

Family Conference: Changing Gears | Session 2 - Encouragement and Challenges in Young Years

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. Thank you for a great breakfast. Particularly grateful for Sue's casserole that had anything that has tater tots on top should be eaten. That's just that's a life rule for me. So thank you. I got lots of protein and carbs, my two favorite things. So thank you for being here. We were hungrier for God's word and more needy for it, obviously, than we are even our earthly food. So we're going to be looking this morning. Last night, we kind of looked at the mandate from the Old Testament, particularly what Moses had to say to the younger generation that would actually enter the promised land. How do you go about instructing your children? And we looked at some amazing ways. The Lord didn't just leave us with here's the principle applied any way you want. In many ways, he said, here's some various departments in your life where you have that opportunity to follow the mandate to tell every generation about his redemptive power, about his amazing divine revelation, about the human heart's a tendency to forget, to forget, to forget, to forget, and even to rebel. And so we covered that ground last night. But today, we're going to be looking this morning in the New Testament. So turn to Ephesians chapter 6. We're going to look together at the first four verses, but kind of in two parts, because what Paul offers there is initially instruction that tell a child what are the priorities in their relationship with their parents.

And then in one verse, Paul tells us as parents, what are your responsibilities as parents or grandparents in the life of your children or grandchildren? How do we have that influence? And so we're going to look at timeless principles, and then we'll talk about some ways that we can apply those in our family.

And you've got a handout, and you've got a handout, I trust, with you. More material than I can cover there, but it's something I thought you could take with you, and maybe read some of it later beyond this session.

So let's just remind ourselves what the Word of God says. Ephesians chapter 6, verses 1 through 4. Well-known verses, and we just want to make sure we actually understand what God is telling us. And here's what's interesting. As parents, hearing what God tells children they should do in their responsibility, in their relationship with their parents, sort of becomes our marching orders. What is the scope and sequence of the curriculum we should be teaching it? It has this impact.

[2 : 45] Hearing what God calls our children to do, how they are to respond to our not inherent, but God-delegated authority in their life. Hearing what God requires of them gives you and I the nerve, if you will, to actually hold a biblical standard.

And without reminding ourselves of things like this, you know, you'll find yourself repeating yourself, or becoming lazy or inconsistent in your parenting. And from time to time, it's just good to look back and just say, what does God require of them?

And it gives it, it just reinvigorates your conviction to just say, all right, I'm not being unreasonable. I'm not being too hard on my kids. I'm not being too easy on my kids. I'm just doing and training and showing them exactly what the Lord asks us to do.

So you might say at a parenting conference, why are you telling me what the kids need to be doing? Because that's what you're training towards. So let's start in the first three verses. What are a child's responsibilities, their priorities in their relationship with their parents?

And they're twofold. One is that they are to prioritize obedient action in response to a parent's God-given authority. And then the second priority is this, an honoring attitude toward their parents' God-given authority.

[4 : 02] So obedient action and an honoring attitude. And so look together at priority number one. Here's the simple command, children, obey your parents in the Lord.

In the twin epistle, Colossians, we have a parallel passage that says, children, obey your parents in all things. So between Ephesians and Colossians, we've made it clear God requires obedience of children to their parents' God-given authority.

But it's interesting, the word obedience actually comes from the word we get our word acoustics from. It's a hearing word. It's not so much an action word. So it's hearing. To obey means to hear with a heart that's ready to obey.

That's really the definition. Listening, I put in your notes there, listening with a view towards submission. That's what it means to obey. So children, listen to your parents with an attitude and a view towards submission.

That's the command. And then here's the simple reason. Why? What does he say? For or because this is right. Colossians takes it this way.

[5 : 11] This is well-pleasing in his sight. Now, this is an interesting concept to say, well, this is right because you may have met some people who say, look, unregenerate children can't do anything to please the Lord.

Well, that's true in a saving sense. Your lost children can't do anything that would please God in the sense of pleasing him to earn salvation. But it does please the Lord. And you should tell the children, it pleases him.

When you listen to my voice with a view towards submitting. That pleases the Lord. And on the flip side, you should also warn him. That means it doesn't please the Lord.

When you don't listen to my voice with a view towards submission. These are early lessons that I'm sure you're already teaching your children. They might even say, I don't remember a time when I didn't know that.

I always knew in between my conscience and my parents' instruction. I know it pleases the Lord when I obey. And I know it doesn't please the Lord when I disobey. Look, that is the foundation of an understanding of the gospel.

[6 : 13] You want them to understand the gospel. It has to start with the bad news that you don't naturally obey. And sooner or later, your kids are going to figure out, I can't, I've tried and I can't be good for five minutes.

You should be encouraged by those moments. Yes, you're beginning to feel the desperation I felt that led me to my need for a savior. So the command is to listen with a view towards submission. The reason is because it's pleasing in God's sight. And so this is where I was talking about. Look, you sometimes need to be reminded that's what the Lord expects.

So that you'll have the nerve to hold the standard where God holds it. And so I've just put some practical notes here that for some of you would be well known. And perhaps for others of you just encourage you or maybe things you've forgotten.

But you want to train your children that because of God's command, the first time you speak, they should obey. And maybe you could add in your notes, I should be able to speak to you in a normal tone of voice.

[7 : 14] Because what we discover is kids don't always respond. So I've just put in the notes there, maybe avoid the early warning system where you go, I'm going to count to three.

You better obey by then, one, two. But what are you training? Oh, I don't actually have to obey until you intensify, get a little bit angry and say the number three.

Then I better obey. So you're setting the bar. You're training them. Will I, you need to obey the third time, the second time? No, you need to have the nerve to expect and train towards first time obedience, the first time you speak in a normal tone of voice.

Avoid repeating the same command multiple times. Sometimes it isn't one, two, three. It's just like, come to mommy, come to mommy, come to mommy. Okay, now I'm coming.

Well, you can have it that way if you want. But you could also train them towards you need to come the first time that mommy speaks. I also put there in your notes, avoid giving a command followed by seeking your child's approval.

[8 : 22] Do you hear yourself doing this sometimes? Where you say, okay, we're going to finish our homework and turn the TV off now. Okay. It's like, I'm not really asking for your endorsement.

And it's a temptation. We think it'll soften it. It's because we're dreading that they might not obey. And I'm just saying, Paul is telling the young people, this is a letter that would have been read out loud in a house church setting.

A church that probably hadn't grown and didn't have their own building and hadn't grown a living room yet. So probably a small church in Ephesus. And there he has the nerve in the hearing of children for them to hear, listen to your parents.

It's a listening word. Listen with a view towards submission. That's what you're training towards.

Ted Tripp in his excellent book, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*.

I've quoted it there at the end of page one. Obedience, therefore, what is it? Define it for your kids. Is doing what you're asked without challenge, delay, or excuse.

[9 : 26] Obedience is doing what you're asked without challenging your parents, without delaying to obey, or without excuse.

