

A Parent's Authority

Ephesians 6:1-4

Introduction: A parent's authority is personified in the life of a child in discipline. What is the goal of effective discipline? Many parents have a hard time administering discipline to their children because they have never identified their purpose and goals. Some parents approach discipline as if their only purpose is to make their child pay for their disobedience. Inflicting pain becomes the primary goal. These parents have lost sight of their purpose. We must never forget that ***our primary purpose is to train our children to honor and serve the Lord.*** Biblical authority employs scriptural discipline to help us accomplish that goal.

The word nurture in our text comes from a Greek word which means to instruct or chasten.

This word "paideia" *pahee-di'-ah* is also translated as;

- 1) Instruction - 2 Timothy 3:16 *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for **instruction** in righteousness:"*
- 2) Chastening - Hebrews 12:5 *"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the **chastening** of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:"*

I. THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE

A. Its Focus - Instilling Character

We will never train our children to love and serve God unless we first lay a proper foundation. The primary focus must be on Biblical principles. Salvation is the first concern, then emphasizing the importance of a personal, conscious, daily walk with God.

B. Its Function - Influencing Conduct

A change in behavior is the *result* of a proper focus in our discipline. We make a serious mistake if we focus on conduct to the exclusion of character.

II. THE PROCESS OF DISCIPLINE

- A. Teaching - What you tell a young person to do. This has the least influence. Parents make a tragic mistake if they rely only on a *"do what I say"* approach.
- B. Training - What you require a young person to do. This is where the practice of chastening is effective.
- C. Testimony - What you show a young person to do. Very important. Your children are watching what you do.

III. THE PRACTICE OF DISCIPLINE

Five requirements for scriptural discipline:

- A. It must be Controlled - You, as the parent, must be in control of;
 1. Self - Be careful of emotions.
 - a. Anger - Leads to a desire for revenge or retribution, often results in excessive punishment.
 - b. Anxiety - Undue concern over the consequences.
 - c. Arrogance - Selfish Pride which demonstrates concern for personal image rather than the welfare of your child. *"How could you do this to me?"*
 - d. Affection - While it is certainly understandable that you would feel sympathy for your child, you cannot allow your affection for him to alter your determination to discipline him. Many parents fail in their discipline because they cannot stand to see their child suffer.
 2. Situation - You are to determine circumstances surrounding the discipline.
 - a. What? - The manner and extent of the punishment.

- b. When? - The time of the punishment. The younger the child, the more important it is that the discipline takes place quickly.
- c. Where? - The place where the punishment is to occur.

Note: Never allow your child to bargain with you. When you do you reinforce a belief that there is always a way to avoid the consequences of disobedience. It's just a matter of finding out what will accomplish that goal. When they do not accept the punishment two things happen:

- > Resentment grows - They are very unhappy about their "unjust" treatment.
 - > Rebellion grows - Their determination to disobey is reinforced.
3. Son - Many parents allow their children to intimidate them. This is especially true as the children get older. There should never be a time that you feel you have lost control of your children. Even as adults, your children should continue to honor and respect you (Though you no longer have control over their actions once they have moved out of your home). When disciplining your child, you should always be in control of the child.
 - a. The child should be calm during the discipline. Crying is certainly to be expected, however, uncontrolled screaming is a sign of anger rather than anguish.
 - b. The child should be compliant during the discipline. Never allow your child to run from you or hide when you are trying to discipline them.

B. It must be Consistent - Children need to know what is expected of them. Whether they are punished or not should not be determined by how a parent feels at the moment or what is going on in the parent's life. Too often parents will postpone discipline until they finish what they are doing

and may on occasion neglect the discipline altogether. Doing so sends a very confusing message to a child who does not know what to expect.

1. Discipline must be consistent in its Expectations. The standards you set should be;
 - a. Right - They should apply to all children equally.
 - b. Reasonable - They should make sense *to the parent*.
 - c. Realistic - They should be attainable for the child.
2. Discipline must be consistent in its Examples. Parents can have the greatest influence when disciplining their children if they set a consistent, Godly example for them to follow.
3. Discipline must be consistent in its Execution. Offenses should have a pre-determined punishment. And each repeated offense should receive a consistent response. Beware of distractions that could keep you from being consistent. Examples: current activity, moodiness, etc.

C. It must be Compassionate

1. Attitude - Don't act like an executioner.
2. Administration - Do demonstrate a sorrow that you have to apply the punishment.

D. It must be Conclusive - Nothing is more disheartening and discouraging to a child than to face a punishment which has no obvious end.

1. The Purpose - Know what you are trying to accomplish. What behavior are you trying to correct? Your purpose should not be to simply demonstrate your authority or inflict pain.

2. The Program

- a. Method - Know what you will do.
 - b. Manner - Know how you will do it.
 - c. Measure - Know when it will end.
- E. It must be Convincing - You must believe that what you are doing will work. And it should be effective at convincing your child.

Conclusion: Rearing children requires time, tenderness, and tenacity. It is not an easy thing to do. Many parents fail because they are not willing to make the sacrifice necessary for success. Some parents fail because they do not see the value of their children. Others fail because they are just too caught up in themselves.

A man came home from work late again, tired and irritated. He found his 5-year-old son waiting for him at the door. "Daddy, may I ask you a question?" The dad replied: "Yeah, sure, what is it?" "Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?" The dad got mad and said, "That's none of your business! Why do you want to know?" The little boy said, "I just want to know. Please tell me, how much do you make an hour?" The dad, wanting to sit down and relax, said, "If you must know, I make \$20 an hour." The little boy sighed and bowed his head. Looking up, he asked, "Daddy, may I borrow \$10 please?" The father flew off the handle, "If the only reason you wanted to know how much money I make is so that you can hit me up for some cash to buy some stupid toy, then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed. You're so selfish. I work long, hard hours every day and don't have time for this." The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door.

The dad sat down and started to get even madder about the nerve of his little boy. How dare he ask questions only to get some money. After an hour or so, the man had calmed down, and started to think that maybe he was a bit hard on his boy. Maybe his son really needed the money for something important. And so, the father went up to his boy's room and opened it, "Are you asleep, son?" "No daddy. I'm awake," replied the boy. "I've been

thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier. It's been a long day, and I took it out on you. Here's that 10 bucks you asked for." The little boy sat straight up, beaming. "Oh, thank you, daddy!" he exclaimed. Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out a wad of crumpled up bills. The dad, seeing that the boy already had some money, started to get angry again. The little boy slowly counted out his money, and then looked up at his dad.

The dad, now very upset, demanded to know what was going on, "Why did you want more money if you already had some?" The little boy replied, "Because I didn't have enough, but now I do. Daddy, I have \$20 now...and I'd like to buy an hour of your time."

Raising children requires sacrifice. It requires your time. It requires consistency. But the rewards are great.