

PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLICAL PARENTING

Methods of Parenting

Lesson 4

So far we have discussed the foundations of Biblical Parenting, the Resources of Biblical Parenting, and Critical Things to Remember and Apply in Biblical Parenting. We have looked at the Scriptures and discovered many mandates, principles, and goals which relate to parenting. In this lesson we will look at some practical ways you can apply what we have learned in the three previous lessons from the Scriptures. Many of the methods which will be discussed in this lesson are not Biblical mandates but practical things you can take or leave, try, or modify. While the goal of parenting and some of the methods of parenting are clear in Scripture, others are not, so we are left to form our own personal convictions as to just how to apply the Biblical principles we have learned. For instance, the Bible requires parents to teach their children the Word of God and to do so diligently and at all times of the day. But exactly how you teach your child the Scriptures is not addressed. There are many ways to teach your child the Word of God and it is your responsibility to determine what way works best for you and your child. While the command to teach your child diligently cannot be ignored, how you teach your child diligently is up to you to decide.

One of the difficulties in parenting is that there are so many variables in the parenting process. The standard of the Word of God does not change, but parents, children, personalities, age, and circumstances are not static, but in a constant stage of flux. If you teach only the Biblical principles of parenting, people can feel like they have been left with no practical how to do it information. If you get real specific in exactly how the Biblical principles apply, then you depart from Scripture and have to teach outside of what is specifically addressed in the Word of God. Then there is the danger of confusing people as to what is God's Word and what are some optional ways to apply God's Word. This lesson falls primarily into the latter category optional ways to apply God's Word. We will seek to discuss practical methods for parenting, but it is your responsibility to examine your own life, your own child, their age, their strengths, weaknesses, personality, and the circumstances you and your child live in to determine how to apply the Biblical principles we have learned.

I. **METHODS FOR BEING A BIBLICAL PARENT**

A. **Examine your own salvation**

1. Why is it important to take time to evaluate your salvation?
2. Does your heart convince you of your salvation?
3. Does your life convince you of your salvation?
4. Do the Scriptures convince you of your salvation?

B. Examine the goals you have for yourself as a parent

1. Why is it important to have personal goals for your life and walk with the Lord?
2. What are your long-term goals for your life?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
3. What are your short-term goals for your life?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
4. What are your plans to reach your goals?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

C. Examine the goals you have for your child

1. Why is it important to have goals for your child?
2. What are your long-term goals for your child?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

3. What are your short-term goals for your child?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

4. What are you doing to reach those goals?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

D. Examine your methods of parenting

John MacArthur, commenting on the ever escalating acts of violence being committed by young adults said: The truth is that such people are not a product of something their parents *did* to them. They are products of what their parents did *not* do to them. ¹

1. Are your parenting methods Biblical?
2. Are your parenting methods practiced in the fruit of the Spirit?
3. Do your parenting methods address the heart of your child or just their behavior?
4. Do your parenting methods give glory to God?
5. Why are Biblically based parenting methods so important?

¹ John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting*, pg. 32.

6. Are your methods unbiblical?
 - a) Do you practice manipulation?
 - b) Do you practice threatening and repeating?
 - c) Do you practice laziness and neglect?
 - d) Do you practice terrorist tactics?
 - e) Do you practice comparing?
 - f) Do you practice giving rules with no reason?
 - g) Do you practice behavior-oriented parenting?
 - h) Do you use reverse psychology?
 - i) Do you practice bribing?
 - j) Do you practice obedience through self-esteem?
 - k) Do you practice sanctification by isolation?
 - l) Do you practice All no s and no yes s i.e., negative parenting?
 - m) Do you parent out of personal convenience?
 - n) Do you practice parenting by ridicule?
 - o) Do you practice excessive kidding?
 - p) Why should we avoid all methods of parenting that are not Biblical?

