

## **LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

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### **PARENTING IN A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WORLD**

#### **A. The Parent (where there is not a father, the mother must seek to fulfill this role as well as keep the child's respect for those in authority) – Fathers, based on the Word of God, are extremely important in the raising of their children:**

1. Must be someone who fears God and is committed to walk in His ways (compare 127 to 128).
2. Psalm 128: - children are like olive plants, they create peace, and the parents will see their grandchildren.
3. This leads to a life of wisdom and knowledge (Proverbs 9:10; 23:24).
  - a) *"The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him."* (Proverbs 23:24; NIV)
  - b) He preserves his family by lovingly holding them to the authority of God's Word (Genesis 18:19).
    - Paul says that a good leader will have faithful children not accused of riotous or unruly living. (Titus 1:6)
  - c) He does not exasperate his children, he raises them to love the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21,23).
    - He provides them training (instruction) in the Word of God so that they preserve in it (Proverbs 2).
4. A father must be a person who turns their hearts (their life, will and minds) to lovingly care for their sons (Malachi 4:6). This again would lead to peace in the land.
  - a) This love causes a father to discipline his children, leading to respect (we will discuss what discipline means later; Hebrews 12:5-7, Proverbs 19:18; 29:17).
5. Parents must teach their children how to obey and listen to them (Proverbs 1:8-9; Ephesians 6:1-2).
6. Single mothers must be committed to caring for their children above caring for themselves:
  - a) God had a special sympathy for the fatherless child (Jeremiah 49:11).
  - b) Hagar understood that she must care for her son and did everything possible to make sure he was doing well (Genesis 21:14-21).

- c) A woman without a godly husband or a father at home must keep the children close to godly men who can help shape them from a young age in the church (1 Kings 17:8-16; 2 Kings 4:1-28).
- d) Timothy's mother was married, but her husband was not a believer. She focused on raising Timothy to be a man of God with the support of his grandmother (Acts 16:1-5; 2 Tim. 2:5; 3:14-15).

7. Parents must commit to functioning harmoniously when a husband and wife are present.

- a) When there is no harmony, the children struggle (Genesis 27) which leads to division in the home.
- b) The husband and wife must work together to establish rules that are consistent causing the home to function in a dignified manner (1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:14):
  - How many times will there be family devotions per week and when?
  - What time should homework start?
  - Can the children watch TV during the week?
  - When is dinnertime? Can the family watch TV during dinner?
  - Who is going to wash the dishes?

## **B. Biblical Discipline as Compared to Correction:**

Because of sin, a child will be disobedient and rebellious (Psalm 51:5). When we tie this to foolishness being rapped up in their hearts, we have a lot of work that must be done in order to develop the image of God in the life of a child. This is why God teaches us about discipline and correction (Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 12:7-11).

As soon as a child knows right and wrong, we must begin this process of discipline and punishment. Before this process becomes necessary, God gives us some time to prove our love for our children as we care for them as babies daily (as babies, we care for them tenderly and continuously; 1 Thessalonians 2:7. They demand our time 24, 7).

### **Discipline:**

1. Definition:

- a) Discipline is the act of stretching the mind and body of a person so that when the performance comes, it can be a pleasure because of the pain a person faces in the practice.
- b) The **purpose** of discipline is to teach and give positive direction to an individual. Punishment is correcting an action after it occurs.

2. Biblical Mandate:

- a) **Prov. 13:24** -- *"He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him."*

- Notice that loving the child was attached to discipline. Nourishing, directing, and shaping are involved in this process. It is when the child rejects this instruction that the child is whipped.
- Here are some thoughts to bear in mind:

b) **Hebrews 12:7,9** -- *"It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?"*

3. The difference between discipline and punishment.

a) Discipline comes before the act; punishment comes after the act.

- In a home, this can be interchanged between father and mother.
- The reason why it is hard in a single parent home is because the single parent must do both.

4. How can you discipline more and punish less?

- a) Do not be afraid to touch your child.
  - b) Develop structure in the home and clearly define and explain. Let the kids help you to develop the structure.
- **EXAMPLES:** (Try to be flexible but always work according to your schedule.)

### Correction:

Correction has a purpose: to get a child in line with God's Word when the child shows a desire not to listen and to be somewhat rebellious, so that their life will be in line with God's plan. It is not correcting the child just because the parent does not like something they did. It is correcting the child so that the child lives in line with the application of God's Word to life issues.

1. Biblical Mandate:

- a) **Prov. 19:18** *"hasten thy son for his hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."*
- b) **Prov. 22:15.** *"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."*
- c) **Prov. 29:15.** *"The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Verse 17. "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."*
- d) There are limitations to this process. They are as follows:

