



The Kingdom Perspective

The Limits of Your Child's True Self

Hello, this is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective.

Since time immemorial parents have been managing the tension between a child's desire for self-expression and their need for external structure and discipline.

Each culture has negotiated this differently—some more permissive and others more restrictive. However, what's unique about our present cultural moment is that it's defaulted, almost completely, to an ethos of self-expression. We are warned that the most damaging thing we can do to a child is to question their inner desires or (God forbid) suppress their self-expression.

But here's the problem: children need their parents to guide them in who they *ought* to be. Children are hardwired to find their self-definition, not in themselves nor in societal fads, but from their family. That's why every child naturally looks to their mom or dad for a response to their actions: "Look, Mom!" or "Daddy, watch!"

Now, indeed, it's possible for a parent to be abusive in their reactions or restrictions, but it does not follow therefore that *all* restrictions are. Ancient wisdom (not to mention, parental experience) tells us that "folly is bound up in the heart of a child". Therefore, we do damage to our children and their future if we do not direct and correct their false and foolish desires. No good parent pushes a child into the street, saying, "Just find your own way. Do your own thing!" My friends, if this is true in physical development; how much more in social, emotional, and spiritual!

Certainly, children need to know they are loved and accepted; but they also need to know there are limits to what's acceptable. They need instruction and consistent and loving correction. Requiring conformity to norms is not uncaring; it is a safeguard to emotional and social chaos.

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

"A youngster's heart is filled with foolishness,
but physical discipline will drive it far away."

~Proverbs 22:15 (NLT)

"My child, listen when your father corrects you.
Don't neglect your mother's instruction.
What you learn from them will crown you with grace
and be a chain of honor around your neck."

~ Proverbs 1:8-9 (NLT)

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