II. **METHODS FOR EVANGELIZING YOUR CHILD**

A. **Be a good example**

1. Why is being a good example for your child so important?
2. Do you let them see you pray?
3. Do you let them see you read the Bible?
4. Do you let them see you cherish the things God cherishes?
5. Do you let them see you share the gospel with others?
6. Do you let them see you walk in the Spirit?
7. Do you let them see no difference in your walk with the Lord whether you are at home, church, a Bible study, or at work?
8. Do you let them see you respond in a godly way to trials?
9. In a nutshell, do you let them see you live the way God wants you to live?

B. **Be teaching your child about sin and its consequences**

1. Why is it important to teach your child about sin and its consequences?
2. When they disobey, use their disobedience to show them their sin and need of a Savior and explain the gospel to them.
3. When you see ungodly behavior in others, use that to explain sin, its consequences and the only cure.

4. Explain the temporary consequences of sin.
5. Explain the eternal consequences of sin.

C. Be teaching your child about the holiness of God

1. Why is it important to teach your child about God's holiness?
2. Explain what holiness is.
3. Explain that God is perfectly holy.
4. Explain God's hatred for sin because He is holy.
5. Explain why God must respond in wrath and judgment towards sin because He is holy.

D. Be teaching your child about the goodness of God

1. Why is it important to explain God's goodness to your child, especially in contrast to his wrath?
2. Explain God's love and how it is manifested to us.
3. Explain God's mercy and how it is manifested to us.
4. Explain God's grace and how it is manifested to us.
5. Explain God's compassion towards us and how it is manifested.

E. Be teaching your child about the gospel of God

1. Why is it important to clearly explain the gospel to your child?
2. Explain God's reasons for sacrifice.
3. Explain substitution.
4. Explain Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and the significance of each.
5. Explain justification.
6. Explain saving faith in contrast to non-saving faith.
7. Explain repentance and its relationship to salvation.
8. Explain what gives us assurance that we are truly saved.
9. Avoid a reduced or simplified approach to sharing the gospel.
10. Avoid trusting in man-made responses as assurance of true repentance and saving faith.

F. Be quizzing your child about key doctrines related to salvation

G. Be looking for a transformed life in your child, not merely a profession of faith

1. Why is it important to look for a transformed life in your child?
2. Look for a sensitivity and interest in God and the things of God.

3. Look for a pursuit after righteousness.
4. Look for remorse over sin.
5. Look for a hunger for God's Word.
6. Look for a Biblical world view.
7. Look for a self-initiated pursuit of God.

III. **METHODS FOR USING YOUR RESOURCES WISELY**

A. **Methods for teaching your child the Word of God**

1. Why is it important to teach your child the Word of God?
2. Read the Bible.
3. Read Bible-oriented children's books.
4. Read biographies and stories that teach Biblical lessons.
5. Listen to songs, hymns, and spiritual songs.
6. Listen to sermon tapes.
7. Listen to stories on tape.
8. Have your child memorize God's Word.
9. Use people, places, and things to teach the Bible.
10. Use life's circumstances to teach the Bible.

11. Encourage your child to have quiet times.
12. Give your child things to do during the sermon.
13. Quiz your child about what he or she learned in Sunday school or youth group.
14. Have family times centered around the Word of God.

B. Methods for teaching your child how to pray

1. Why is it important to teach your child how to pray?
2. Teach them what the Bible says about prayer.
3. Teach them how to pray.
 - a) Silent prayer
 - b) Group prayer
 - c) Family prayer
 - d) Intercessory prayer
 - e) Prayers of thanksgiving
 - f) How to use prayer lists or journals

C. Methods for teaching your child by example or comparison

1. Do you teach with metaphor?
2. Do you teach with simile?
3. Do you teach by using What if . . . hypothetical situations?
4. Do you teach by using God's creation?
5. Do you teach by using life situations?
6. Do you teach by the example of godly people?
7. Do you teach by the example of wicked people?

