

Parenting from Proverbs

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Session 2

In our first session, we talked about the biblical balance needed in parenting, specifically addressing Proverbs 22:6. We established that this verse is not a promise or a guarantee, but a warning. As parents, we are responsible to step into our child's life and get involved, directing them towards righteousness.

We discussed the importance of using the rod early in life, gradually decreasing its use as verbal instruction becomes more important in addressing the heart of the child. A frequently debated question is, "When is a child ready to understand and receive the gospel?"

Charles Spurgeon said,

"A child who knowingly sins can savingly believe."

This is why every discipline event is an opportunity for the gospel. However, it's not something that happens all at once or in a week. Children, at first, often think they can perfectly obey God. They are not in touch with their own sinfulness and don't realize how their sin makes them incapable of truly obeying God from the heart.

Now, let's talk about the reality that not all homes are ideal Christian homes. In our current hyper-postmodern environment, we see homes where there is a lot of instruction and little consequence. A common example is when a mother says, "When you do that, you make Mommy unhappy," to which the child may not care at all. Proverbs 29:15 says,

"The rod and reproof give wisdom."

Without consequences, children are left to go according to their own foolish nature, leading to shame for the parents (Proverbs 22:6).

*“Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

Christian parents often think that if they bring negative consequences, such as corporal punishment, into a child's life, it will harm the child's psyche. But biblically, children are resilient and need consequences. Discipline is necessary for shaping a child, and when applied lovingly and wisely, it never harms the child.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are homes where there are plenty of consequences—lots of use of the rod—but little verbal instruction or admonition. These homes can feel like a military boot camp, producing children who are exasperated and angry. In such homes, the focus is often on behavior management rather than addressing the heart. These children grow up and, when given freedom, indulge in their sinful nature, because they haven't learned the “why” behind godly behavior.

Then there's another kind of home—one that starts off permissive but becomes authoritarian when the parents become Christians. These parents, now zealous for the faith, may unintentionally make life miserable for their children by imposing strict rules and harsh regulations. Such children often grow to reject their parents' faith.

Now, let's look at what should be happening in the Christian home. Proverbs 29:15 tells us that

“The rod and reproof give wisdom.”

The rod refers to corporal punishment but can also be taken metaphorically, meaning other forms of discipline that inflict temporary discomfort on the child.

Proverbs 13:24 says,

“Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.”

Loving parents must be diligent to discipline their children, but this should be balanced with verbal instruction.

As children grow, corporal punishment becomes less effective, and verbal instruction becomes more critical. Proverbs is full of parental pleas for the son to listen and heed wisdom. For example, in Proverbs 4:3-7, Solomon reflects on his own father David's instruction, emphasizing the importance of getting wisdom and insight.

[3] When I was a son with my father,

tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,

[4] he taught me and said to me,

“Let your heart hold fast my words;

keep my commandments, and live.

[5] Get wisdom; get insight;

*do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of
my mouth.*

[6] Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;

love her, and she will guard you.

[7] The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom,

and whatever you get, get insight.

As parents, we are not behaviorists. We need to address the internal issues of the heart.

Ask your child, "What is it in your heart that caused you to do or say this?" This reflection teaches children to understand their own hearts and motivations, leading them to godliness.

The bad news is that as your child grows, you naturally lose your authority in their life. The good news is that as your authority decreases, your influence can increase—if you have built trust. Build trust by teaching them to make wise, godly decisions.

In closing, harmony in your marriage is essential for effective parenting. Proverbs 17:1 says,

"Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife."

Many times, behavioral problems in children are a barometer of what's going on in the marriage relationship. Children are deeply affected by conflict between parents, so if there is unresolved strife, it's time to work on your marriage.

Let's pray that God will use the truths of His Word to change us as parents, so we can in turn help our children walk in wisdom.

Appendix 1

Scripture References

1. Proverbs 22:6

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it."

2. Proverbs 29:15

"The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."

3. Proverbs 13:24

"Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him."

4. Proverbs 19:18

"Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death."

5. Proverbs 23:13-14

"Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol."

6. Proverbs 4:3-7

"When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, 'Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.'"

7. Proverbs 17:1

"Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife."