The Lord has blessed us with five children. But we had two children. And then we had a nine-year gap before the Lord would bless us with three more children.

And often people will ask us, what did you learn and what did you do different with the second set of kids nine years later that different from the first? And I'll say this. With the first set of kids, I added to this definition.

It used to say obedience. You need to do it where asked without challenge, delay, excuse. And you need to do it with a happy heart. And that's what I told the first two growing up. About nine years later, the Lord blesses with more kids.

You know, I realized even Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane is not obeying with a happy heart. His heart is grieved and filled with sorrow.

[10 : 23] He's dreading taking on the false guilt of the whole world. So Christ didn't always obey with a happy heart. But what he did obey was with a submissive heart. Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done.

So that's kind of with the next set of kids, we kind of altered our definition. It's doing what you're asked without challenge, delay, or excuse. And then I just added this, with a submissive heart. You don't have to smile and be giddy about it. I don't really require a happy heart, but you do need to have a submissive heart. And so the number one priority that Paul lists here in a child's life is to obey your parents.

Listen with a view towards submission. Now, look at the next page of your handout. Here's the second priority that comes in the rest of the passage. And that priority one is obedient action in response to your parents' God-delegated authority.

By the way, just to remind you, authority in the Scripture. A husband's authority in the family. The husband's authority over his leadership of his wife and children.

[11 : 31] A parent's authority over their children. Think of authority. Some people hear authority and we tend to think of raw power. You know, I had a friend once who had a shirt that said, leadership, Cole, and a whole lot of people doing what I say.

And that tends to be what we think of as leadership and authority. Barking commands and edicts and, you know. But really, if you put together what the Scripture says about authority and leadership, a parent's authority, it works in this way.

It's a temporary window in a child's life. While children will have to honor us for life, they don't obey us for life. I have five adult children. I don't really have authority in their life.

What I have now is, by God's grace, a degree of influence. And that's kind of what I want at this point. I don't want, I'm done having authority. They now have authority over their kids. But authority is not raw power.

Authority is greater accountability and, you know, and greater responsibility. So, husbands, in our marriage, your authority, quote-unquote, that God has given you over your wife is not raw power.

[12 : 38] But rather, the authority God's given you is greater accountability and greater responsibility. You'll never answer men for your wife's individual sins. God would never hold you responsible for that.

But God will hold us as men responsible. We'll give an account. We have a greater responsibility for the whole family unit that our wives will never give an account for. So, authority is not raw power. It's never inherent. I don't have authority inherently in me. You know, God said, as he did to Adam, here's the garden. Take care of it. Cultivate it. Keep it. Guard it. Develop it. Eve then would be demonstrated as, you know what, Adam?

Intentionally, I didn't make you able to fulfill what I've called you to do. I'm going to make you a helpmate to partner with you and bring me good glory by together doing what I asked you to do.

Cultivate and keep the garden.

So, delegated authority to Adam and Eve. Delegated authority to you as parents. Delegated authority to us as men. What is that authority? What is this God-delegated authority?

[13:39] A greater sense of responsibility and greater accountability. So, in the light of your greater responsibility and accountability to your children, they are to obey you.

And now, secondly, they are to have an honoring attitude. And that's what Paul goes on to say. We have the same pattern of a commandment with a reason. A commandment, an imperative, and then an incentive.

What's the command? Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise. It's not actually the first commandment that has a promise. I think what Paul is saying is this is a priority commandment.

In that sense, it is a commandment of first importance. The reason, then, is so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. So, just as we kind of had to define, what does it mean to obey?

It's the word listen with a view towards submission. What does it mean to honor? Honoring means a loving respect toward the parents' delegated authority.

[14:40] Holding the position God gave them in your life, hold it in high honor. Remember, when that commandment, honor your father and mother, was given in Exodus chapter 20, it would have been declared by Moses to largely an adult audience.

And so, Paul's picking it up now and repeating it and saying, Children, your priorities in your relationship with your parents is obedience and honor. And honoring, hold the position your parents gave you in high esteem.

And my relationship with my own parents could be described as difficult. And when late, in my late 40s, when the Lord had them move near us so we could begin taking care of their physical needs, I remember thinking, all right, I haven't lived with them since I was 18 and I left for college.

And then I got married when I was 20. So, I haven't lived in this close of proximity to my parents for a long time. And some of you have been blessed with fabulous relationship with your parents. But that wasn't my case. And so, I remember having to ask the Lord, Lord, what will it look like to honor them? I'm certainly willing to pour out myself and my wife as a nurse and had skills there that could be proved to be very useful in caring for my parents.

[15:57] And what will it look like to honor them? For some of you, you might have to begin way back here and say, well, I don't even know what that's going to look like. But I know this, that the opposite of honor would be despise.

So, I just had to start, for me, I was so remedial in my relationship with my parents. I'd start, well, what does it look like to honor them? I'm not sure, but I'll start here. Do you despise them in any way?

And, of course, I loved my parents and didn't have blanket despising. But there were things in their life that I had no right to this self-righteous attitude. But I just despised about their life and some of their values and the way they went about things.

So, I had to repent of that. And so, even as adults, we're talking about your kids right now, training them to honor you. But it bears mentioning to say, you're all adults in the room.

You still need to be honoring your parents. And you figuring out what that looks like, I'll say this. Maybe you start by saying, make sure there's nothing in you that thinks you're better than them or looks down on them, despises them, is critical of them.

[17:03] There's no place for that in a believer's heart. And if they don't know the Lord or they know the Lord and they're not as mature as you are, then maturity on your part means bringing graciousness to that relationship.

So, what does it mean then? So, I guess my point is really this. If you're telling your kids to honor you and they watch you not honor your parents, they're going to struggle honoring you.

They're going to pick up on the hypocrisy. Wait a minute, there's a great divide here. And the honor you give your parents has nothing to do with them being honorable. It has to do with this.

God, they're the perfect parents for me. You gave them to me. You put them in my life. And because I trust and love and honor you, I will honor them.

So, you may need to have some work to do to just rectify your own honor of your parents before you can call your children to honor you. So, what is honor?

[18 : 04] Or a loving respect that holds your parents' God-given role in your life in high esteem. And in your case, you're saying to the kids, look, I don't have any inherent authority.

But God gave you to me. You don't belong to me. He asked me to take care of you. And he tells me to tell you, you need to honor me. I remember particularly in the teenage years, which is usually the time when kids are struggling honoring their parents.

They've begun to objectify you. They go from hero worship to thinking, you know, dad is a superhero. He can do anything. And slowly over time, they figured out, you are a seriously flawed human being.

And you're like, oh, you figured it out. I liked it so much better when you thought it was amazing. And so, you know, the call to honor delegated authority is real.

So, in the teenage years, when it got more difficult, I remember saying to the kids, look, I don't have some sick craving to be well thought of by 15-year-old sour teenagers.

