

The Duties of Parents – Part 05

Introduction: In his marvelous book, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, Tedd Tripp points out that when it comes to your role as the parents of your children, the breakdown goes like this in terms of your interaction with them: 90% is formative instruction, while 10% is corrective discipline. It is common for parents to look at their role in the lives of their children as almost exclusively the disciplinary force. If we see unruly children or disrespectful youths the comment is often heard, "Someone needs to take that one behind the woodshed, etc..." While that may be true, the much larger problem was probably the absence of consistent, gentle, loving *formative instruction*. Discipline in the form of self-controlled, non-angry, spanking followed by a clear telling of the gospel and a call to repent and believe is important. But the key to winning your child's heart is the consistency of your instruction, the consistency of your own life and manner toward them, the consistency of your expectations, and the consistency with which you enforce those expectations.

We spoke in our first time together about the specific biblical duties of parents. We looked at the many passages in the Old and New Testaments that spell these out clearly. The duties of parents are simple and clear – they are to educate their children in the ways of God and His Word. That is the key and that is the bulk of our work. And this cannot be done quickly or overnight. It is for the long haul and requires steadfast patience, endurance, prayer, tears, and hard work.

Discussion Question #1: Why do you think Tripp would put such a lop-sided percentage on those two things: 90% is formative instruction, while only 10% is corrective discipline?

The issue of physical discipline – i.e. spanking – is controversial in our day (although it wasn't through most of the rest of human history). The Bible is very clear and doesn't seem to acknowledge *any other form of discipline*.

Proverbs 13:24 He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.

Discussion Question #2: Why would the Holy Spirit breathe forth such a strong condemnation of those who refuse to spank their children? They "*hate*" them? How?

Proverbs 3:11-12 My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction; [12] For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Discussion Question #3: Why does a father chasten his son?

Proverbs 19:18 Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.

Discussion Question #4: Refusing to chasten your son is identical to "setting your heart on his destruction." I mentioned in an earlier gathering that your child has a nature which, if left alone, will destroy him or her. In light of that, why does this text plead: "Chasten your son while there is hope."?

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Discussion Question #5: How does the "rod" drive foolishness from the heart of a child?

Proverbs 23:13-14 Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. [14] You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell.

Discussion Question #6: Correction will prevent "death" and "deliver his soul from hell." Why such strong expressions?

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

Discussion Question #7: Normally we think of gaining wisdom from people with more of it than we have or from God's Word, but how does "the rod and rebuke" give wisdom?

Proverbs 29:17 Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul.

Discussion Question #8: How will consistent correction give you "rest" and "delight to your soul?"

Discussion Question #9: How did the presence or absence of godly, biblical, controlled spanking affect you?

Principle: The basic biblical obligation your children have to you is this:

Ephes. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Example: "so-and-so, *come here.*"

Discussion Question #10: What is the most dangerous part of so-and-so looking up at you, and then continuing right on with what they were doing before you called them?

Formative instruction is part of the disciplinary process itself (especially when they are very young):

Every act of disobedience is an opportunity to point them to the cross of Christ. And they must understand first and foremost that the most dangerous part of their disobedience to you is that they are disobeying *God*. Every act of disobedience they engage in provokes the wrath of God and inflicts His law's curse upon us. A great Bible verse to use in discipline after you've helped them understand what biblical law they have broken which brought about that discipline is:

Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us...

Application: When they are face to face with a direct violation of God's law – which is why they got spanked to begin with – take that opportunity to witness to them and call them to repent and believe in Christ.

The "it's gotta sting" principle: A spanking – we always have used a paddle – has to draw tears and hurt a little to be effective. I have watched my own children be willing to trade a spanking to get away with what they wanted *because the spanking did not sting enough*. We have always spanked right on the rear-end. Lower or higher can bruise. But part of the deal was always: *you have to hold still, and if you move at the last minute and you get hit on your leg, that is not my fault*. You never want to injure or humiliate your child, but *it has to sting enough to make it unpleasant enough to work*. With my boys, it got to where Amy really couldn't do it anymore, only me. One of my children used to keep socks stuffed down the back of his pants... so, be aware of just how *sneaky* they can be.

Application: Make sure you don't spank them and then send them away. You **must** hold them, comfort them, and make sure they know why you spanked them – *because you love them, because you desire what is best for them, and because God's Word requires it*. Let them know that if you hated them (as I have been accused after a spanking by my children more than once), you would let them get away with disobeying you and do nothing. When a parent says, "I just love little so-and-so too much to do that to them," remember God's Word: **Proverbs 13:24** "He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly." This is a good verse to have committed to memory when the recently "stung" child accuses you of hating them.

Any comments on the "it's gotta sting" principle?