FBS “Parenting Matters: Wisdom from God’s Word—Discipline” 5-28-17

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**Intro.** Anyone here ever had a bad experience with corporal discipline? I don’t have any, but my older brother did. While in elementary school, he received 3 paddlings for mispronouncing a teacher’s name on one occasion. While in 2nd grade, he raised his hand & was neglected for several minutes. He eventually got up & said, “Mrs. Helpenstine, I need to go to the bathroom.” She replied, “Mr. Breidenbaugh, that is not my name. It is Helpensteen” & she took him to the hallway & gave him a paddling. A year later, a friend of his was asking him, “Didn’t you get a spanking last year in Mrs. Helpensteen’s class?” “Yes,” he said. “Why?” “Because I called her Mrs. Helpenstine.” Another girl overheard it & told the teacher that Shane called a teacher by the wrong name. Mrs. Tolbert asked him if that was true & wondered why he was still talking about it, so she took him out in the hall & gave him a paddling. When he returned to class, his friend asked him if he got a spanking & if it hurt. “Yes, I got a spanking, but it didn’t hurt. She’s an old lady.” His friend told the teacher & she took him to the principal to get a paddling—3 paddlings for one mistake. Aren’t you glad we don’t give out spankings for mispronouncing our name? When we talk about “Parenting Matters,” we look for “Wisdom from God’s Word.” Today we look again at Proverbs on the subject of “Discipline.” (read Proverbs 3:11-12; 19:18-20; 23:13-14; 29:15).

Theme: Parenting & discipline

Background: Most of the book of Proverbs is Solomon’s advice to his son. He offers advice on how to relate to neighbors, what character traits to develop, what to look for in a wife, how to develop a good work ethic, how to handle your finances, issues of discipline & more.

* **I want to define a confusing word in terms of corporal discipline & then give you some ways to carry out discipline for your children because parenting matters:**

**What is the rod of discipline? (10:13; 13:24; 14:3; 22:8, 15; 23:13-14; 26:3; 29:15)**

* Sebet (10:13; 13:24; 22:8, 15; 23:13-14; 26:3; 29:15)—a stick cut from the stem or branch of a tree (Toombs, *IDB*, vol. 4, 103); in Proverbs “it is the symbol of discipline, and failure to use the preventative discipline of verbal rebuke & the corrective discipline of physical punishment will end in the child’s death” (Waltke, *TWOT*, vol. 2, 897)
* Hoter (14:3)—used in Isaiah 11:1 as a “shoot” (young sprout of a tree)

Illus: Did one of your parents ever make you get a switch? The “rod of discipline” is best thought of as a “switch” in our modern way of thinking—other appropriate substitutes could be a paddle, a flyswatter, a belt, a hand (as long as you keep it open & don’t make a fist)

**1. Use the rod of discipline early, firmly & consistently (19:18; 20:30; 23:13-14)**

* Proverbs says if you don’t discipline, he could die (23:13-14—because he can live a rebellious life)—discipline while there is hope (19:18) refers to disciplining them when they are young

Illus: I speak from experience for receiving discipline early, firmly & consistently. Moreover, there is a noticeable difference in our children who received discipline early, firmly & consistently versus those who didn’t get such discipline early on

* You may use the rod/spank the bottom or the bottom of the feet for stomping off or a light smack on the lips/mouth to teach them to be quiet
* Don’t cause permanent harm but be firm enough to cause temporary pain (20:30)
* Start early during the toddler years—a light tap & displeasure in your voice is normally enough
* Be consistent as husband & wife & in dealing out discipline for misbehavior

**2. Use instruction/rebuke with discipline (5:12; 6:23; 13:1, 18; 15:5, 10, 32; 17:10; 19:20, 27)**

* Proverbs often includes discipline with works of rebuke/reproof (5:12; 6:23; 15:10; 17:10) or instruction (13:1, 18; 15:5, 32; 19:20, 27)—if they have understanding, they will listen to the rebuke & not need the rod of discipline (17:10)

Illus: Our most effective discipline is when we explain to our children why they are getting punished (and not just “because I said so!”) or even in giving them a warning that if they continue, they will receive discipline