[19 : 07] It's not that I need your honor. I require you to honor me because God said you should honor me. Not because I have a sick need for affirmation from kids who don't know anything about life yet.

I love you, but I do not need your honor. God says you must honor me because you're practicing honoring the Lord by learning to honor me. If you think the things I ask you to do are confusing or strange to you, where do you see some of the things the Lord is going to ask you to do in life? And you don't want to be an adult for the first time having to come under authority that doesn't make sense to you. You training your children now is readying them for the kind of difficult things in life that you know the Lord, perhaps even right now, is asking you to come under it and submit to it and honor Him through it.

But you're taking the long view here. Well, I learned to honor God throughout your adult life by practicing on by honoring me now. If you can't honor me now, you're not suddenly going to be submissive to your Creator.

And so that, in essence, is why the Lord has asked to do it. What are some of the honors and attitude on the inside? So how do I measure? How do I know if my kids are being honoring? Let me just suggest some of the ways that I think it presents itself externally.

[20 : 27] So here's what you might be training. Encourage your children to make eye contact with all adults when they're spoken to. Now, some of my kids were outgoing like me.

Some of them were shy than me. And I remember some, you know, toddler holding my arm and somebody would come up at church and say, good morning. And they would bury their face in my armpit. Now, that's not sinful.

That's not rebellious. But it isn't really honoring to an adult. And so I'm going to patiently train them. Hey, look at Mr. Jones. Just say, good morning.

So they pull their head out of the little nest. Good morning. Go back in. Okay, well, that's progress. That's slow training. And we're not just going to talk about it in the moment. Talk about it when you're not in the moment. So on a Tuesday evening over dinner, hey, on Sundays, it's our big family.

And it's like a family reunion every Sunday. And sometimes you're meeting cousins you didn't know you had. And so when we gather, it's like a family time. So when a spiritual family member speaks to you, one of the ways you'd want to honor them is just look them in their eye and just say hello.

[21 : 32] And so now you say it's proactive training. Don't wait and do it in the moment. But here's what grabs hold of your heart. And as you know, a lot of parenting is about you and what it's doing to you. But Mr. Jones comes up and speaks.

Your kid buries their head and doesn't want to speak. What do you sometimes feel? Embarrassed. My kids aren't acting right. You're pinching them underneath them.

Good morning. That's a way to train. It may not be the best way. But man, there's so many things going on. So fear of man starts corrupting what are people thinking of me?

What's the impression of my parenting? It starts polluting the whole process. But train them to make eye contact. Train them that respectful word choices and tone and body language, their tone of voice.

Just train them in that. Don't expect them to automatically know. Don't be impatient or embarrassed if they don't know. You're training little people who've never done any of this before.

[22 : 32] So you're training them. Train them to use respectful word choices. In our family, our older kids were raised in Arkansas and there in the South.

Saying yes, sir and yes, ma'am was an easy way to communicate honor. There are other places and cultures where I got pulled over in Chicago for accidentally running a stop sign. I was lost. And the officer came to the window and began questioning me and I was answering him, yes, sir, yes, sir. And he said, boy, you making fun of me? I was like, no, officer, sir, person. But you know what respectful language looks like in your cultural setting and train your kids in that way. Attentive listening is also a way of showing honor. I mean, that's even true in an adult relationship.

Somebody's talking to you and you're just like, boy, look at the time. No, attentive listening. Train them. When an adult speaks to you, you look at them and you hang in there with what they're saying.

[23 : 32] Of course, soft-hearted submission and compliance. This is that difference. You say, Billy, I want you to go to your room and put all the toys in the toy box. Billy doesn't want to go, but he goes and he's mad and he stomps into his room and he throws the toys in the toy box and slams the lid down on the toy box.

There, I obeyed. Are you happy? Well, they got priority one down, sort of. They listened with a view towards submission. But that lack of honoring attitude, that disrespect, that is not holding your God-delegated authority in high regard.

So they obeyed on the outside, but they didn't have an honoring attitude on the inside, and that has to be addressed. In the end, honor is this. You're looking for the tender, submissive relinquishing of their will to your will.

Sometimes I would take a flexible object or even just use my hands and say, look, what the Lord's asking you to do is bend your will to the shape of Daddy's will.

And Daddy's will is saying, do this or don't do this. You need to bend, choose to bend your heart to the shape of my words. That's a graphic way to kind of depict to them.

[24 : 44] That's what the Lord's looking for. So just sheer obedience itself is not enough. Paul says you need to be honoring in your attitude. So the command, honor your father and mother.

And then he gives the reason, so that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. So Paul's quoting both from Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 here as a summary of, in general, what the rewards and benefits and the protection that comes to an obedient life.

This is not a law of longevity. This is not a promise. This means if you hear someone who dies of leukemia at age 14, well, clearly they didn't obey and honor their parents.

That's not what Paul is saying. But more proverbially, principally saying there are rewards that come. There's protection in general that comes from leading an obedient and honoring life.

Again, in Ted Tripp's excellent book, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, he talks about the protection that comes from obedience. And teach your children, look, when you honor and obey mom and dad, then you're staying right here in this pasture where it's safe.

[25 : 56] When you disobey, you go outside the pasture where there are wolves and danger. And then he says something we've never forgotten. He said, some of your kids have fence marks on their face.

They stay in the pasture, but they're always pushing. I wish I could get out there. And so kids are going to have fence marks on their face. And you just keep reminding, that's what Paul is doing. There's reward and safety and protection that comes to those who live an obedient and honoring life. So not all child sickness and death is a result of sin.

But instead, there's the promise, reward, and blessing that comes. So that's the first three verses of Ephesians 6. Two priorities that a child needs to be pursuing in their relationship with you.

And it kind of encourages you to be able to say, all right, I can train towards this because that's what God says. I think for any of you who are single parents, I think this is a particular challenge because I know that, you know, with Tandy and I partnering and parenting together, there were just times when we would have to say to each other, sweetheart, you are repeating yourself three or four times before the kids are banging.

[27 : 11] You've lowered the bar. And you just need somebody who's hearing and watching you to just go, you know what, just push the bar back up there again. Thank you for reminding me. Thank you for the encouragement. And if you're a single parent doing this alone, wow, that's just hard

because you don't have anybody to kind of remind you to hear yourself.

So maybe just inviting church family into your life enough to just say, yeah, what are you seeing? What are you noticing? That would be helpful.

Or just continually come back to teaching like this so you can say, it is not unreasonable for me to train. Now, I do not expect my child to always obey me the first time.

That's not the point. It's not an unreasonable standard to say we're training towards this. And anything short of this is not pleasing to the Lord. So single parents, we have a responsibility to you as a church to come alongside and help you particularly.

Because I would just say, man, Tandy needed to encourage me at times. I needed to encourage her. We would have struggled greatly without that partnership. So you're going to have to make that partnership happen in other ways.