### Practical Principles for Discipline and Correction:

### 1. Parenting Suggestions:

- a) Don't disapprove of what a child is--disapprove of what they do.
- b) Give attention and praise for good behavior--not just bad behavior.
- c) Encourage and allow discussion but remember that the parents should make the final decision.
- d) Punishment should be swift (this does not mean to whip right away), reasonable, related to the offense, and absolutely certain to occur--it does not have to be severe.
  - If you say you will punish for a particular thing, you must follow through.
  - Do not constantly threaten a child and not do what you say because the child will eventually ignore you.
  - Take punishment through several steps, whipping as the last resort. Whipping may have several steps. A light whipping the first time and a major one the last time.
- e) Throw out all rules you are unwilling or unable to enforce and be willing to change them if you think it is reasonable to do so.
- f) If you're sure the child understands your rules, don't warn and lecture. Instead, when a rule is broken, provide the appropriate agreed-upon consequence. Remember to appreciate (reward) your child when he follows the rules.
- g) Don't feel you have to justify rules, although you should try to explain them.
- h) As your youngster grows older, many rules may be flexible and subject to discussion and compromise. However, on the few rules you really feel strongly about, enforce them no matter what rules other parents have.
- i) Allow the child or youth to assume responsibility for his decisions as he shows the ability to do so. If he fails, wait a while and try again.
- j) Don't expect children to show more self-control than you do as a parent.
- k) Be honest with your youngster--hypocrisy shows.
- l) The most important factor in your youngster's self-image is what he thinks you think of him; his self-image is a major factor in how he acts and what he does.
- m) Avoid using sarcastic remarks. Even when used in jest, this approach can be detrimental to a youngster's self-image.

## **C. Ten Commandments for Parents:**

### 1. Thou Shalt Start with Thyself:

- a) The parent who attempts to train children to have good manners but has none themselves is fighting a losing battle.
  - A boy in the first-grade class called a girl a bad name. When corrected by the teacher, he seemed puzzled and said, "But my mother says it all the time."
- b) Children don't learn merely by being told; they learn by seeing. Children are able to detect shame and insincerity. We must set a consistent example for our children.

2. Thou Shalt Be More Concerned About Relationships Than Rules:

- a) Parents have a basic responsibility for helping their children develop a healthy self-concept.
- c) Wise parents will seize every opportunity to praise their children; this helps to strengthen their self-image.
- d) Wise parents also can affirm their children by accepting them in spite of their faults and/or failures and by building them up with appropriate words and behaviors.

3. Thou Shalt Learn to Listen:

- a) Listening is a real art. We always find it easier to talk. Listening to another person means acknowledging his worth, respecting him, and trying to understand his viewpoint. We know another person only as we listen to him.
- b) A common complaint of teenagers is, "My parents never listen to me." Through the dynamic of "listening love," the generation gap between parents and children can often be bridged.

4. Thou Shalt Spend Time with Thy Children:

- a) Once, a minister's wife dropped a visitor's card in the offering plate requesting a visit from the minister. In our go-go culture, stopping and enjoying life as a family is increasingly difficult. But we must make the effort.
- b) Children need their parents to play with them, read to them, take them on trips, hikes, and to suitable amusements. Years pass quickly, and opportunities to be a family together soon pass into yesterday. We need to seize the opportunities to spend time together.

5. Thou Shalt Acknowledge Thy Faults As A Parent:

We can never do all that is needed for ourselves or our children. Parents who refuse to admit their failures and shortcomings blame their children and themselves for their inadequacies.

Dr. Reuel L. Howe tells of a parents' study group that had come to terms with the truth that their children needed more love than they were able to give. They faced their inadequacies, and the miracle of miracles improved family life.

6. Thou Shalt Keep a Sense of Humor:

A family was watching a skit on television. The parents started laughing. Their three-year-old son, of course, did not understand the skit's humor but thought their laughing was funny. So, he started laughing. Soon, they were laughing at him laughing at them.

Most of us take ourselves too seriously. We need to learn to laugh at ourselves. Laughter releases pent-up despair and relieves hostility.

It has been rightly said, "To everything, there is a season...a time to laugh...".

#### 7. Thou Shalt Treat Thy Children Equally:

A child is a unique gift from God. There is no other child like your first-born, or second, or third. Each has their personality--extrovert, introverted, brilliant, or otherwise.

One child should not be compared to another. They should be loved for who they are -- not for what you want them to become. A good parent loves despite imperfection. Over each child, we should pray: "Thank you, Creator God, for this, your special gift."

#### 8. Thou Shalt Use Discipline:

An astute observer of the American family has said that we are a child-centered culture. Instead of parents disciplining their children, children discipline their parents!

Discipline may include punishment, but we should not think of it as primarily negative. Discipline provides a structure for growing up, which includes protection and guidance. It is "yes-saying" (approval of constructive behavior) as well as "no-saying" (disapproval of destructive behavior).

Discipline is closely related to love and acceptance. Parents who do not provide a disciplined structure do not love their children.

#### 9. Thou Shalt Know When To Let Go:

This is the last commandment, but not so important. As parents, we naturally want to feel needed as long as possible. This desire tempts us to overprotect our children.

Being tied to a mother's apron strings is like having a noose around your neck. Wise parents accept their changing role by recognizing their children's need to be freed from emotional dependency on them.

### **D. Conclusion:**

Raising children is a full-time job. No child is here by accident all children are permitted by God. Parents must take this responsibility seriously so that their work causes the child to be a gift to God. Parents have become too busy making money and watching television rather than spending valuable time raising their children. Children watch too much television, any type of show, rather than spend time with their parents talking about their problems, playing games, teaching them to do their devotions, working with their involvement at church, and organizing the home so that they go to bed at a reasonable time during school. The family is always a work in progress.

The family is God's primary example of how heaven works. Without this example and the church functioning for God's glory, mankind will never see God fully functioning each day.

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