let's see if we can gain even more understanding the shebet. First of all, the shebet is so small that it's something that only stings...IT CAN'T bruise the skin...in fact...the Lord gave us some extra fat in a certain place on our body that can help in this venture...our bottoms. The fleshy part of our bottom. Listen, not the legs...not any other place on the body...not the back...and certainly never strike a child on the face. Punishment should only be done in privacy...not in public. Public is never the right place and the shebet should only be used by parents.

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Listen...I know some of you are cringing because you've been taught in various places that corporal punishment is wrong. And I get that. Chuck Swindoll in his book:

CHARLES R.  
SWINDOLL



*Parenting*

FROM SURVIVING  
TO THRIVING



BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES IN A CHANGING WORLD

“Parenting from Surviving to Thriving,” says this:

**“I will be considered politically incorrect in my style, and I know that many contemporary experts would not applaud my stand on corporal punishment, but I must stand on the authority of Scripture. This proverb [13:24] and many others like it are too plain to ignore and too clear to confuse. These verses have been misused by people on both sides of the issue, but that does not invalidate the message of God’s Word. We have a responsibility to discern**



**its meaning and apply the principles reasonably and faithfully.”** Chuck Swindoll, “Parenting from Surviving to Thriving”

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Church family, the shebet is to be used for **subduing the will** and teaching obedience, not breaking the spirit of a child. The goal is to teach them self-control. See it this way: discipline is not something done to a child, but for a child. Discipline is used to teach respect for authority-not only at home, but at school, in church, and in public. Children have to be taught to respect authorities (teachers, police, coaches, etc.)

Mom and Dad, the purpose of punishment is to reestablish. We seek to teach him/her to surrender to our authority, when they’re wrong...we shape their will. Now, we certainly want children to have strong wills so they can navigate this anything-goes world...but, there must be boundaries and when there are...children appreciate those boundaries. Boundaries makes them feel loved and safe.

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But must understand, we should do our very best NOT to discipline when we’re angry. And I get it, that’s hard...after all, you’re frustrated and obviously it’s something egregious and that’s why it calls for the shebet, because it’s EGREGIOUS, it’s something OBSTINATE showing WILLFUL and DEFIANT DISOBEDIENCE...it should never be done for childish mistakes...like spilling their milk or leaving their bike in the rain... Kids will mess up...forget things...do childish things...they’re kids. We don’t punish children for immaturity...no, that’s the place for instruction, not the shebet.

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Listen, this has been my observation after raising four kids...the shebet when used properly, is seldom used. I’ll say that again. It’s seldom used. And that was the case in my home. It was used early and because I believe the Bible...

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**Proverbs 13:24**

<sup>24</sup> **Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.**<sup>[a]</sup>

So, there was a healthy fear of the little wooden spoon...and usually that was enough.

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But all kids are different. For some children...you can just look at them and they’ll straighten up...others...after you’ve used the shebet will look at you and say, “That didn’t hurt.” And there’s usually one in every family and this is why, as parents, we must be praying people. Praying for wisdom and discernment to handle our unique children. Because there are no cookie cutter methods when it comes to kids. They’re all different. Remember...we have to train up a child in the way he is bent...the way he should go...remembering the Lord crafted our child with a specific gifts, strengths, temperament and it’s up to us to learn how to train and disciple that child.

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Often, I’m asked: How old should a child be in regards to the shebet. Well, they should at least be toddler age. Infants/babies...small children prior to the age of 2 or 3 might just need a light pop on the hand, not touch something they shouldn’t.

One can say it this way...when they become old enough to disobey with a smirk on their face...thumbing their nose at your authority or directives...then you know they’re old enough to obey, and for egregious defiance...total obstinance...the shebet is called for.

I’m also asked, “When should you stop using the shebet.” Well, that will vary based on the child...but, I’ve found by the time they’re 10 or 11...there are other methods than can be effective...losing privileges...losing things like TV time or game time, etc. For older kids you take away their cell phone and they’ll think you’ve cut off their arm!

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Here's the thing we need to understand when it comes to discipline...you care about their heart. You discipline with love as the motive. After the discipline there must be affirmation. We affirm and love on our children. The goal is to communicate authority, respect and obedience, but we are to teach that comes from a heart of love...not because they're scared to death of you. And listen, once you're done...move on...hug them...reinforce why they were disciplined and how they can learn from that experience...and then move on...don't hold it against them...don't hold a grudge. Because I've seen parents do it and they are merciless and that creates defiance and potential rebellion.