[28 : 23] Now, secondly now, in verse 4, we've transitioned from Paul's instruction to parents in Ephesus. Now Paul is giving us principles that extend well beyond Ephesus to us today about, well, what are the priorities in a parent's relationship with their child?

And if you look on page 3, I've kind of just developed a graphic so that this is how I picture how this plays out in my mind. Priority 1 for a parent is this.

Fathers, it's a negative command. Do not provoke your children to anger. Again, in the twin epistle of Colossians, it gets shaped this way.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children so that they will not lose heart. That's priority number 1, a negative priority, a warning.

Men, wherever we hear God telling us not to do something, what do you automatically know about your heart? Left in my default mode, clearly the Lord knows this.

[29 : 24] You will be provoking and exasperating to your children. So the fact that the Lord has to say, don't do this, alerts you to the fact you're going to have a tendency towards this.

Priority number 2, what should you do now positively instead of provoking them, instead of exasperating them, and we'll define what those terms mean in a minute. What's the second priority but bring them up?

Literally, feed them. Nourish them. Rear them tenderly is how Calvin translated that word. Bring them to maturity. And we'll talk about that in a moment.

And then the reason I have the two little boxes coming out from that, here are the two ways we go about this. How do I go about the banner is bring them up, nurture them, feed them, bring them all the way to maturity.

How do we do that? In two ways. In the discipline of the Lord and in the instruction of the Lord. So two priorities. And then two methods to how you go about priority number 2.

[30 : 29] You do that through the discipline. That means training of all kinds, including, but not limited to correction. So it's not correction, it's training.

And then secondly, you do this in the instruction of the Lord. The word means to verbally place truth into a child's mind. So your two tools are training in all kinds of ways.

And then teaching with your mouth. Placing God's truth in their mind. And the reason I have an arrow going from left to right at the bottom of the page is just to represent a crossfade over time.

Over time, there's less and less of that training and correction. And more and more as your children become older and young adults, more and more of that verbal placement of the truth in their mind. So if you're parenting in the younger years, you're going to do a lot of discipline and training. And I'm not saying you won't teach. But you start actually training kids before they can even think conceptually.

[31 : 33] But over time, as they mature, you'll find yourself continuing to train, but largely through instruction. So over time, there's that crossfade.

So that's a graphic depiction. Now let's just, if you look at page four, let's just talk about these two priorities and just make sure we understand the words the Lord is using. So priority one, avoid sinful provocation and discouragement of your children.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger. Colossians, do not exasperate your children so that they won't lose heart.

In Ephesians, what Paul is saying, that word provoke, I've just put in your notes there, it means to, don't goad your children into perpetual resentment of you. How would we go about that?

How could we do that? Well, I've listed some things to avoid here. But I think I would say it this way. It could be a little confusing because if you cross the will of a four-year-old and take away their toy or say, it's time to stop, it's time for a nap, or now we're going to eat, or don't push your cup off the high chair.

[32 : 44] If you get in the way of the will of a toddler, they will become angry. So this could be confusing. Fathers, don't provoke your children to wrath. My kids get mad anytime I say no.

They don't like that. And that's not what he's talking about avoiding. And he's talking about the kind of anger that's a result of two things in particular.

Hypocrisy or neglect. And underneath hypocrisy, you could tuck this away or maybe make it a third, and that would be inconsistency.

I mean, if the bar is first-time obedience on Monday, but by Thursday, I don't have to obey until the fourth time you scream. And then Friday, you suddenly put the bar back again without any explanation or admission.

That's a kind of hypocrisy, a kind of inconsistency that you would find provoking as adults. If someone in authority, your life, man, if you work for someone else or with someone else, and one day the protocol was here, and the next day the protocol, with no email notification that there was a change.

[33 : 51] I mean, the boss got the right to, he could change the protocol every day if he wants. But without any loving communication, you're kind of left lost, and your morale would tube. You'd be confused and goaded into kind of resenting that authority figure in your life.

Well, your kids even more so. They don't even have the emotional maturity that you have as an adult. And so don't provoke them through hypocrisy. Don't provoke them through neglect.

Don't provoke them through inconsistency. Or any of the rest of this long list on page four. I've taken this from Pastor Paul Shirley up in Wilmington.

A dear friend and former student of mine has written an excellent little booklet called The Christian Home. I'd highly commend it to you. But here are some ways that parents can provoke their children.

Prideful parenting. You're always right. You're never wrong. You never confess sin. And Tandy and I have marveled. Our parents, we just look back at our childhood. They never said they did anything wrong.

[34 : 55] They never said, please forgive me. They never acknowledged anything. Proud parenting can provoke your kids. Angry parenting. Sinful speech. Were you communicating in your selfishness?

You've inconvenienced me. You're modeling the very thing that you don't want them to be, and they're going to find that provoking. Inconsistency. I already mentioned that. Controlling parenting. Constantly micromanaging every detail of life according to your preferences, particularly in older children. Weak parenting. Allowing them to get their way will always create problems when they can't get their way.

Even if it's outside. Maybe in your home, they always get their way. Sooner or later, they're going to enter a school or another setting at a friend's house where they're not allowed to get their way, and you're asking for trouble that kids will actually resent you for.

Overactive parenting. Perfectionistic parenting. Competitive parenting, where you compare one of your kids to another, or some cultural expectation. Man-pleasing parenting.

[35 : 59] Oh, this is so common. Parenting because you're worried about what other people think, particularly at church. Manipulative parenting. Forcing your children to comply by some kind of ungodly means or emotional ploys.

Even mocking children. Distracted parenting. You're with your kids, but really in your mind and your heart, you're at work or you're at play.

You're present, but you might as well be absent. Children will grow up to resent that. Presumptuous parenting. You always know everything before you even heard their perspective. Hypercritical parenting.

Joyless parenting that communicates you're not a blessing per Psalm 127. You're a burden. That would obviously discourage a child. Grudge-bearing parenting.

You won't let go of something even after it's been dealt with. Forgiveness has been granted. Fearful parenting. Not trusting the Lord. Critical parenting.

[37 : 01] Promise-breaking parenting. Worldly parenting. This list comes from a similar list found in The Faithful Parent by Martha Peace and Stuart Scott and The Heart of Anger by Lou Priolo.

So those are just some ways. Number one, dads, we have a tendency to be provoking, discouraging, hypocritical, proud with our kids. And Paul says, parent-fathers, don't do that. Build a different kind of... What is Colossians, by the way? Exasperating them. It just means taking the wind out of their sails to the point that they lose heart. You've probably experienced this. You can sometimes get in a season in a relationship with your children where it's become so toxic, so negative. It's such constant correction and criticism. And in the toddler years, moms, if you're home all day with those kids, you're definitely going to feel like, all I do is correct. And there are certain years where that is absolutely true. I can't get around that. The mind-numbing repetition, it can be discouraging.

