

groups.

— Notes | October 19, 2025

Family | Godly Discipline is the evidence of Love

God's design for family is wrapped within the confines of His love. In the Bible, we see God as our Good Shepherd, the One who leads us beside still waters and restores our souls. The Shepherd's Staff is a metaphor used to represent the Shepherd's love. The Staff serves as an instrument of love used to defend the flock from danger, rescue His flock from trouble, guide them through loving discipline, and lead them into His way. Even in the darkest valleys, among the chaos and confusion of an uncertain future, the Shepherd's staff serves to bring order as He comforts, protects, and disciplines His children. Not to be mistaken for punishment, discipline is correction motivated by His love to cultivate holiness and guide us toward a harvest of righteousness.

God has modeled discipline for us and calls us to do the same for our children. Discipline, God's way, seeks to lovingly correct bad behavior, while encouraging good behavior, teaching obedience to God's standards, and cultivating a heart oriented toward faith, wisdom, and righteousness. Training up a child in the way they should go helps our child develop a character that reflects God's holiness and brings Him glory. This is what discipline looks like from God, and what it should look like to our children.

Key Scripture | Psalm 23:4

"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

Related Scriptures

— Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 19:18, Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 6:45, Mark 7:20-23, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 Corinthians 14:20,26,33,40, Ephesians 6:4, Hebrews 12:5-11

Icebreakers:

— Q: If you could make a rule that everyone had to follow for a day, what would it be?

Key Thoughts and Reflections: _____

I. The Goal of Biblical Parenting is Heart Transformation

Q: God desires to transform our hearts. How is heart transformation different from behavior modification? Does the transformation of a heart lead to behavior modification? Why or why not?

Q: As parents, we are called to mirror the heart of God. Read Hebrews 12:5-11 aloud. What does verse six tell us about the Lord? Share an example of God's love through discipline.

Q: What does verse eight say about those who are not disciplined?

II. Discipline and Affection are Two Sides of the Same Coin: LOVE

Q: Before we are parents, we are first sons and daughters of God. Why is it important to be a loving and surrendered child of God before trying to raise our children that way?

Q: God models love for us through high discipline and high affection. Within this parenting model, He teaches us to set clear boundaries, consistent consequences for sin, and restoration after correction. What can these practical methods produce in the life of a child? How might these develop resiliency as they grow into adulthood?

Q: Other parenting models include high discipline and low affection (dictator), low discipline and high affection (permissive), and low discipline, low affection (estranged). Why would these models be considered unhealthy?

III. Disciplining Children—God's way

Q: How does setting clarity in expectations by establishing the rules, order, and standards of your family help children to learn right from wrong?

Q: Share the benefits for the child when consistency in consequences is maintained. How might you help your child to reflect on the source so that heart-level issues can be identified?

Q: In the story of the Prodigal Son, the Father meets the son with grace and love. From the father's response, how should we respond when our children ask for forgiveness?

Get Practical _____

In our key scripture, we are reminded that God is with us, His rod and staff serve to comfort us. Sit with the Father and recognize the ways He has protected, rescued, disciplined, and guided you on your journey. Thank Him for His love and care. If you are a parent, consider the four parenting models shared above. Which quadrant do you tend to drift towards? What needs to shift in how you parent? God entrusted YOU with those in your care. Take some time daily to dedicate them back to Him and ask for His wisdom to love them His way.

Five Steps to Godly Discipline:

-1 **Set clear expectations and consequences.**

Establish the Rules/Order/Standard in your Family. (USE THE BIBLE as your GUIDE.) Clearly define expectations and explain why they matter, ensuring the child understands the impact on relationships and others. Warn them of specific, appropriate consequences for crossing those lines, and have them repeat it back to confirm understanding. This proactive step helps children learn right from wrong in a loving, instructional way.

-2- **Be consistent in enforcing agreed-upon consequences.**

Recognize a Breach of the Standard. Follow through on set consequences at all costs. Consistently enforce the agreed-upon consequences when boundaries are crossed, as inconsistency can erode trust and teach that rules are optional. This mirrors God's faithful discipline in Scripture, building security through reliable guidance.

-3- **Teach your children to reflect and identify the source of their sin and why it happened.**

Discuss why and ask them to repeat it back to you. After applying the consequence, calmly discuss the incident in a private setting. Ask the child to explain why they think it happened and how their actions affected others, focusing on empathy and self-awareness. The goal is to connect behavior to relationships, pointing them toward heart-level Issues.

Don't stop at the fruit, dig to the ROOT. Where did the action come from?

-4- **Offer forgiveness and reconciliation.**

Guide the child to ask for forgiveness, then extend it fully, affirming that the relationship is restored. End with words of love and physical affection, like a hug, to reassure them of unconditional acceptance. This step reflects the gospel's emphasis on mercy, helping children experience grace while learning from mistakes

The Goal is to CORRECT the BEHAVIOR and RESTORE the RELATIONSHIP after the Consequences.

-5- **Make room for GRACE INTERRUPTIONS. Allow GRACE to interrupt CONSEQUENCES from time to time.**

Create a SAFE Environment for your kids to FAIL...and still BE LOVED. This is the culture of the Kingdom of God. We fail, repent, are forgiven, and are forever loved. This is a safe place to learn in the love of the Father.