

Session #4

Text: Proverbs 3, 22, and 23

Discipline or Punishment?

Icebreaker: What was your parent's favorite form of discipline? (Grounding/Restriction, Taking something away from you, or maybe spanking? Bonus points for sharing what you were spanked with: paddle, switch, belt, hand)

Read Proverbs 22:15 and Proverbs 23:13-14.

1. Kids that don't get disciplined by their parents are easy to spot in public. What do these verses say about discipline, and what does it produce in the life of a child?
2. Punishment is penalizing your kids for a past mistake. Discipline is correcting your kids to ensure future success. Growing up, where you punished or disciplined? How can you tell the difference?

(Personal note from Nathan: What's the purpose behind your actions? If you want to make your kids feel bad about what they did, then that's punishment. If you are trying to help them NOT repeat an action in the future, then that's discipline. Ask yourself, "What am I trying to accomplish in this?")

Read Proverbs 3:11-12

3. Discipline is something that LOVING parents do for their kids. When you are talking about or actually giving discipline to your kids, what are the most common emotions shown by you as a parent? How about the emotions of your kids?

(Personal Note from Nathan: I try to never discipline my kids when I'm angry. It's easy to get caught up in the emotions and punish my kids based on how I feel in the moment. Next time you have to discipline your kids, try sending them to their room first and telling them to wait on your there. That will give you some time to calm down, think though what you want to say to them, and ultimately move from the anger of punishment to the love of discipline.)

4. In the video, we identified 3 big areas of failure in life that cause parents to need to discipline their kids: being disrespectful, being unreliable, and being irresponsible. Are there any other root areas that you would add? Give example of different things in the life of your kids that illustrate these key areas.

5. Out of the 3 listed below, what areas did you struggle with the most growing up? How about your kids?

A- Respect- value everyone, regardless of their race, gender, background, or upbringing.

B- Reliable- be dependable, trustworthy, honest, and a person of integrity.

C- Responsible- take responsibility for your own actions, don't blame others, ignore your problems, or pretend like the consequences in life are no big deal.

6. A parent oftentimes has to discipline a kid as a result of a failure. How can you use discipline as a teaching tool to make your kids more resilient in life instead of just reminding them of their past mistakes?

(Personal Note from Nathan: Great discipline always comes with a "talk." I want to make sure my kids are fully aware of what they did, why it was wrong, the consequences of the actions, and why continuing to repeat the action is harmful for them and their future. Don't assume your kids know all of those things, thus skipping straight to the spanking or grounding.)

Read Proverbs 22:6

7. Solomon makes it clear that there is a RIGHT path and a WRONG path for kids to take in life. Have you sat down with your spouse and defined the path that you want your kids to take? Take some time to identify some adjectives that you want to describe your family. Try writing a family creed (or motto) and have a goal in front of you and your kids as you move forward together.

(Warning from Nathan: I know "free range" parenting is extremely popular. Parents like to say things like, "I want my kids to make their own choices and find their own path without me telling them where to go." It sounds great, but it's IMPOSSIBLE. Please hear me on this: If you don't set your kids on a path, then someone/something else will! Kids are desperate for direction and leadership in life. If they don't find it from you, then they will go to other adults/kids/culture. Don't forsake the responsibility that God has given YOU as parents. Train up a child and show them the right path!!)