[38 : 04] But particularly, it's fathers being addressed here as not exasperating them so they don't lose heart. If you get in that toxic cycle, here's what happens. A child begins to adopt a mindset, kind of like I'm a prisoner on death row.

Right? Prisoners on death row have nothing to lose. So they don't mind mistreating the guards who stand outside their door. What are you going to do? Give me the death sentence?

I already have the death sentence. And sometimes our kids begin to feel that way. You just wait until your father gets home. Okay, so I have to dread the rest of the day. At this point, dad's going to kill me when he gets home. So it's over.

So why obey now? Just go for it. It'll happen. Or just perhaps worse yet, they've already figured out, I can't please you no matter what I do.

That's how they begin to think and feel. So they don't even, they're de-incentivized to even try to please you. And so what, you know what that's a sign of?

[39 : 02] It's a sign that you've been showing personal offense to their disobedience as if you had inherent authority. How could you possibly disobey a parent like me? No, no. What you want to keep pointing is, do you understand as provoking as what you did?

And make no mistake about it, Johnny, that was very provoking to me. That's not your big problem. What you just did displeased God. And so you just got to keep deflecting where is the center of the offense of their disobedience.

And our anger, this is why God says, the wrath of the anger of man does not accomplish what? The righteousness of God. You're not going to accomplish the righteousness of God by making sure your kids know just how offensive you find their behavior.

And irritability and the raising of voice and sinful tone of voice and yelling. All it communicates is, wow, don't do that. Because it really ticks dad off. Is that really the lesson you want them to be learning?

I mean, they do need to understand how their actions affect other humans, sure. But if that's all they walk away is saying, so now what are they obeying out of? Fear of you.

[40 : 11] And the Bible says fear of man is a snare. So don't train them to fear you in that sense. Just say what you've done offended the Lord. And maybe overlook some of the things that just don't communicate as heavily what offends you.

That's the kind of toxic environment that you avoid where you've just exasperated your children to the point that they've lost heart. I'm not even incentivized to try to please you or obey.

Well, that's a sign that we weren't aiming at a noble enough goal. No, child of mine, you need to be attempting to please the Lord, not me. It certainly is pleasing to me when you obey.

So that's priority one. Avoid this kind of sinful discouragement and sinful provocation. Priority number two for us as parents, pursue the tender nurture of your children, but bring them up in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord.

That word for bring them up is the very same word Paul used just a few verses earlier. When he says husbands back in chapter 5, verse 20. Husbands, love your own wife as your own body.

[41 : 22] He who loves his own wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but here's the word, nourishes it and cherishes it.

Men, when we got married, we didn't have to learn a whole new skill of how to love. What we had to learn to do was how to love your wife like you've already been loving yourself.

Paul really gives two examples for us as husbands. Love like Christ loved the church. And love like you have your whole life tenaciously already loved yourself. For instance, when your body is tired,

you rest you.

When your body is hungry, you feed you. When your body is thirsty, you slake that thirst. You hydrate. So he says, in a similar way, nourish your children. So Paul takes the word that men have naturally nourished their own body.

It's literally the word for feeding. So what does he mean? Fathers, don't provoke your children, but feed them. Nourish them.

[42 : 25] Isn't that interesting? Because men, we tend to think culturally in the 21st century in the Western world that this kind of nourishing or nurturing a child, that's something that women do. And Paul is saying, no, I'm addressing fathers.

Not that women, of course, men nurture in a different way than women. He's not feminizing us. But to kind of totally abrogate yourself from saying, there doesn't mean to be any nurture.

I mean, he's putting this in contrast to provoking. He's talking about long-term patience. Take the long view and nurture this project that begins as an infant that you can have very little to do with. But as they grow, then nurture them, feed them. Again, Calvin translated this Greek term in this way. Rear them tenderly. Whatever it means to nourish, he says, it's the opposite of provocation and discouragement.

He's calling you to be kind with your authority. To not a feminine tenderness, but a male version of tenderness. A Christ-like tenderness. Taking the long view.

[43 : 32] It was interesting. Tanya and I have been involved for decades in elder care, in our parents' lives. And had this opportunity to minister in this way that we call a complicated privilege.

It's a privilege to care for aging parents. But it is complicated. And so, having done this now for many years, we've just been thinking about how it's the opposite of parenting.

When you're caring for aging parents, you're seeing the demise of skill. It's like anti-maturity.

They're going backwards in time. And skills they had developed from childhood to adulthood now regress back into childlike needs.

Life ends in the same kind of utter dependency on others that it begins with. Unless you die young and unless you die suddenly, you're going to need help.

You're going to need care. It's a vulnerable place. A dependent position. And so, I think sometimes we forget that when I see parents getting impatient or weary in the long-term process of raising this project from infant to adult, you maybe think of it this way.

[44 : 44] If I were to be in a car accident this afternoon and suffer a traumatic head injury, Tandy would instantly know that our whole life just changed radically.

And man, this is going to be a long-term project. Todd's going to learn to need to talk again, to eat again, to dress himself again, to care for his hygiene needs again.

Wow, our life just got seriously altered. And this is going to take a long time to get all of that back.

And even when I do, I probably won't have exactly the same Todd back again.

Well, a traumatic event like that, it just becomes really obvious. Wow, any plans we had are off. Any lifestyle I assumed is gone. Everything changed.

When God placed an infant in your arms, a not so traumatic event actually signaled all the same things.

[45 : 42] Oh, wow, your life just got totally altered. Your lifestyle, any expectations you had, plans you had, and the way you like to live, oh, wow. This is a long-term project.

What is really obvious in a traumatic head injury case is somehow not quite so obvious in the raising of a child. But that's exactly what it is. If I had the traumatic head injury, I'm going to have to learn to walk.

I'm going to have to learn to talk. I'm going to have to learn what to do with my emotions. I'm going to have to learn how to relate to people all over again. Well, your little infant without the brain injury is in exactly the same position.

They don't know what to do with their emotions. They're going to have to learn to walk, to talk. And you'd sign on with an adult going, wow, this is going to be a big deal. But somehow, those first few months of parenting, you're like, this is not a big deal.

This is amazing. This is euphoric. This is incredible. And then it's like, no, wow, this is a really long-term project. And now I'm beginning to think I have a traumatic brain injury.

[46 : 44] And so just remind you, take the long view. Why would you expect a child? I mean, think about it. When they first discover their toes, they don't know what to do with them. So what do they,

they put them in their mouth.

That's not what toes are for. And when they experience an emotion, or they find their voice, bah, bah, bah, and they're just yelling in restaurants, no, no, no, no, no.

So you tap their little lips and go, la, la, la, or show quiet, or you sing, or you distract, and you're sort of, right? They're too young. They can't say, don't use your voice like that.

You can't explain that to them, but you just model for them something different. And so, man, you got to, your techniques have to just keep creatively advancing as you see the needs.

And so just a reminder, they don't know what to do with their hands. You have to teach them. They don't know what to do with their voice. They don't know what to do with fear. They don't know what to do with desires.

