

Lesson 8: The Discipline of Development

Ephesians 6:4 – “Bring them up in the *discipline* and instruction of the Lord.”

Greek – *paideia*, often translated “education”
Hebrew – *musar*, often translated “instruction” } both words mean “training”
Another word could be “discipline” (cf. disciple, academic discipline), but it often sounds too negative.

Training speaks of being proactive, even planning a course to follow:

Many parents fail because they are reactionary—giving children attention only when they act up.
Even if wrong behavior is dealt with every time after the fact, this is not faithful parenting.
Obedient parents train their children proactively, ahead of time, with prudence and diligence.

Positive training is necessary due to *immaturity*.

Even if a child were to never act up and need correction, immaturity alone demands lots of training.

Note: It will be important for you to differentiate when the child is acting foolishly or childishly.

We correct foolishness but accommodate for childishness with patient training.

Therefore, obedient parenting must involve *both* the positive and negative sides of discipline.

Illus. Think athletic training: { Positive Development – e.g. need to improve skills
Negative Correction – e.g. need to end a bad attitude

Deuteronomy 8 – The Discipline of the Wilderness

God purposely brought His people through the wilderness to *humble* them and to *test* them (v. 2).

God purposely withheld all food but manna in order to *teach* them to know:

“Man does not live by bread alone, but...by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD” (v. 3).

In other words, God brought His people through an *experience* in order for them to *know* something about Him:

1. The experience was an affliction—all food withheld but manna.
2. The affliction was not a punishment—perhaps they were sinfully ignorant, but this is not a reaction.

Model: “The LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son” (v. 5).

Principle: *Godly parenting trains through planned pain.* Seek experiences of *controlled stress* for your children.

Psalm 119 – The Benefits of Affliction

Martin Luther said three things make a theologian: meditation, prayer, and affliction (Germ. *Anfechtungen*).

Why? Afflictions force us to ask new questions of God and to seek fresh answers in His word (vv. 67, 71, 75).

Even Jesus “learned obedience through the things which He suffered” and became “mature” (Heb. 5:8-9).

Note: There is no sin in Jesus. This is not correction. But as human, His immaturity needed training.

If even the Son of God Himself needed training as a man, how much more do our children? Do we?

Hebrews 12 – The Discipline of God

Proverbs 3:11-12 – “Those whom the Lord loves he disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.”

Wow! One sign of being loved by God is to be whipped by God—in love.

Note: If we do not *love* our children, we should not discipline them; but if we do, we will (Pr. 13:24).

As Paul did not rejoice in the sorrow itself, but in the repentance (2 Cor. 7:9), so also a loving parent.

The text assumes that earthly fathers discipline their children and that we received such discipline.

General Rule: “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful...” (v. 11).

If there is no pain, there is no discipline—that is the logical equivalent of this divine word.

Application

Parents must avoid “helicopter parenting” and let the child have developmentally appropriate pain and risk.

Beware of our overvaluing safety: “It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth” (Lam. 3:27).

Plan for experiences that push them out of their comfort zone—socially, vocationally, academically, physically.

Train their manners ahead of time for worship services, meeting elders, handling defeat, and persevering.

Above all, maintain your firm trust in the Lord and His methods, even when there is complaint and accusation.

As long as you know the level of stress is not too much, believe in the love of God to discipline your child.