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For the Love of the Family Ministries™

Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family

Proper Discipline Of The Child Part 1

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Proper Discipline of the Child Part 1

Proverbs 23:13-14 "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."

We now move into a different section from where we have been, as we now move into the proper discipline of the child. I firmly believe that both parts are important, but I believe the first part is extremely important. The first part was our spiritual relationship and conveying our spiritual relationship with God to our children. Part of the training is the correct, godly, and Biblical discipline of our children.

The book of Proverbs mentions proper discipline five times. It is interesting to me that the book of Proverbs mentions communicating our spiritual relationship to the child twenty-five times. Many Christians have different ideas about the discipline of our children. We live in a very undisciplined

society. The lack of discipline and spiritual communication is sending our society into major problems.

One of the areas that this lack of discipline shows up in today in our society is in the peer influence of our children and allowing our children to make their own choices. What is happening today is the culture we are living in is rearing our children instead of the parents. The culture and peer influence rears our children because in many instances the parents are not there to rear the children. Listen to me very carefully, if you desire to rear spiritual children, you have to make a decision in your life to be the main influence in your children's lives. Three of the most corrupting influences upon our children today are television, music, and friends. Do not be deceived folks; the devil wants our culture to rear our children. Do not underestimate the power of these influences. Many children will listen to their peers before they will listen to you, if you allow it to be that way. Again, you must make a decision to be the most important influence in the children's lives.

The Lord has blessed us with two wonderful daughters, Teresa and Jennifer, who have been trained by their parents to have a heart to serve God. They have been taught by their parents not to allow the influence of their peers to lead them into sin. Both daughters are preparing to serve the Lord on the mission field. At the time of this writing one has graduated from Bible College and married a godly young man. The other is in her second year of Bible College and will spend her summer on a foreign field because of her desire to see others come to know Christ as Savior. They are not interested in what the world has to offer. Why? Because they were taught and trained from the time they were small children that what God wants is more important than friends and peer influences.

My wife and I made a decision as young parents that my wife would stay home and become the most important influence in their lives Titus 2:3-5. Their mother home schooled both of our daughters. They were not academic misfits. In fact, one of the girls scored in the top three percent in the country on the English portion of the ACT test. We heard all the talk about lack of socialization. Folks, those of you who know our daughters know they are not social morons. We made sure their socialization was godly. We made sure to guard their training and influences. Why did we do that? We know that the Bible tells us that Satan wants to destroy their lives. I Peter 5:8-9 "Be sober be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." As a Christian parent, you better understand these verses. I can hear someone say, "I bet their home was like a prison, they never had any fun." In fact, quite the contrary is true. Our children had a great time growing up. They learned to have the right kind of fun from their parents. Their mother taught them to enjoy proper music, not music that appeals to the flesh. She taught them to be godly young ladies as the Bible instructs in Titus 2. She taught them to dress, as a godly young lady should. She taught them to cook, and we both taught them to be hard workers. They were taught to do their best for God in whatever they did I Corinthians 10:31. My wife Kim, was a huge godly influence in their life because she committed herself to be there and to be the most important influence in their lives. Kim worked very hard and prayed much for their lives. Parents today start out by allowing their children to make their own decisions. I have observed parents interacting with their children like this: The parent lays out the small child's clothes and the child says, "I do not want