[47 : 42] They don't know what to do with anger. They don't know what to do with love. They don't know what to do when they think something's funny. you have to train them in everything. The same way that would be really obvious to you if an adult lost it all and had to get it back.

They've never had it. You've got to teach them how to do it the first time. So in that sense, pursue the tender nurture. Bring them up. That's the banner. A tenderness.

And remember, he's not talking to women. A masculine version of tenderness. You still will never do it exactly like your wife. You're not supposed to. The kids don't need two moms.

They need a mom and a dad. But bring your version of the kind of patience that basically communicates this. You are not an inconvenience to me. You are not in the way of what I want to do.

I have decided as an act of my will that you are what I want to do right now. That's how a man nurtures a little young soul.

[48 : 44] And you do that when they're two. And you do it when they're 12. And you do it when they're 22. And you do it when they're 42. It's still that long-term project. I want to be that. That's the banner.

Bring them up. And how do we do it? Lord, I've never brought somebody up before. If you're a first-time parent, I've never developed a human before. I don't know what I'm doing. And so the Lord says, I'll tell you how to do it.

You've got two tools. You do it by training. And you do it by instruction. So he says, bring them up in the discipline of the Lord. If you're like me, when I hear the word discipline, I automatically think of correction.

I think of, don't do that. That's discipline. Or I think of, I told you not to do that. You did that. And now there are consequences for that. And perhaps when they're defiant, the bringing of the rod.

Corporal punishment. Now bring them up in the spanking of the Lord. That is not what this passage is saying. That's too narrow. Spanking is one of the tools in your toolbox.

[49 : 45] But the word discipline just means training. All kinds of training. Proactive training as well as correction and chastisement. So teaching them how to wait and self-control.

Train them to that. They don't know how to do that. Teach them what manners are like and how to eat politely. Teach them at naps and bedtime. Teach them communication skills. There's inside voices.

There's outside. There are polite words. There are impolite words. There's screaming and there's speaking. Proactive training as they're growing. Teach them to do chores. Teach them a difference between running and outside behavior and inside behavior.

Teach them that we care for other people's property. If you're going to borrow something, give it back to them better than the way you received it. Teach them about preferring others. Teach them how...

This is so helpful. Repeating an event, following the rod or corporal punishment, the time when they've been corrected. So let's say you squatted down and said, Come to dad.

[50 : 44] And the kid turned around and ran the other way. And you know they understood you. You're out of that zone. Did they know what they were doing? It's clear. This was defiance. Then you're going to discipline your child.

You're going to train them and correct them. But then it's really helpful. Go right back to the same spot and put Johnny right there and say, Let's try it again now. Come to dad.

And hopefully they come running to you. Don't be utterly shocked if they choose to go for it again.

Turn around, do a U-turn and run away from you. Not unheard of. And I think that's why sometimes

we're scared to go back and retrain.

Let's try it again. I don't want to have to go through that whole thing again. That's your job. Train them. One of the ways you train is by repeating an event, following a time when they've disobeyed you and failed.

So bring them up by training. And you do this by proactive training of all kinds. And then, of course, secondly, I've got there on page five, you also bring them up by correction and chastisement.

[51 : 47] This should be reserved for disobedience, for defiance. And even obedience accompanied by a defiant attitude. It was encouraging for us as young parents.

Even before we became parents, we had a close relationship with couples who were older than us and had kids and watching them have the courage to just say, you know, you can discipline for a defiant attitude, even when the actions were technically compliant.

So you should never use the rod. And we'll talk about this in more detail in a moment. The rod and corporal punishment, that kind of chastisement, is never used for immaturity.

That's not how you train. It's just a way to correct in the face of defiance. Let me give you an example of what I mean by immaturity versus defiance. If a young toddler who's learning to walk starts to pick up more speed than they intended to, momentum happened and they fall and break a lamp, you don't spank a kid for falling and breaking a lamp.

But with a six-year-old who's known for three good years of their life, we do not run in the house. I'm not saying that has to be your rule, but let's say that was your rule.

[53 : 00] We don't run in the house. And they run in the house and trip and break the lamp. That's not immaturity. That's defiance. And so in that case, you might give the rod.

An older child, however, we'll explain some of these differences. A 10-year-old runs through the house and breaks the lamp. What I think would be more effective is withholding of your allowance or your chore money will have to be saved up until you can buy mom a new lamp.

See, the use of the rod is an artificial burst of physical pain that's intended to teach one lesson and one lesson only. And that is sin always leads to suffering.

And the younger a child is and the less conceptual they're able to say that you're able to teach them, the more... So before a child, before I can explain, let's say a crawling toddler keeps crawling over the living room and is determined to pick up a bobby pin and stick it in an electrical outlet.

I can't say to that toddler. I can say the words no. I can coach the word no. But I'll say this. If they just keep doing it and I spank their hand and that's the beginning, I would say an introduction into corporal punishment.

[54 : 17] If they begin to experience that long before they can say these words, this is all I know. If you touch that, it hurts here. That looking at you and doing it anyway, that sin in my heart, even before they could say these words, it leads to suffering.

There are consequences for it. And you need to understand, we are trying to undo a lie that began in Genesis 3. When Satan deceived Eve and said, you can sin without consequence, you surely shall not die.

That lie has been spinning that I can sin without consequence. And you're beginning at the earliest stage to say, oh no, you can't sin without consequence. There will always be consequences. And so reserve the rod for it.

It's just meant to teach that one lesson. We'll talk about some of those nuances in just a minute. It is amazing, by the way, how quickly a child could learn from not only this corporal punishment and this proactive training combined, correction, chastisement, proactive teaching, and then secondly, instruction.

I'll give you some examples in a moment. But the word for instruction comes from the word that's more often translated in your Bible, admonishment. And to admonish comes from the idea of taking truth and placing it in someone's mind.

[55 : 37] Truth that someone's never heard before or maybe truth that they've forgotten. I think of it like, I don't know if you remember there was a, remember the reach toothbrush?

It was this toothbrush that had a 45 degree angle on the end. And the advertisement was because you don't have a flip top head, you can't reach all the places in your teeth. And so this clever little toothbrush is going to hit angles you can't hit.

But in this cartoon drawing, they would, it was if you were hinged here and you could just open up your whole head. And that may sound weird to you, but that's what I think of when I hear the word

admonishment. As if someone had a flip top head and I could just take God's word and put it in there.

Let me teach you something. You're a new believer. You've never known this before. Or you're a believer that's been in walking with the Lord a long time and I could tell you've forgotten. So let me have the privilege of just placing that truth back in your mind from my mouth to your ears, your heart and your mind.

That is our second tool. How do we bring them up? How do we nurture them in a long-term project? Train them and instruct them in the Lord to verbally place God's truth in your mind.

