

Gospel-Powered Faithfulness: Younger Years Foundations
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I. Training

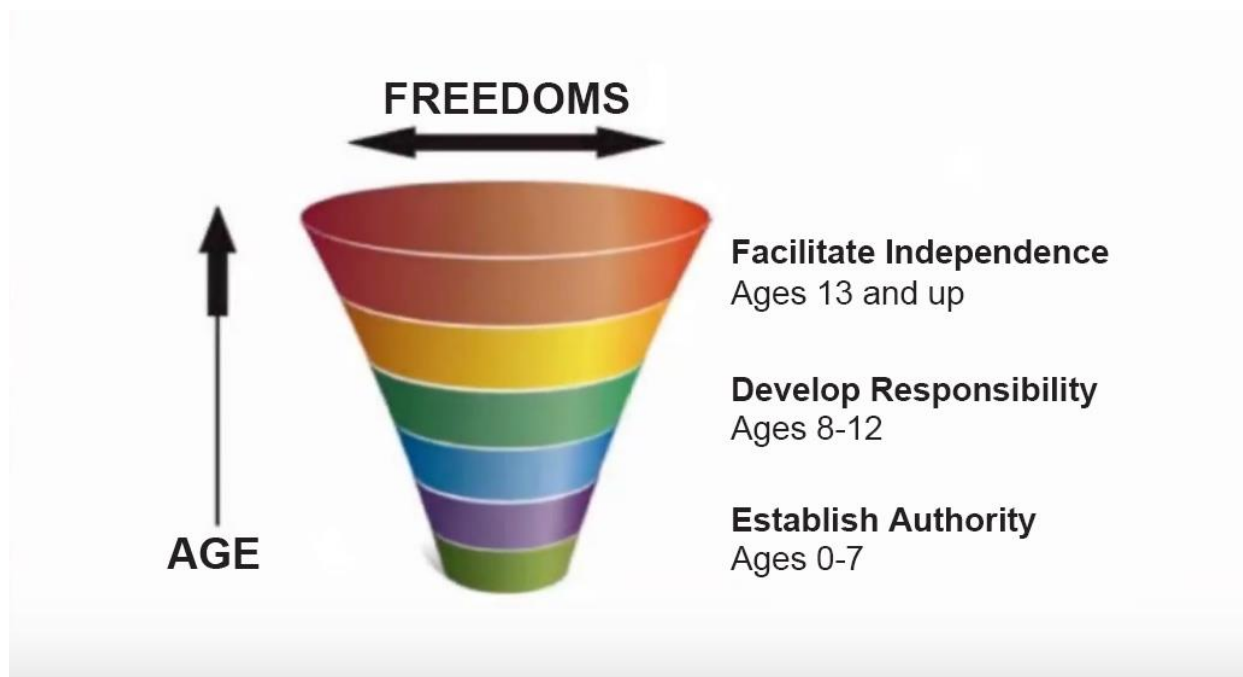
“Discipline” and “Instruction” in Ephesians 6:4 Includes Both Training and Correction

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Ephesians 6:1-4

Children need to learn to submit to Christian parents’ authority because God Himself designed the family as one of the primary places where children learn to know Him, trust Him, and live wisely under His rule. Scripture presents parental authority not as harsh domination, but as a loving stewardship meant for the child’s good and God’s glory.

When children learn to obey their parents, they are ultimately learning to respond rightly to God’s authority.



Three Practical Ways to Provide Instruction

1. Family Worship

Regularly read Scripture together.

Ask simple questions:

- What does this teach us about God?
- What does this teach us about people?
- How should we respond?

2. Daily Conversations

Use normal life situations as teaching moments.

Examples:

- conflict between siblings
- fear or anxiety
- disappointment
- success

These moments allow parents to apply God's truth to real life.

3. Personal Conversations

Sometimes instruction requires one-on-one conversations:

- explaining sin
- correcting attitudes
- encouraging repentance
- reminding them of the gospel

Instruction should always point children to Christ.

Children must understand:

- they are sinners
- they cannot save themselves
- Jesus died and rose again
- forgiveness is found in Him

Parents are not merely raising moral children, but children who trust the Savior.

Parents often feel discouraged.

But Scripture reminds us:

- Only God changes the hearts
- Parents are called to faithful instruction
- The results belong to the Lord

"My word... shall not return to me empty." Isaiah 55:11

Faithful teaching of God's Word never goes to waste.

2. Corrective Discipline

When a child sins or disobeys, discipline includes correction:

- rebuke

- consequences
- sometimes physical discipline (wisely and lovingly)

*MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD,
NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;
FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES,
AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”*

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline. Hebrews 12:6-7

Correction is meant to restore and guide, not merely punish.

A. Discipline Reflects How God Treats His Children

Paul’s command reflects God’s own fatherly discipline.