to wear that!" The parent says, "Honey, I am sorry I did not know you did not want to wear that. You do not have to wear that." The child and parent continue this dialogue through out the child's life in almost every instance. Most parents do this today. What happens, the child grows up making their own choices, and when he gets to be eighteen he will not listen to a word you say because you have taught him from the time he was a little child not to listen to you. You have now opened his life up to be reared by his culture. His friends will be the most important influence in his life fueled by television and music of the culture. He will become a spiritually undisciplined person in life who is lead by his emotions rather than by the Word of God. Unfortunately, most Christians fall into this category today and do not have a clue why their children have turned out the way they have. **YOU MUST DETERMINE TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT INFLUENCE IN THEIR LIVES.** However, you have to be a spiritual person to see the truth in what I am talking about here. I can again hear someone say, "I bet his girls do not have any friends." On the contrary they both became spiritual leaders in Bible College and have like-minded friends who desire to live for God. You see folks; we trained them to have a spiritual disciplined life as a child and protected their influences for God as small children and teens so that as they matured they would be able to make godly choices. Why, because they saw their parents make godly, disciplined choices. A fifteen-year old is not mature enough to make choices on a life's mate and they do not need to be put in situations where they might be tempted to do so. Parents do not be stupid. We very seldom ever allowed our children to spend a night away from home unless we really knew the spiritual life of the family they were with. We certainly would not allow them to spend the night with the unsaved or carnal Christians, which included extended members of our family. We also told our daughters as they were growing up that there was no reason for them to consider dating. They had plenty of time when they went to college to start considering young men. They were also instructed as to what they needed to be looking for in young men who could possibly be their life's mate. Teenagers are not mature enough to make decisions that are as serious as their life mate is. They also should not be put in relationships and situations that would encourage them to be involved in the lusts of the flesh at an age where they need to concentrate on their relationship with God not the opposite sex. Most parents make serious errors here and believe their children will lack in social skills if they are not allowed to date. In fact, what happens is the parents are allowing the culture to rear their children and heart break can come out of social peer pressure Galatians 6:7.

We were not going to be bullied or begged to make stupid spiritual decisions in light of I Peter 5:8-9. Again, we are to live a disciplined life not a weak emotional feeling lead life. Our decisions are to be made based on the Word of God not on a whim of feelings. We communicated to our children as they were growing up that Jesus wants to reproduce His character in their life and the devil wants to reproduce his character in their life. To a Christian who has a relationship with the Lord, living for Christ and walking with Him is more important than whether or not he is a good ballplayer. Folks, I know the influence that peers have on your life in sports, as I was a former professional baseball pitcher. The Christian life is a disciplined spiritual life. If you do not understand this principle, you will fail in the task of rearing your children to love and serve the Lord. The culture will rear your child if you allow it to do so and bring heartbreak to you and your home. So, why do I have to take this position on a disciplined Christian life? Psalm 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psalm 58:3 "The wicked are estranged from the

womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." A child is a sinner at birth. You never have to teach a child to do wrong. They will do so automatically. You have to teach them to do right. The will of the child must be dealt with while it is weak. The child must understand that he or she cannot live by their lusts alone.

Parents, discipline is a strong form of love that gives the child security. The child has to learn self-control. Proverbs 13:24 "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteth him betimes." The word here "betimes" means "early" in his life. Proper discipline of the child must start early. Babies have a will and they start to exercise it early. From the time they are babies we must let the children know they cannot have their own way. The Bible tells us to discipline early. Proverbs 19:18 "Chasten thy son while there is hope and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Did you notice the phrase "while there is still hope?" There will come a time for the spiritually ignorant or disobedient parent that there is no hope.

Proverbs 22:15 "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child: but the rod of correction shall drive it from him." In these two verses there is a prominent word, "rod." My understanding is the Hebrew word for rod is a branch or a stick or a staff. It is like the rod of a shepherd. The rod was a symbol of authority in the hands of a ruler. Basically folks, this deals with spanking and using an object to spank. On this Biblical basis, I never used my hand to discipline our children. I used a paddle as a symbol of authority. Parents we are to discipline early and the Bible tells us to discipline consistently and correctly. Obviously, we do not spank for every infraction. Sometimes there is verbal correction. Let me give you a very important rule: A child should never be told more than once. If you are not careful here the child will develop a pattern with you. How far can we go before the parent will get this done?

A child must understand that parental authority is God's authority. Someone says, "Pastor are you saying I should spank my child?" They will think I do not love them."

Proverbs 3:12 "for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth: even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." The proper correction shows you love your child.

Let me give you another pattern to look for. As soon as you say, "I am going to spank you," the child says, "I am sorry." The child is not sorry he is a con artist! You need to make sure he knows and understands what is expected of them. Another important rule is never discipline a child for failure to understand. Again, here some children can be a con artist in this area.

