

Parenting Freedom (3)

Family Night – Wednesday, September 18, 2024

- Children need love AND limits.
- Do you love me? Can I do what I want?

“The LORD disciplines the one he loves.” – Hebrews 12:6

“Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.” – Proverbs 13:24

Wrong Ways to Discipline

- Coddling
 - Discipline looks like parents asking permission or trying to “sell” good behavior.
 - This is abdication of your God-given authority.
 - “I too am a man under authority...” Matthew 8:5-13
- Control
 - A command is given. The child refuses (often in creative ways). The situation escalates.
 - Underneath control is a desire to prove your authority, which leads to a power struggle.
 - Loss is inevitable. Either they win, or you lose by “winning”.
 - Compliant child – often lives in fear of disappointing adults
 - Rebel child
 - Sneaky child
 - Anger – secondary emotion. What you really feel is helpless, powerless, and overwhelmed.
 - Anger makes discipline personal. It also undermines our power by turning discipline into punishment.
 - “There is an inverse relationship between how angry we are and the effectiveness of our discipline.”

Teaching Obedience

- Children are not born with the ability to submit to authority naturally. “No”
- Obedience must be patiently taught. It requires maturity.
- Kids only learn to obey by disobeying and reaping what they sow.
- Good behavior leads to good consequences. Bad behavior leads to bad consequences. Let them choose! They will learn to make wise choices.
- Be patient. Your job is not to change your child, but to demonstrate the blessing of obedience and the curse of disobedience.

Example

- Sitting at the dinner table, one child starts annoying another.
- Parent gives a command: “Stop bothering your brother.”
- Child waits a few seconds and starts again.
- Typical parent response, in anger: “I said stop!”
- The child doesn’t need more words. The child needs an event.
- “The most powerful way a child learns to make better choices is by experiencing an event based on their choices.”
- After giving the initial command, reinforce it with an if/then scenario.
- “If you annoy your brother again, then [insert consequence].”
- Follow through should be calm and immediate. He made his choice!

What are some consequences you have used with young children? school-aged children? teens?

Other Thoughts

- Beware of shaming! “What is wrong with you?!”
- Understanding emotional reactivity – allow your child’s (and your) emotions to settle
- Reinforce good choices with rewards, but not as a bribe.
- Don’t threaten consequences more than once. Let. Them. Choose!
- Timeout – isolation as a consequence, in a boring room instead of a chair or corner.
- Spanking – never angry, used primarily to curb repetitive, dangerous, or foolish behaviors.
- Understanding the difference between childish behavior and foolish behavior.
- Tantrums – with younger children, show no emotion and wait it out. With older children, calmly communicate a consequence and walk away.
- Circle back on discipline and help them connect the dots.