

P A R E N T I N G

As parents, the first disciples we are responsible for making are our children. God's word charges parents to train their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The primary place that children learn who God is, who they are, what Jesus has done, and how they are to live in this world is in the home. Parenting is hard work. It requires wisdom and direction from God, along with a lifetime of growing and learning from failures. We only get one opportunity to raise our children, so we want to look to God's word for instructions on how to honor Him in child rearing.

Read Ephesians 6:1-4, Deut. 6:1-9

Discuss: What does it mean that children are brought up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?

A few keys to parenting

Example

Our children need us to set an example for them in how to live a kingdom life.

Do mom and dad love Jesus?

Do mom and dad love each other?

How do mom and dad love people?

How do mom and dad invest their treasures? (Proverbs 20:7, 1 Tim 4:16)

One of the best things we can model for our children is repentance and faith. They learn about submission to Christ and to love God and love others by watching our lives. They learn by how we respond when we fall short.

Read Ephesians 5:1-2

Discuss: How is God an example for us as His children?

How can we be an example for our children?

Discipline

Our children need us to discipline them. Our discipline teaches them not just to obey us, but to obey God. They need to learn boundaries, which are put in place for their good, and that when they cross those boundaries, they will be punished. The aim of our discipline is to grow godly character and change. (Proverbs 22:15, Proverbs 13:24, Hebrews 12:11)

When disciplining our children, we want to make sure we also shepherd their heart. We don't want to just discipline behaviors, but try to help them understand why their motivations and desires are wrong, which lead to the actions we are correcting. This can be done by having a conversation with your children along with a time of discipline. Discuss with them how the behavior was disobedience and what might have led to that disobedience. (Luke 6:45)

Our children also need us to teach them how to know and follow Jesus. The gospel should be a constant foundation in our homes, teaching our children the scriptures and biblical discipleship.

Grace

Our children need us to love them unconditionally, and they need us to show them the grace that we have been shown in the gospel. There are many times when they will disobey your commands just because they are youthful. There are times when mercy will teach them more about changing their hearts and behavior than discipline will. (Romans 2:4)

Our kids should never have to wonder if they are loved. It should be so evident in the way we speak to them and care for them with tenderness. When a loving relationship is the norm, then discipline is understood as an act of caring correction. (Hebrews 12:7-9)

Personal Application

How can you worship God for the gift of children?

In what ways do you teach your children how to know and follow Jesus?

How could you better shepherd your child's heart in discipline?