Something that is very important is that we should discipline for attitude. When a child says "no" to you or makes a face etc. proper discipline is in order. In this battle of the wills you may have to spank more than once. Remember I said spank not hit, slap, yell, cuss, pull their hair, get them on the floor and beat them, chase them around the house with a belt, or scream at them. God has given us the perfect place to spank. It has no bones that will break and has been provided by the Lord for the "rod of correction." Parents who yell and scream all the time are only building a rebel. The child will hear you yell and scream and ignore you and when he grows up he will never listen to a thing you tell him. I have talked to many parents who have disciplined in this manner and they firmly believe they are a disciplinarian. "You know Pastor my kids got it when they back talked me, I hit them right in

the mouth. I yelled and they listened." Sure they did, right up until the day they got out of your house. Now they live the way they want which does not include living for God. You did not train them, you browbeat them! They longed to get away from you.

Listen carefully, proper discipline of the child requires not disciplining in anger. When our children disobeyed, we calmly went into the bedroom and talked with them about their disobedience and spanked them on the area God has provided. We always told our children that we were displeased with their behavior and God was displeased. We then told them we loved them and wanted them to grow up to have good character and to be obedient to the Lord. We also told them that Jesus loved them and wanted them to have good character. We always hugged them and made sure they knew we loved them and the discipline was for their own good. Quite frankly, we really never had to spank either child after the fourth grade. We broke their will early. I will talk about this matter of breaking the will further in the next message.

I have talked to many criminals in jail. I always ask them a question, did your parents spank you when you were growing up?" The answer is surprising in many instances, but it is something for us to think about. Almost always, they will answer, " dad or mom (they usually do not call them that) beat me when I needed it," or some answer similar. They always seem to have a smile on their face when they talk about it. Then I ask, "How did they spank you?" I get something like "he chased me with the belt or he got me down and whomped me" etc. They never talk about a Biblical, godly form of discipline. Most people do not understand what proper discipline is.

Parents I can hear someone say, "I will never spank my child!" Then you may be affecting that child's salvation. Proverbs 23:13-14 "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell." Parents, this is a will matter. Remember, I said parental authority is God's authority. If a child will not submit to his parents, he will never submit to God. When we did spank our children, we did not allow them to scream, yell, or excessively cry. If they did, we spanked them until their wills were submissive. This may take several times. Many people in our culture now say spanking is child abuse. I agree there are people out there who do abuse their children. The lie of the devil and the greatest form of child abuse that has ever been put upon a society is putting children on drugs for their behavior. Many public school children are now on drugs for what has been called Attention Deficit Disorder. I would agree that there is a great Attention Deficit Disorder in our society and it is on the part of the parents, not the children. Many of the children in our society are being put on drugs because the parents are not home and when they are home, they are too tired to give the child any attention. The child is banished to the back of the house, put in front of a television, or a video game. When discipline is brought forth it is in the form of yelling, screaming, hitting etc. The parent does not have the time or the energy to do any real parenting as God has commanded. Therefore, we put drugs in our children because we do not have time to deal with them. This is one of the great sins of our society and many Christians have bought into it. The sadness is we have multitudes of children who will grow up never learning to obey as God has intended them to and they will always have an excuse for their poor behavior. The culture has given them a reason to be a rebel and to be disobedient. Their parents are off the hook because they have a child with a problem. Do I believe

there are children with real mental problems out there? Yes there are but the percentage is very few. What we are experiencing now is a society that is extremely undisciplined and is dependent upon drugs for behavior rather than the Word of God.

Parent's let me finish this message with this important thought. I believe proper discipline of the child is important. I really do not believe it is as important as the first section we looked at. Your relationship to God and developing Junior's relationship to God is your most important task in rearing spiritual children. Listen carefully, if you have a spiritual relationship with God you will understand the importance of proper discipline and will seek God's will in the matter. Folks, I can tell a lot about a person's relationship with God by the godly discipline in their life or the lack of spiritual discipline in their life. I can tell a lot about the spirituality of a church by looking at the Pastor's children and family. As a Pastor it is my responsibility before God to have a godly family, or I can not teach anyone else what God's word says on the matter. It is my responsibility to develop in my wife and children a passion for the Lord. My testimony before God is important in this matter. This is an area where we can not fool anyone. The Bible makes it plain it will come back to get us if we are not obedient to God in this matter. Something I have learned is this takes hard work. We cannot be lazy and slothful in this matter of spiritual training, which I believe is the most important matter; we have outside of our salvation and our children's salvation.