[56 : 45] It's amazing how quickly children can begin to grasp the concepts. So you start teaching them that sin is, here's the most important thing you want to place in their mind.

Sin is not an outward thing. There are outward manifestations of sin, but sin is much, much more pervasive than that. It's in your heart. And kids at a young age, we could train them to think about what's going on in their heart.

Why did you hit your sister? When you hit your sister, it doesn't prove you have a hand problem. You have a heart problem. What do you think was going on in your heart that made you grab that toy from your brother?

And from little age, I can hear my kids saying, selfishness. All right, you get it. Well, what would it have been like if from an early age, you were thinking about what's going on in my heart that made me speak to somebody that way?

What goes on in my heart that a certain instant, boom, just like that, instant fear. Or another situation, boom, why does it engender me with instantaneously anger?

[57 : 48] You and I have spent our adult Christians' lives trying to figure that out and go, we're a mystery to ourselves. You can't repent of sin you don't understand. And this shallow external view of sin that it's just my words and deeds.

Oh, no, Jesus says in Mark chapter 7, out of the heart comes all sin. So part of your instruction in placing truth in God's mind is help them understand something's going on in your heart that makes you do and say what you do.

And just questioning that in an early age can be incredibly helpful. I remember once I was giving the rod to my son.

He was, it'd be early elementary, I suppose, at least kindergarten. And he was just saying, Daddy, how come you don't get spankings? And I said, well, because I'm an adult and when you become an adult, and allow me to just say here that changes in a teenager's body make it pretty clear that continuing to give the rod would be shameful and demeaning in ways that it isn't with a little one. And so I said, well, because I'm a grown-up, I said, I don't get the rod anymore, but God spans my heart when I sin. He said, oh, you mean like that burning feeling you get in your tummy when you tell a lie?

[59 : 11] I was like, yeah, that's your conscience. And that's the Spirit of God, like spanking your heart, telling you what you did was wrong. And I said, so I get spanked on my heart. And so he goes, okay, he seemed satisfied for a minute.

Then he could tell the wheels were turning. And he goes, wait a minute. I get that feeling too. So how come I get spankings on my heart and my bottom, and you only get spankings on your heart? And I'm just like, because that's just how it is when you grow up. But I said, I can assure you the consequences of sin in an adult's life are way greater than a spanking.

I remember the first time I kept, one of my kids was now too old to spank. And I told them they weren't going to be able to go to some social event.

I didn't ever use church. I didn't want to withhold the Word of God in the child's life. You can't go to youth group because you disobeyed. I don't think that's a great area to ground in. But I was, they couldn't go to a party.

[60 : 10] And I remember they came to me tearfully. It was one of my daughters and pleading. She said, please, can I just have a spanking instead and get it over with? And I said, oh, no. Clearly, I have found something that hurts worse than a spanking.

No, honey, I'm not going to give you a spanking. But that's what you're trying to. Look, the consequences. The rot is an artificial consequence. It's a short burst. It's artificial to teach the lesson sin leads to suffering.

But as a child ages, you have the opportunity to make a more specific kind of, something that's related where the crime and punishment can meet each other better.

So the more conceptual your child is, the more you can be creative. And I'm joking about taking delight in their pain, but it did reinforce to me, I'm on the right track. Because I want you to understand sin leads to suffering.

And tonight, your suffering is, you can't go to the party. As much as you'd like to. Look at page six. Just some proverbs on the use of corporal punishment, chastisement, the rod.

[61 : 15] Remember again, this is reserved for defiance. This is never used. This is not how you train in maturity. This is what you do when a child has been defiant. So I just gathered the proverbs on the rod into a couple of categories.

Number one, why is the rod necessary? First reason it's necessary is because of the child's sinful nature. Because of what God says about a child's heart. Proverbs 10, 13, the rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.

Your child was born lacking understanding. And the use of, and we'll just use the word rod, not saying it has to be a round instrument. But the use of the rod was just a poetic shorthand for physical chastisement.

The rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding. Proverbs 14, in the mouth of fools is a rod for his back. In other words, a child's sometimes defiant speech and foolishness is going to require the use of physical chastisement.

Proverbs 22, foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child. The rod of discipline will remove it far from him. Proverbs 26, a whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod is for the back of fools.

[62 : 31] And so foolishness is bound up in your child's heart. And God says that one of the ways we train our children is through physical chastisement. The rod teaches that sin leads to suffering. Secondly, the rod is not only necessary because of who a child is in his heart from birth.

But the rod is also necessary because the parents, as parents, we have a sinful reluctance to do it. Proverbs 13, 24, he who withholds the rod hates his son.

But he who loves him disciplines diligently, trains diligently. It is unloving ultimately. You're loving yourself if you withhold the rod.

Sometimes we withhold it just because we're too lazy to get up out of the chair. We just can't believe we're going to have to do it again. Sometimes we're reluctant just because our temperament is just tender temperament.

It just doesn't want to do it. Tandy would often tell me, man, it is only for the love of Jesus that I ever use the rod. It's just, I hate to do it. And that's just, I think, true for some.

[63 : 38] Proverbs 23 says, Do not hold back discipline from the child. Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul.

Your child may give an Academy Award winning performance in death and dying. One of our grandchildren is so expressive. I mean, this child's highs are higher than any high.

This child's low is lower than, and I walked in after work one day. We were, we're at our daughter's house, and she was disciplining this child. And I walk in, I mean, just blood curdling, dramatic.

I said, another Academy Award for improvements in death and dying? She said, yes. That's, do you understand what the Lord understands that? That's why he put this in his word. Though he won't die, he's just going to make you think he is.

Don't buy it. You're actually rescuing his soul from eternal death. And so, it's an act of love. And the rod is necessary, and the instruction is necessary, because we are often, as parents, sinfully reluctant to use it.

[64 : 51] Thirdly, the rod is necessary because of the consequences of not using the rod. Look what he says. Proverbs 19, 18, discipline your son while there's hope, and do not desire his death.

You are accelerating death if you don't do this. Discipline your son. That means there's a window while there's hope, because there's a window coming. You can't do that anymore. Proverbs 29, the rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

Rebellious, undisciplined children who've never been trained, no attempt to limit them in their autonomy. He says, they will ultimately bring you shame. And finally, positively, Proverbs 29, 17, correct your son, and he'll give you comfort.

He will also delight your soul. So, your use of faithfully using the rod can lead to great grief or great joy. Now, remember, these are proverbs.

They're principles. They aren't promises, because you could say, well, I corrected my son. He didn't bring me comfort. He's been nothing but grief. I understand that. This is not a guilt-edge guarantee promise.

[66 : 01] This is a proverb saying, well, one thing for sure, no discipline on your part will not lead to joy for either of you. And so, Solomon wisely gives us these principles. Just a couple minutes just to talk about some common problems with the rod.

When somebody comes to say, I'm trying, but it's not working. Now, here are some things that I've noticed as I explore people's lives and this is our own experience as parents. And this is probably an area where during our Q&A; on Sunday night, you might have some questions.

