

Wednesday Night 11/12/25

Text: Hebrews 12:6

Title: Parenting Gods Way: Firm Hands, Tender Hearts

4 Stages of Parenting

Discipline years 1-5

Training years 5-12

Coaching years 12-18

Friendship years 18+

Above is a great guideline to assist parents in understanding the different stages of life so as to better how to relate to your kids all through their lives. Remember, you will be your child's parent until the day you die. Hope this little breakdown helps to encourage you in whatever phase of parenting you find yourself in, which hopefully is one of the most enjoyable of all the

stages for you. Just know Lee and I are praying for you.

4 Stages of Parenting

Discipline years from 1-5 years of age. These are the formable years. Children develop more between birth and three years of age than they do at any three year period over the course of the rest of their lives. Its during these years we pour the foundation that our children will build the rest of their lives on. Like a house, you can't build beyond the foundation that is laid. The same is true in our faith too.

Training years from 5-12 years of age. These are the years where we teach and instruct our children in life. What to do, how to think and respond to everything we believe life will throw at them. I like the "watch one, do one teach one" method best. First, invite your kids to watch you do it, then invite them to come along side you and do it with you and then when you feel like they are ready, have them teach what

you taught them to someone else. This method has proven best in training someone to know they get it, and its a great way to ensure that your kids are not only learning knowledge but more important, application, the when and where and how to apply it.

Coaching years 12-18 years of age. The coaching years is still hands on parenting but from the sidelines. Parents who have a difficult time with their teenagers do so for the most part by misunderstanding their role in their Childs life. Coaching is done best as we come along side our kids and encourage and instruct them from the sideline. For some the coaching years is where parents learn the art of letting go. Just like in sports, once the kids step on the field they are vulnerable to hurt and pain, glory and sorrow, victory and defeat. We can't play for them. Its here we learn how well we trained and how well they listened and learned. Like a good coach we seek to instill confidence in our kids by reminding them they have what it takes and celebrating their victories and providing comfort and encouragement in defeat.

Friendship years from 18 years of age on up. From eighteen years on up and until the day we die our role in our kids lives is best enjoyed as friends. No longer do we provide the discipline or training, maybe a little coaching here and there as it is sought out, but from here on out our role as parents is to seek to enjoy our children as friends. The joy in friendship isn't that our friends agree with us or we with them. Friendship is best enjoyed as we simply appreciate what the other person means to us. The best of friends simply share life together. We enjoy one another's company. Friends listen and speak truth to one another without the fear of rejection or judgment. This is the goal of parenting, where we can sit back and look back and see how far we have come together. Good times and great friends are there for each other. The world may walk away but your friends are always close by.

Today, we witness a cultural shift in how the world views parenting. Words like "gentle parenting" are praised, promising harmony and

understanding without confrontation or correction. While empathy and patience are beautiful virtues, many of these modern ideologies remove a crucial God-given tool of discipline — loving correction — what Scripture calls **“the rod of reproof.” or “The belt on the backside”**

Parenting that refuses to correct, under the banner of gentleness, risks creating children who are guided by their feelings rather than by God’s truth.

Love and discipline are not opposites; in God’s plan, they are inseparable partners.

Speaking of partners... I can not stress enough the need for both mom and dad to be active in the raising of the kids. It's not just a mom's job...

In Deuteronomy 6, it was fathers who were responsible for the spiritual upbringing of the kids.

Mom's the lover
Dad's the discipliner

“Wait Until Your Father Gets Home”

We grew up with Bill Cosby... he use to tell a story about as soon as his dad came home he would immediatley come into the boys room as they were in bed by that time and the dad would give both boys a spanking and through the tears they would say to their father, “what did we do wrong?” to which the dad would repky... “You know” and we thought how did he find out...

Dr. Loren Moshen from the National Institute of Mental Health, as he analyzed census figures he found the absence of a father to be a stronger factor than poverty in contributing to juvenile delinquency.

I'll tell you why that's important. Because when people talk about this during election time, all these problems, they say, well the problem is

poverty or the problem is race. Wrong. This guy is saying I've studied it. And **absent parenting** is a bigger cause than those other factors.

Listen, the cure for crime isn't in the electric chair, it's in the high chair. The most formable years of a child are from birth to three years old. Even Socrates said to the men of Athens, he marveled that they could turn over every stone, he said, to find wealth for themselves, but pay so little care to their children to whom one day they would relinquish it all.

Perfect parents, no, godly parents yes!

