

## **Family Study: Principles of Parenting - Permissive Parenting**

for the College and Career Class at Gulf Coast Baptist Church

10/15/23 by Steve Thomas

### **Introduction**

When Parents do not fulfill the responsibilities they have been given by God, or even ignore the all-together, there are consequences. There are examples from scripture that give us cautionary tales regarding this process. God has included them in scripture for our learning (Romans 15:4). Specific responsibilities of parenting will be studied later, but first perhaps seeing the results of shirking these duties can be a motivation for parents.

### **Permissive Parents can Produce Perverted Children**

#### **Eli, Hophni, and Phineas**

Eli, the high priest during the time of the judges, did not carry out his responsibilities with his sons. 1 Sam 2:29 gives us the words of God to Eli concerning his parenting of Hophni and Phineas. They were judged because of their practice of profiting off of their position as priests. God evened out the scales. Eli honored his children above God, not correcting their behavior before the people.

Faithful parents will honor God over the financial wellbeing of their children. Eli should have trusted God, and honored him, allowing God to provide for their family. But these men took the chiefest of the offerings from the people instead of allowing them to be burnt up as God intended. God's words described this behavior as "despising God" instead of honoring Him.

#### **Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom**

2 Samuel 13:21 reports David's anger at the actions of his children, but it does not tell us of any actions to remedy the situation. David's inactivity to faithfully mediate this situation provoked his children to more sin. Our children are learning from us, whether we think we are teaching or not.

David's motivation was never fully revealed, but those around him did not agree with David's mercy as applied, believing that David was taking the wrong side. Joab rebukes David for favoring his enemies instead of his friends in 2 Samuel 19:5-7. Mercy can sometimes cloud the judgement of a parent, causing the situation to become worse instead of better. Trusting that God has given us the proper method of discipline that will ultimately profit the child and those around is the proper response. The Christian parent will be tempted to be inactive in parenting duties, this is a spiritual attack. The believer needs to put on the armor and see things from God's perspective.

#### **Adonijah**

1 Kings 1:6 tells us an interesting fact concerning David's parenting style. With Adonijah, David never displeased his son. David never held Adonijah accountable in asking him why he had done certain things. Adonijah is described as a "very goodly man". This means that

he was agreeable or pleasant. However, he tried to take the kingdom away from Solomon and even after David's death he tried to undermine Solomon's power in taking one of David's concubines.

Parents are to hold the charge that God has given them higher than the regard for their children's feelings. Our children's self-centered behavior is self-destructive, and the children do not realize this. They are simply doing what feels right for themselves. Only by displeasing the child can a parent train them to seeing the truth. Displeasing the child in the short term will ultimately be for their profit in the long term.

### **Law vs Grace in Parenting**

1 Timothy 1:8-9 give us a principle regarding law that can apply to parenting. Early in the child's life, law can be applied to keep the child from straying into the behavior of the unrighteous. The law can provide a deterrent to the child to keep him from certain behavior. The law cannot train the child however, grace must do this (Titus 2:11-12). God child-trains the believer with grace and with discipline (Hebrews 12:5-6). God's scourging is intense and loving. If the parent will scourge his child, using law to direct them, God might not have to later on. The principles of corporal punishment will be laid out in a later study. But only a parent who does not love his child forsakes this type of punishment according to scripture (Heb 12:8).

In the early years of the child's development, simple lessons can be taught using law. As the child develops and can understand and experience more, a sliding scale of law moving towards grace can be applied. Paul uses this principle in 1 Cor 13, saying that when he was a child he spake, understood, and thought as a child, but when he got older he put away those things. Using the rod is something that is necessary for a parent. But if used properly, it will not be necessary for long. The World System will teach that parents should not discipline using physical punishment, but God's word is clear. Scourging, while being grievous at the time, is an act of love.

The application of Grace is hand in hand with the application of the law to young children. As the child's knowledge moves from oida (head knowledge) to gnosko (experiential/heart knowledge) more grace and less law can be applied. The child will learn from watching you more than from listening to you. If the Christian parent is living out their eternal life (Christ's character), the result will be a change of mind on the part of the child (Rom 2:4).

### **Conclusion**

When parents realize that they are constantly under attack in regards to their parenting, they can begin to defend against these attacks. Having the proper mindset regarding attack is the key to enduring temptation. God has included truth throughout scripture that can guide the Christian parent. This wisdom will guide the parent in fulfilling the charge they have been given from God concerning their children.