You might jot down those questions now while they're fresh on your mind, and then maybe we can discuss them on Sunday night. But here are some common problems. Waiting too late for discipline.

So, you've repeated yourself so many times, and now finally, in a state of exasperation, you're finally going to give the rod. That tends to not work because you're going to be so tempted towards giving the rod in parental anger now, rather than in love, that you're undoing its effect.

Now, the effect is, oh, I'm getting the rod because I pushed you to the point you got so mad you're hitting me. That does not represent what God is wanting to communicate in the giving of the rod.

[67 : 08] You represent God in the moment you're giving the rod, and God doesn't wait until He's just... His anger is a sustained opposition to sin because He's holy. God doesn't have temper tantrums.

He doesn't have sudden solar flares in His anger. He's not suddenly... He didn't roll up and get up on the wrong side of the bed today. No, God's anger is as holy as His love and His mercy.

It's perfect. You want to try to represent the perfect opposition that God has because He's holy to everything that is unholy. So you wait too late for discipline.

It will tend to be infected by parental anger rather than done as an act of love. Sometimes the problem with the rod is you're using too much force. People say, well, how hard?

How many licks? How many... That's a private decision you will have to make together with your spouse. But I'll say this. My guiding principle would be this.

[68 : 07] The least amount of force that it takes to get the job done. What's the job? To see a child broken under it.

That they felt, oh, sin led to suffering. The least amount. And that varies from child to child. Some of my kids just saying, we're going to go to the laundry room. The laundry room is the room in our house that didn't have any windows to the outside.

You need to be culturally wise. We live in an age where people don't understand biblical loving chastisement. So, you know, I would never do this in public. I wouldn't even go to a car. And, you know, there are cameras everywhere now.

And people could accuse you of wronging your child when you're actually doing what God says.

And so, too much force sometimes just scares a child. So, it took less force with my daughters than my son.

Something about me as a man. Something about her tenderness as a girl. Sometimes, however, the rod's not working because there's not enough force. It really just didn't make it hurt. And you don't need to be leaving marks.

[69 : 12] There's no reason for bruising. We're not talking about beating. We're talking about loving, controlled chastisement as an act of love and submission of your heart to God's law.

And so, but not enough force. If it doesn't hurt enough, then they're not learning the lesson. And you say, well, how do you know? Well, trial and error. But there's something that happens in the heart of the child when they've softened under the use of the rod.

And there's a, they'll come back and hug you. In essence, all but say thank you for it. Because something got purged out of their conscience. They knew it was wrong.

In real life, the consequences for sin might be lifelong. But in a child's life, a young child's life, the use of the rod, it's just a few minutes and it's over. And so, too much force, not enough force is a common problem.

Inconsistency is a huge problem. You know, yesterday I did the same thing and I didn't get a spanking for it. And today I do, I'm confused. Now, what do you do when that happens? You admit to the child, I've been inconsistent.

[70 : 17] I noticed yesterday I was saying everything three times. Today, good morning, we're back to square one. You need to obey mommy and dad the first time. So, acknowledge inconsistency and change it.

Failing to include instruction. That's like another common problem. Instruct them in something besides, I've had it with you. Just, you know, go to the laundry room. That's not what's happening. I'd tell one of our kids, by the way, on that use of force, just saying go to the laundry room. Just explosion of tears and drama. And it's like, just haven't touched you yet. So, just be thoughtful and be consistent.

Failing to give instruction. Just making sure that, that's what makes sure, do you understand you disobeyed God? Yeah. You didn't just disobey me. I had to tell my kids, I would be now disobeying God if I didn't spank you.

Because his word tells me, if I love you, I'll give you the rod. And not giving you the rod would be unloving. You don't want me to not love you, do you? And they're like, is that a trick question? Child's fears.

[71 : 21] Yeah, man, if they're just so afraid of it. And then maybe that means you've been using too much force. I think another common failure in the rod is where there's no confession or acknowledgement of sin.

You need to get a verbal sign off from them that says, I did disobey you. I did not do what you asked or I did what you told me not to do.

If the rod is ever used to release parental frustration rather than loving correction, that's going to, it won't be effectively used the way God said it would. And failing to represent God's authority and his offense in the process.

And then failing to show affection afterwards. The rod should end with an embrace and a hug and I love you. And in essence just says, that's over. That's over.

That's done. I would always ask my kids, do you want to pray? And sometimes my kids would say yes. And they'd say, God, I disobeyed and please forgive me. And other times some of my kids would say, no, I don't want to.

[72 : 22] And I'd say, well, or I don't know how. Well, just tell God what you told me. I disobeyed you. See, sometimes I'd never forced them to pray. I wouldn't recommend that. And I wouldn't be overly alarmed that some of my kids wanted to pray and some didn't.

I didn't think the praying ones were saved. I didn't think the unpraying ones were hopeless. It was, some was just temperament difference and softness of heart. But offer.

And if they don't want to pray, then you pray. Or even if they do pray, you should, I'd recommend you pray as well. What you have on page seven and eight is two excellent pages out of some curriculum called Parenting for Life out of Grace Community Church in California.

These two pages are excellent. If you have more questions about the process of giving the rod, read these before that Q&A; on Sunday night. It may answer. I would call this my FAQ.

Frequently asked questions about the use of chastisement. So children have two priorities in their relationship. They are to not only obey, but to honor. Parents have two priorities.

[73 : 25] And they are to, under the banner of nurturing, a long-term project of maturing a little human, they are to do two things. Fathers, we are to avoid exasperation and provoking to anger through hypocrisy, inconsistency.

And not only are we to avoid that, but we're to pursue them, growing them up, using the tools of training, which includes correction but isn't limited to it.

Though the correction seems to be where most of us have our questions in parenting. But not only correction, but then just the proactive training them. And over time, it's less and less correction and more and more influence and teaching from Scripture.

That's just big picture overview of what the Lord is asking us to do. So let's pray. We'll take our break and then come back and talk about parenting in the teen years. Gracious Father, thank you that you haven't left us without both motivation and instruction.

Thank you, Lord, that you bring clarity to us. That we just need to hear again and again that we get worn down. We start polluting the process of parenting with worldly thinking or our own ideas.

[74 : 36] And while we want to be creative and nuanced and personalize these principles, according to the rhythm of each family's life, there are some timeless things here that we just need to be reminded of.

And so thank you for reminding us what you call children to do so we can train to that goal. Thank you for warning us, particularly as men, that there'll be a tendency to lose sight of the long-term project and to infect the process with impatience that I'm being inconvenienced by someone else's immaturity and sin.

Thank you that you've warned us we can exasperate our children. We can take the wind out of their sails where they feel no hope. And clearly we're not communicating gospel hope in that scenario. So help us to be these kind of men, not feminized men, but godly men who would parent our kids the way you patiently train us.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.