
Your Child's Chastening¹

Various verses from Proverbs

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You are visiting some friends with a 2 year old. This child is running wild through the house, yelling, demanding attention, throwing toys, and just making the world all about him. Your host decides it's time for the child to go to bed. He says, "Johnny, it's time to pick up your toys and go to bed." And you know what Johnny says; "OK" picks up his toys and goes to bed. That will be the day with little Johnny. You know what he really says, "NO". Father tries the second time with the same results. The third time brings a much higher decibel level to Dad's voice and the response is just as elevated. Finally Dad lets Johnny continue with his wild behavior. Dad says, "You know what those 2 year olds are like. They are in those terrible twos. He'll grow out of them."

No, Johnny won't grow out of them and have any reasonable obedience to those in authority. Something must change.

We have been looking at the Grace and Duty of Biblical Parenting during this year's family enrichment conference. The focus has been on the age group of birth to school age children, normally about 5 years old. Ephesians 6:1-4 was the primary passage for this series. The two rails upon which the duty of parenting run are the rail of nurture - counseling, and the rail of discipline - command.

There were two basic goals for my part in this series: teaching children they must obey their parents without complaint, without challenge, without delay, and without excuse, and teaching the Biblical principle of consequences.

Tonight we're going to look at the practical side of discipline - the biblical duty of the rod or physical consequences. We

What is the rod

The book of Proverbs gives God's design for this part of discipline.

A parental command

Proverbs 19:18 "Discipline your child while there is hope." (NLT)

Proverbs 23:13 "Don't fail to discipline your children." (NLT)

Proverbs 29:17 "Discipline your children" (NLT)

These verses are used in the context of the parent/child relationship. Using the rod must be done consistently. Just as children are to obey their parents, parents are to obey God.

¹ Most of the material in this message is taken from the book *Shepherding a Child's Heart - Revised and Updated*. 2nd edition, Tedd Tripp, 2005.

An act of faith for parents

Proverbs 19:18 Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives. (NLT)

Proverbs 20:30 Physical punishment cleanses away evil; such discipline purifies the heart. (NLT)

God commands using the rod. Parents don't understand how it works, but parents place their faith and confidence in God's wisdom and His counsel.

A rescue mission

Proverbs 23:13-14 Don't fail to discipline your children. They won't die if you spank them. Physical discipline may well save them from death. (NLT)

Proverbs 13:24 Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them. (NLT)

Proverbs 19:18 Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives. (NLT)

Proverbs 29:15 To discipline a child produces wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by an undisciplined child. (NLT)

Proverbs 29:17 Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of mind and will make your heart glad. (NLT)

Parents love themselves more than their children if they will not use the rod. The rod is God's instrument to potentially save your child from hell. The rod is the tool that brings wisdom. The rod makes the child ready to listen to the Gospel. Parents who don't discipline wonder why their world is chaos. Disciplining brings peace of mind and heart gladness. When the rod is not used you are disobeying God and teaching your child that he is in charge of his life. The rod is a rescue mission.

How to Spank

1. Take your child to a private place. It needs to be somewhere you can talk to your child and spank him without being interrupted or rob him of his dignity. This is not something done in front of your other children. By doing it in private you show respect.
2. Tell your child what they have specifically done or failed to do. Physical discipline must be tied to specific easily demonstrated disobedience. As your child grows in understanding, disciplining can be done for more general and attitudinal issues. But this is not done with pre-school children. Spankings must be done for specific times of disobedience or attitudes. There is never any spanking for anything general or just because you can't take it any longer.
3. Part of your discussion includes having your child acknowledge what he has done wrong. This is probably where most of your time will be spent. Your child knows that a spanking is coming and will lie about what he has done hoping for a reprieve. Once he has acknowledged what he has done, he knows why he is being spanked.