IV. METHODS FOR ADDRESSING THE HEART OF YOUR CHILD

- A. Do you look for the attitude driving the action?**
- B. Do you question your child to discover what they are thinking and feeling?**
- C. Do you contrast ungodly thoughts, feelings and desires with godly ones by giving examples?**
- D. Do you talk to and reason with your child all the time, not just during a crisis?**
 1. Talk before the crisis
 2. Talk during the crisis
 3. Talk after the crisis

E. Address the thoughts driving their actions in relationship to:

1. Do you talk to your child about how their thoughts and actions relate to themselves?
2. Do you talk to your child about how their thoughts and actions relate to others?
3. Do you talk to your child about how their thoughts and actions relate to God?

V. METHODS FOR TRAINING YOUR CHILD TO OBEY

A. Verbal

1. Reprove to correct or scold verbally with gentle and kind intent.
2. Rebuke strong verbal criticism.
3. Exhort strong or urgent verbal advice or warning.
4. Admonish verbally giving gentle earnest advice or warning.
5. Warn verbally expressing the dangers of thoughts, actions, people or places.
6. Encourage verbal motivation to do what is right in the future.
7. Praise verbal affirmation for things done well.

B. Physical

1. Scriptural support for physical discipline

- a) Prov. 13:24 He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.
- b) Prov. 19:18 Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.
- c) Prov. 22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.
- d) Prov. 23:13-14 Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, And deliver his soul from Sheol.
- e) Prov. 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.
- f) Heb. 12:4-11 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; 6For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives. 7It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9Furthermore, 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? 10For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- g) What is the rod of discipline according to these verses?
- h) Does the rod of discipline always have to be physical?
 - 1) Natural consequences
 - 2) Consequences from parents

2. Unbiblical methods and motives of physical discipline

- a) Never discipline in uncontrolled anger or rage
- b) Never discipline to get revenge
- c) Never discipline in retaliation
- d) Never discipline to inflict bodily injury
- e) Never discipline as a final response to threatening or repeating, which has led to exasperation

3. Biblical methods of physical discipline

a) Discipline in the fruit of the spirit and love

- 1) I Cor. 13:4-8 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.
- 2) Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

b) Talk before you discipline

- 1) What did you do?
- 2) Why did you do this (look for motives and desires of the heart which drive their actions) ?
- 3) Why are these thoughts and the behavior they produce sinful?
- 4) What are the consequences of this kind of behavior?

- c) Applying the rod
 - 1) What do you use?
 - 2) Where do you apply the rod?
 - 3) How hard do you apply the rod?
 - 4) How hard is hard enough?
 - d) Talk after
 - 1) Express your love
 - 2) Clarify the reason why they were disciplined
 - 3) Encourage them to do what is right
- 4. When should you start using physical discipline?
 - 5. How often should you use physical discipline?
 - 6. When should you stop using physical discipline?

C. How do you know when and how to discipline your child?

- 1. Which is it?:
 - a) Childishness?
 - b) Foolishness?
 - c) High-handed rebellion?

2. What about disciplining your child in public?
3. What acts of disobedience require what kind of discipline?
4. How do you determine the degree of punishment?

Fathers and mothers, I charge you solemnly before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, take every pains to train your children in the way they should go. I charge you for the sake of your own future comfort and peace. Truly it is in your interest so to do. Truly your own happiness in great measure depends on it. Children have ever been the bow from which the sharpest arrows have pierced man's heart. Children have mixed the bitterest cups that man has ever had to drink. Children have caused the saddest tears that man has ever had to shed. Adam could tell you so; Jacob could tell you so; David could tell you so. There are no sorrows on earth like those which children have brought upon their parents. Oh! take heed, lest your own neglect should lay up misery for you in your old age. Take heed, lest you weep under the ill-treatment of a thankless child, in the days when your eye is dim, and your natural foe abated.

If ever you wish your children to be the restorers of your life, and the nourishers of your old age, if you would have them blessings and not curses joys and not sorrows Judah's and not Reuben's Ruth's and not Orpah's, if you would not, like Noah, be ashamed of their deeds, and, like Rebekah, be made weary of your life by them: if this be your wish, remember my advice betimes, train them while young in the right way.²

²J. C. Ryle, *Duties to Parents*, pgs. 36-37.