Illus: I’ve heard parents count to 3 or 10, but I’d caution you against it, because you are teaching them to delay their obedience & we should never delay our obedience (especially to the Lord)

Illus: When John Henry Jowett was pastor at Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, he began a series of children’s meetings. At the very first meeting, four boys with penny whistles upset the meeting by playing tunes while Jowett was speaking. An usher rounded up the boys and took them to the vestry where they faced Jowett. “Can’t you fellows play tin whistles any better than that?” Jowett asked. “If you can’t, I shall have to get Mrs. Jowett to give you some lessons.” A few weeks later, the four boys gave a concert with Mrs. Jowett accompanying them on the piano (Wiersbe, *The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching & Preachers*, 189)—the right words & training may be all that’s needed to avert discipline

**3. Use various forms of discipline (12:1; 29:17, 19)**

* Proverbs doesn’t use “rod” for every use of discipline, because there are different types of discipline (12:1), but words alone without discipline often isn’t effective (29:19)
* Moreover, when you discipline, you will be able to rest & have delight because your children grow up as good characters &, in light of the Christian view, strong Christians & churchmen (we are in need of strong Christians & churchmen today)

Illus: Other forms of discipline may include withholding something they value—a toy, a TV show, a snack (not a meal). We have had to employ such models & still seek out models for effective discipline in our children’s lives

Illus: As they get older, you may have to get their attention in other ways—teenagers who slam their bedroom door get it taken off the hinges for a few days

**4. Use discipline to teach submission in areas of rebellion (5:23; 10:17; 22:15; 29:15)**

* The child who doesn’t get disciplined may die because of rebellious ways (5:23) while the one who accepts instruction will live (physically & spiritually, 10:17)
* Furthermore, discipline leads children to wisdom & a lack of discipline leads them to foolishness (22:15; 29:15)

Illus: Discipline not just the actions but the attitude—the child who throws a temper tantrum for not getting her way should get punished, but even if she doesn’t throw a tantrum, but crosses her arms in disgust & glares at you with her eyes is still rebellious toward you in her heart & that rebellious will should be broken before it gets her in trouble in the future (James Dobson’s books *Dare to Discipline* & *The New Strong-Willed Child* can help you in these areas)

**5. Use discipline as a display of your love & God’s love for your children (3:11-12; cf. Psalm 94:12; 118:18; Hebrews 12:3-11)**

* The world tells you that discipline is a display of anger & shouldn’t be used, but viewed rightly, it is a display of love (3:11-12)—Hebrews precedes enduring loving discipline with Christ’s sacrificial endurance (12:1-11)

Illus: Have you ever disciplined your child & then held them in your arms to console them—that’s what the Lord does with His children—He disciplines us so we don’t continue to stray but He mercifully & lovingly reaches out His arms to comfort & console us in our sorrow (cf. Hebrews 12:3-11)

**Conc.** One father said: Out of parental concern and a desire to teach our young son responsibility, we require him to phone home when he arrives at his friend’s house a few blocks away. He began to forget, however, as he grew more confident in his ability to get there without disaster befalling him. The first time he forgot, I called to be sure he had arrived. We told him the next time it happened, he would have to come home. A few days later, however, the telephone again lay silent, and I knew if he was going to learn, he would have to be punished. But I did not want to punish him. I went to the telephone, regretting that his great time would be spoiled by his lack of contact with his father. As I dialed, I prayed for wisdom. “Treat him like I treat you,” the Lord seemed to say. With that, as the telephone rang one time, I hung up. A few seconds later the phone rang, and it was my son. “I’m here, Dad!” “What took you so long to call?” I asked. “We started playing and I forgot. But Dad, I heard the phone ring once and I remembered.” How often do we think of God as One who waits to punish us when we step out of line? I wonder how often he mercifully rings just once, hoping we will respond to Him with joy? (Dennis Miller) Is the Lord getting your attention? Does everything seem to be going wrong? Could it be the Lord is disciplining you to get you to repent? Is He reaching out His arm to draw you close to Himself? Why don’t you stop running away from Him & start running to Him? Jesus Christ gave His life for you & is waiting for you with arms open wide.