4. Remind him the spanking is not because you are frustrated or angry. The spanking is to teach him he must obey you. Tell him you are obeying God and you are concerned for his good. Tell him this is what God says needs to be done in order to help you obey. You may not hit your child for any other circumstance other than biblically sanctioned discipline.
5. Tell him how many swats he is going to receive. This is important to allow your child to see you are in control yourself. The number of swats will vary between each child. There are those who seem to have bottoms of leather. There are those who are so rebellious they will not cry and will tell you that didn't hurt. There are others who only require a look and they fall apart. Be careful that kind of child isn't manipulated you though.
6. Remove his diaper, or pants and underwear so the spanking is felt. This enables you to see what your swats are physically doing to his bottom. Removing his clothing is done at the last possible moment and put back on as soon as the spanking is done. A good rule of thumb concerning removing clothing - if you are the one who takes care of your child's personal hygiene, like changing diapers and giving him baths, then it will not shame your child for you to see his bottom. But if he is the one who takes care of his own hygiene, then leave his underwear on. You don't want to embarrass him or shame him by being naked. You want to make sure the spanking is felt and effective. It is best to put your child over your lap rather than the bed or a chair. This puts you in a physical relationship to your child and lets him know he is not being removed to a neutral object for the purpose of discipline.
7. Once the spanking is done, take your child onto your lap, tell him how much you love him, how much it hurts you to have to spank him, and you hope that it will not be necessary to do it again. You want to make the point the spanking was for restoration, not retribution.

At this point there should be complete restoration between you and your child. If he is not restored, if he is angry at you, if he refuses to accept your affection, then something's wrong. You need to check your own heart and that of your child.

Have you been rough with him? Have you sinned against him with how you've disciplined him? Have you disciplined him in anger? If you have, then you must confess your sin and ask for forgiveness and restoration.

Is his anger a rejection of your discipline? Is he mad at you? Is he trying to punish you for what you have done? If any of these things are there, the spanking session is not over.

Russ took us through Hebrews 12 last week. Discipline is not pleasant but painful and produces righteousness and peace for those who are trained by it. If your discipline has not produced peace and righteousness, then it is not finished. Tedd Tripp illustrates how he talks to his children when this happens. He tells them, "Daddy has spanked you, but you are not sweet enough yet. You are going to get another spanking." The child must know something is not right. You are not going to go through the entire session with all of the talking done before. You are going to be spanking for not submitting to you and ultimately to God.

Restoration is critical. There shouldn't be anything between the two of you. You are starting off fresh with a clean slate. The restoration process makes sure you can do that.

8. Pray with your child. Encourage your child that Christ was given because people sin. Through Christ there is forgiveness of our sins. Christ can be known and He can give the ability to obey in the future. This is the best and most receptive time to present Christ to your child. They have been confronted with their need of Christ's grace and power. They are in a position to listen.

If you're not using God's way of disciplining your child, you will be training your child, but it will be with unbiblical methods. Remember, your responsibility is to be shepherding your child's heart. If that is not your goal, then you are probably trying to modify their behavior with bribes, emotional appeals, or punishment and your child's heart is addressed, but not with the Gospel. Bribes are rewards for your child doing what you think is right. "If you will pick up your toys, you can have some ice cream." Emotional appeals play on the emotions of your child, such as fear. "I'm going to leave you here at the store if you don't stop yelling." Or punishment, such as grounding. When the heart is not addressed biblically, then your child's heart will be trained, but it will be trained to respond to the methods you use - bribes, emotional appeals, and punishment.

Questions

When do you spank?

Remember, spanking at this age is for disobedience or defiance, which is failing to obey or honor. You must be careful to know what disobedience is.

Disobedience is not something done by accident. Do you do things by accident? Then why wouldn't your children. They can accidentally knock their bowl off the highchair. They can knock over their milk. They can step on a toy and break it. These are accidents - not disobedience. Disobedience is also not being uninformed. Your toddler finds some crayons and begins to color the wall. They have not been told this is not what crayons are for. Going for the light socket on the wall without being told this is dangerous and not acceptable is being uninformed.

Disobedience is when your child looks you in the eye, knowing that throwing their milk on the floor is not acceptable, and doing it any ways. Disobedience is knowing that going to the light receptacle is not acceptable and doing it any ways. Disobedience is not responding the first time without complaint, without challenge, without delay, and without excuse.

What age do you begin spanking your child?

