

GOING FURTHER RESOURCES

Shepherding a Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp
Gives parents a biblical perspective on correction

Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family by Paul David Tripp
A big-picture view of God's plan for parents, outlining fourteen foundational principles centered on the gospel

Don't Make Me Count to Three by Ginger Plowman
Helps parents of younger children handle disobedience

The New Strong-Willed Child: Birth Through Adolescence
by James Dobson
Helps parents deal with willful defiance

Have a New Kid by Friday by Kevin Leman
Gives practical tools for redirecting a pre-teen's behaviors and attitudes

GOING FURTHER PARKWAY BIBLE CHURCH SUPPORT

Thrive: A Ministry to Moms
Meet other awesome moms and hear Godly wisdom to help you as you navigate this high calling of motherhood. Visit parkway.church/women

Pkwy Kids
Parkway Bible Church offers Pkwy Kids, our kids' ministry that come alongside parents in their effort to instill faith in children including Sunday classes for kids from birth through 5th grade. Find more details at parkway.church/kids

Professional Counseling
Parkway Counseling Center provides onsite, Christ-centered professional counseling. Both male and female counselors are available. Counseling is offered for adults, adolescents and children. All counseling is confidential. For more information, visit <https://parkway.church/counseling/>

Disciplining Young Children



Life Season



DISCIPLINING YOUNG CHILDREN

The scriptures command parents to raise children in the training and instruction of the Lord.

We begin "training" a child from a very young age by the ways we respond to their actions and attitudes.

The primary purpose of discipline is to consistently direct your child toward right relationships with God and others. Several practices contribute to that process.

Those who marry will have troubles. That's what Paul told the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 7:28). Even the best couples can struggle to protect their marriage vows. But what happens when marriage troubles become unbearable? Is there a point at which couples should end a bad marriage? Or is there hope for something better? Walk through the following steps as you prayerfully evaluate your situation.

PRACTICE #1

Establish Your Authority

- Children need a clear answer to the question "Who is the boss?" Mom and Dad embody the security and limits that come from submitting ourselves to a loving heavenly Father. God has delegated oversight of your child's welfare and development to you, placing you in a position of authority over them.
- Starting when children are very young, parents need to model clarity and consistency. Unclear rules and sporadic reinforcement breed insecurity. You must say what you mean, mean what you say and act upon it. Don't overlook defiant behavior just because the specific issue seems minor, or because it is a hassle to stop and discipline at the moment. Children are commanded to obey their parents and parents to train their children even when it is inconvenient to do so (Colossians 3:20-21).

PRACTICE #2

Discipline Rather Than Punish

- Punishment is negative, making someone pay for what they've done. Discipline is positive – training toward a better future. Like touching a hot stove, we learn from the consequences of our actions. Discipline in childhood helps children avoid "learning the hard way" later in life.

- Many parents ask about the use of spanking to help shape a child's will. The scriptures teach that "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15, 13:24 and 29:15). Administering "the rod" apart from biblical principles, however, can cause more harm than good. Corporal discipline should only be used within guidelines such as those offered by Christian parenting experts. Several of the books listed under "Going Further Resources" can help you learn to apply different methods of discipline in healthy and productive ways.

- Regardless of which form of discipline you use, the key is consistency. As author Ginger Plowman explains, it is not the severity of punishment but the "certainty of consequence" that makes the difference.

- God holds parents accountable for how they use the authority He has given them. The scriptures instruct parents not to "exasperate" or "embitter" their children (Colossians 3:21). Do not treat childish immaturity the same as willful defiance. Parents should never discipline children out of embarrassment, frustration or anger. Accidentally spilling the milk or waking the baby is not an occasion for stern discipline. But ignoring direct disobedience can make a child vulnerable to an ongoing spirit of rebellion.

- Parents are called to protect their children from the ruin of an undisciplined life and point them to their need for a Savior (Proverbs 23:14 and Romans 3:22-24). Ultimately, the discipline you apply should be used in a way that restores right relationships. It should provide a consequence that leads the child to repentance (sorrow for their wrong behavior) and restoration of the relationship with God, mom, dad and others.

PRACTICE #3

Lovingly Instruct

- Starting in the preschool years discipline and instruction should become a package deal (Ephesians 6:4). We often make the mistake of allowing our desire for changed behavior to replace our desire for a changed heart. Use simple probing questions and share specific scriptures about wrong choices to instruct your child toward repentance. After disciplining a 2-year-old temper tantrum, for example, you might explain that "God wants us to obey." With a 4-year-old you can go further, explaining self-control, reading Titus 2:6 and asking the child "Do you think that you were self-controlled or out-of-control?" Such loving instruction after discipline helps train your son or daughter to think like a follower of Christ rather than merely behave in order to avoid punishment.