There is no such thing as a perfect parent. But you can be a godly parent, not perfect, but you can be godly. And if you want to be a godly parent, there's one thing you can never be. And that is a passive parent, an aloof parent, a non-engaged and uninvolved parent.

From the study of the Old Testament we can see that King David suffered from what we might call passive parenting at times. We get a

glimpse of the as we study Absalom's life, as he's getting angry. And then there is Solomon, he was also one of the kids in this family.

Solomon in the book of Proverbs writes a lot about raising children and in Proverbs 22:6 he lays it out the importance of hands on parenting...

“Train up a child in the way that he should go. And when he is old he won't depart from it.”

What does that mean, train up a child? Well, it can't mean be passive. It must mean be active, be engaged. It does. The word **"train"** doesn't mean toss out a few words of advice every couple of months, that will suffice.

The word "train" is the Hebrew word **"chanank,"** which means **“to put something into somebody's mouth or to affect or stimulate their taste.”**

The midwives would take a date and chew it up

in their mouth and then place it in the tongue of a newborn. It's call masticate. Its how they stimulate babies pallets and reflex for breastfeeding.

So the word "train" up a child means stimulate that child's hunger and thirst for godliness and godly behavior.

Do you play with your child? Do you pray with your child? Are you actively involved enough to stimulate their desire to be godly?

Speaking of stimuli... I wanted to share with you tonight something most of you probably are doing a good job so hopefully this will just be encouragement for you. But (no pun intended) you are struggling in the area of corporal punishment in the life or lives of your children I wanted to speak to this sensitive topic among todays parents.

To Spank Or Not To Spank... This Is The Question

Point # 1. God's Pattern For Parental Love

Hebrews 12:6 reminds us: **“For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.”**

We all know God the Father is the perfect parent. God Himself parents His children through correction. His discipline is not abuse; it is redemptive. Likewise, when parents correct firmly but lovingly, they mirror God's care — not His wrath.

Gentle parenting, when detached from correction, paints love as approval of all behavior and sends the wrong message to our children.

Biblical love calls a child out of foolishness, not merely to “understand” it but to correct it.

Point # 2. Don't Threaten... Promise (With The Belt...)

Loving Godly Discipline Is Never A Threat

But Always A Promise

Proverbs 13:24 says: “24 Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.”

This verse is often rejected in modern psychology, yet its truth stands the test of generations. The “rod” or the belt or the paddle is not an excuse for anger or abuse — it represents measured, loving correction that teaches accountability and obedience.

Side Note: Instead of using your hand I would recommend using a belt or something that you use each time you need to exercise corporal punishment on your child for a couple of reasons.

1. You have time to cool down if you are angry.
2. Your child doesn't associate your physical touch with pain
3. Using a belt gives you the opportunity to share the why and to speak into your child's life about God's love, His grace and forgiveness

Without such correction, a child learns that boundaries are optional. Eventually, that child will struggle with authority, both human and divine.

Point # 3. Discipline Produces Character

Hebrews 12:11 teaches: “11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.”

True discipline is not about punishment, but about discipleship.

Discipline trains the heart to respect authority, control impulses, and seek peace.

When we fail to discipline, we aren’t being kind — we’re actually depriving our children of the moral boundaries they need for maturity and protection.

Gentle parenting often prizes “emotional safety”

at all costs. Don't get me wrong- "emotional safety" is important; it is both good and needed — but without firm correction, "emotional safety" leads to indulgence.

Our goal as parents isn't merely to raise happy children, but holy ones.

Psalm 144:15, **"Yes, joyful are those who live like this! Joyful indeed are those whose God is the LORD."**

Point # 4. Love Leads to Obedience

Jesus said it best in John 14:15, **"If you love me, obey my commandments"**

True love must lead to obedience. Parenting mirrors this relationship. Children must learn that love does not mean the absence of correction — but the assurance that even discipline flows from affection.

When parents discipline biblically — calm,

measured, and consistent — the child learns security, not fear. But when parents remove all forms of godly discipline, they create confusion between love and permissiveness.

In Closing: Firm But Tender (That's BUT NOT BUTT)

True Christian parenting embodies loving discipline. A firm hand and a tender heart. Parents who listen and comfort, but who also instruct and restrain.

Loving corporal discipline — never in anger, never excessive — is not violence; it is guidance.

It is the physical expression of a spiritual truth: sin has consequences, and correction leads to wisdom.

As Proverbs 29:17 says: **“Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of mind and will make your heart glad.”**

When moms and dads align their discipline with God's heart and His Word, home becomes a place of order, of love, and lasting peace.

There really is no place like home!