Putting it simply, whenever your child is old enough to resist your directives, he is old enough to spank. Your child is rebelling against authority. Many times your temptation is to wait until your child can speak before spanking him. The longer you put off responding to rebellion, the worse the disobedience becomes and the harder it is for him to understand he's under authority to honor and obey. Something that seems so innocent as struggling against a diaper change, or stiffening up when you want your child to sit on your lap, is rebellion. The spanking procedure is the same as we've already covered. It is a fact that children can understand long before they can talk. You don't have any way to know how

much that less than one year old can understand, but he has the ability to understand his rebellion is wrong and there will be consequences for that rebellion. It is normally easy to know your child is rebelling.

When is your child too old to spank?

Children are different. There are so many variables, trying to give an age when they are too old will only be arbitrary. Spanking works best with younger children. It is the more effective with young children. You should be able to sense when your children do not respond to spanking. I believe it's inappropriate to spank a child in junior high or high school. As children mature, there are other methods for discipline.

What if we're in public?

Our culture has determined that spanking is child abuse. Granted, Christians can be guilty of child abuse. When they discipline in anger, when they punish, when they give discipline that is excessive they are abusing their children. They are guilty before God of disobedience. There are more and more states making it a misdemeanor to spank your child. It is unwise, at best, to spank your child in public.

I would rather use time-outs. What's wrong with that?

First of all, God has commanded you to spank. Using time-outs instead is saying that God doesn't know best. Second, using time-outs doesn't give an opportunity for the Gospel in your child's life. The foolishness and rebellion is still in the heart of your child. You have driven the rebellion out of the heart of that child. And third, your excuse shows you are not obeying God. You are more concerned about your time than taking the time to be involved in your child's life.

I have been giving you the Scriptural principles for spanking your child. But I believe there are some who agree with what I have been teaching. But they are saying, "But how do I do it? What happens in real life?" Becky and I didn't rear our children using this teaching. The resources weren't available in the 70's and 80's as they are now. I have asked three Chapel families to share what they do in rearing their children. I'm sure there are others here at the Chapel who are trying to rear their children by obeying Godly principles, but I don't know you as well as I know these three.

<< For those of you who are reading the manuscript and haven't listened to this sermon, may I suggest you listen to hear what these three families have to say. Their participation made this message come to life with real life illustrations of how these families are parenting their children in God-honoring ways. Their ideas are extremely helpful. >>

Wrap up

Let me try to summarize what has been taught the past three weeks.

In the first sermon, *Your Child's Nurture*, Russ gave an overview of Ephesians 6:1-4. He taught children are to obey their parents because this is right and it is best. Parents are to rear their children in the discipline and nurture of the Lord so you don't provoke your children to anger and exasperate them.

I my sermon, *Your Child's Admonition*, I listed some goals parents pursue now and what God's goal is for parenting. Even though authority has been shaped by what they believe, the authority for parents to follow Ephesians 6 is delegated from God. His world is organized by authority in all of life. The goal for rearing young children is to obey their parents without complaint, without challenge, without delay, and without excuse. And to learn what consequences are.

Sermon number three, *Your Child's Depravity and Folly*, Russ covered children's natural state – they are born sinners from the time of conception. Children are also born foolish. All children commit sin and all children commit folly. There was only one perfect child, Christ. He grew physically, he grew in wisdom, and he grew in His relationships, and He was submissive to His parents. We are to bring up our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord in view of the Lord's own discipline and instruction of you.

Sermon number 4, *Your Pattern of Biblical Chastening*, Russ expounded Hebrews 12: 1-11. Using this passage as the pattern, he showed what biblical parenting involves. Chastening is God's way in our relationship with Him as family. Chastening is God's way of transforming and maturing His children. Chastening is God's way for parents with their children. Chastening involves both circumstances and people. It is good for our children to experience hardship. Hardship and discipline reveal, not conceal, relationships. Chastening our children requires our submission to God. And chastening of our children is for their good.

And this evening, *Your Child's Chastening*, I tried to put the rubber on the road through practical application of spanking.

Last week I challenged you to count the cost. Rearing your children according to God's instruction manual will require time. It will require reading and studying of good books on parenting. It requires becoming familiar with those teachings of Scripture that apply to your children's character, their heart, and their strengths and weaknesses. It requires being humble before God and asking Him for the enabling grace and wisdom to parent well. And it requires recognizing sin in your hearts that needs to be humbly confessed and turning from with God's grace.

May God grant us, here at the Chapel, the desire to parent well for his glory, for our good, and for the good of our children.