**“Rules without a relationship leads to rebellion.”** Josh McDowell

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Discipline is a sign that there is a **relationship**. The goal is the relationship. You love your child and so you want them to grow in their obedience toward you, so they can grow in their obedience toward the Lord, because if they won't obey you, they're not likely to obey God. You see, we intuitively know all behaviors are linked to a particular attitude of the heart. So, we must ask questions. Not why did you do it...but, tell me what's going on inside of you? Are you mad? Are you frustrated? Are you hurt? Are you sick? Do you feel misunderstood? Do you feel you're not being heard? Mom and Dad...we're seeking to address the heart...not the behavior (that's a symptom), you're seeking to communicate...build the relationship.

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You want to know something that you already intuitively know: children feel loved when they're lovingly disciplined/corrected...you want to know why? Because they know you care...that they matter. You see, a child needs to hear a parent say, “Honey, you're not going to get away with that because I love you too much to leave you to yourself.” And mom and dad, if you don't discipline...you're leaving them to their own devices and they feel adrift...lost...they will long for someone to care about them. This is:

**Proverbs 29:15**

**<sup>15</sup> The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.**

But we get tired in the battle don't we. And that's the age-old battle...kids don't ever seem tire...and that's because they'll continue to battle you incessantly to see if they can gain an advantage...power...a foothold where they can dominate. Chuck Swindoll says, “So often it's not strong-willed kids that's the problem, but the weak-willed parents.” And “weak-willed” parents use unbiblical methods in addressing behavior. They miss the heart. Because you see, Biblical goals cannot be achieved by unbiblical methods.

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What am I talking about? Pop Psychology...bribing them instead of expecting obedience. Listen, they're smart and they'll keep upping the ante when they understand how this bribing thing works. Children need to be expected to obey because you are the authority and you set the standards, not because a sucker or lollipop awaits. Now, I'm not saying you can't ever reward occasionally with a prize of some sort...but, that shouldn't be the norm. The point is: Don't lower your expectations to that of your child, they can scam you. ☺ Be the parent.

And Mom and Dad...please don't make a threat that you can't keep. Don't say something you know you can't or won't do. You are teaching that you're not honest and can't be trusted. Something else, Mom and Dad...don't count...when you count, you are allowing delayed obedience. They will disobey until you get to the magic number. Also, don't be mean and use emotional psychology...passive aggressive comments...don't shame them or give them the cold shoulder or ignore them...locking them out of your world...that's a form of emotional abuse and is actually akin to intimidation...and all of that is worse than the shebet. You're only going to create rebellion.

***I want to give you, now, 3 thoughts for how we might improve our parenting:***

## **1. Obedience is a part of the Gospel. Jesus expects us to obey.**

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We don't get saved unless we submit...humble ourselves to admit we're wrong...a sinner. And once we do and call Jesus...He said, "If you love me, you'll keep my commandments." Part of the Gospel is obedience. Loving Jesus, means obedience to Jesus.

## **2. Children whose parents require obedience and are intentional about it, are happier.**

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Laissez-faire parenting does not produce gracious, humble children. It produces brats. They're neither fun to be around, nor happy themselves. They're demanding, arrogant and rude. Because you see, if your child is having a problem with every adult in his/her life, you've got a discipline issue and there needs to be a revamping of your discipleship strategy.

Listen, a child who doesn't respect authority is a not a victim of ADD or ADHD...or any other letters you or some doctor wants to assign to them. It's likely you're a laissez fair parent and you say, "Well, I'm just giving them their 'freedom,' I'm going to let them make their own decisions," so, you just "look the other way when they disobey." That's not helping your child and that's not parenting your child...you're going to ruin them. You're actually raising a child that's like ship without a rudder...and they'll end up going nowhere in life. In fact, they'll likely become a victim of their own whims.

## **3. Requiring obedience is not the same as requiring perfection.**

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Remember, we as parents, represent God to our children (in Latin, "parent" means: in the place of God), therefore they know us as their parents, before they'll know God. Children so often see God like they see us. So, we must show them both justice and mercy. Yes, God is a consuming fire, a God of judgment, but He's also patient and slow to anger. We seek the Lord to find that balance.

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Let me ask you this as we close? What do you want in your home? I bet I can answer that with one word: PEACE. We all want peace in our homes. That's...

### **Proverbs 29:17**

**<sup>17</sup> Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.**

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Watch the screens...

### **Hebrews 12:5-11**

**<sup>5</sup> And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." <sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup> 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? <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.**

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Peace comes to the home where there is training with expectations of righteousness...just like God.

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