God disciplines believers to:

- correct sin
- produce holiness
- train us in righteousness

This is explained clearly in Hebrews 12:10–11, where discipline is described as producing “the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Parents therefore represent God’s shepherding care in the life of their children.

B. Discipline Must Be “of the Lord”

Paul does not simply say discipline—he says “discipline of the Lord.”

This means discipline must be:

- Biblical — guided by Scripture
- Christ-centered — pointing children to Christ
- Loving — not harsh or exasperating (Ephesians 6:4a)
- Redemptive — aimed at the heart

II. Why Discipline Your Child?

A. Motivation to Discipline

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

Proverbs 13:24

Meaning:

- Refusing to discipline a child is described as a lack of love.
- Loving parents act early and consistently to correct wrongdoing.

The motivation of discipline is love, not anger.

B. Purpose of Discipline

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.
Proverbs 22:15

Meaning:

- Foolishness and sinful tendencies are natural to children.
- Discipline is one of God's means for restraining and correcting that foolishness.

The purpose of discipline according to Proverbs 22:15 is removing folly.

C. The Emphasis of Discipline

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. Proverbs 23:13-14

Meaning:

- Loving correction protects a child from destructive patterns of sin.
- The goal is life preservation, not harm.

The emphasis is that discipline is protective and preventative.

D. The Result of Discipline

"The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."
Proverbs 29:15

Discipline must include both correction and instruction. Notice the two elements:

- Rod → corrective discipline
- Reproof → verbal correction

This parallels the two elements in Ephesians 6:4:

- Discipline
- Instruction

III. What is the rod of discipline?

Tedd Tripp defines the rod as: "A parent-controlled, careful use of physical punishment designed to underscore the importance of obeying God."

Biblical spanking must be:

- never be done in anger

- never leave injury
- be administered privately
- aim at heart repentance
- include forgiveness and prayer

The rod of discipline is not abuse but a deliberate tool of correction:

- for the parent to obey God is lovingly administer discipline
- for the child to see the seriousness of disobedience
- to reinforce parental authority as parents are under God's authority
- drives folly from the heart (based on Proverbs 22:15)

Biblical discipline is loving training aimed at the heart.

Parents are not simply enforcing rules; they are:

- exposing sin
- teaching repentance
- pointing children to Christ
- forming godly character

Thus, discipline is redemptive, not merely punitive.

IV. A Practical Training and Discipline Process

1. Establish Clear Biblical Rules

Children must know what God expects before they can be held accountable.

Parents should:

- establish clear household rules
- base them on Scripture
- communicate them beforehand

Example: Instead of vague expectations:

- "Be good."

Use clear biblical commands:

- "God commands us to obey our parents." Ephesians 6:1

Goal: Create clarity and fairness so discipline is not arbitrary.

2. Identify the Specific Sin

When a child disobeys, parents should name the sin specifically.

Example: Instead of saying: "You were bad."

Say: "You disobeyed Mommy when I told you to clean up."

This helps the child understand:

- what they did
- why it was wrong
- that the issue is sin against God, not merely inconvenience to parents.

“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

James 4:17

3. Apply the Appropriate Consequence

The consequence should be:

- consistent
- measured but painful
- controlled (never angry)
- previously communicated

The purpose is:

- correction
- restoration
- training in righteousness

This reflects God’s loving discipline. *God disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.* Hebrews 12:10-11

4. Instruct the Child from Scripture

After correction, parents move to instruction.

This involves:

- explaining the biblical principle
- teaching why obedience matters
- addressing the heart motivation

Example questions:

- “What does God say about what you did?”
- “What does God want you to do next time?”

The goal is to move from external behavior to internal heart change.

5. Lead the Child to Confession and Repentance

Children should be taught to:

- confess their sin to God
- ask forgiveness if others were wronged
- express repentance

Helpful passages include:

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. Proverbs 28:13

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

This step teaches children the gospel pattern of dealing with sin.

6. Offer Forgiveness and Restoration

After repentance and asking the parent for forgiveness:

- forgive the child
- restore fellowship
- reassure your love
- pray with the child

Parents should avoid lingering anger or resentment.

This reflects the forgiveness believers receive in Christ: *Forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Colossians 3:13*

The child learns that discipline leads to reconciliation, not rejection.

7. Encourage Future Obedience

Finally, parents help the child think about how to obey next time.

Examples:

- “Next time mommy asks you to clean up, what should you do?”
- “How can you honor God in that situation?”

This helps build new patterns of obedience.

Recommended Reading:

Shepherding a Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp

Instructing a Child's Heart by Tedd and Margy Tripp

Don't Make Me Count to Three! by Ginger Hubbard

The Heart of Anger by Lou Priolo

Get Out of My Face by Rick Horne

Age of Opportunity, A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens by Paul David Tripp