

Instruction For Moms

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in El Prado, Georgia. Please listen to Pastor Gardner as he brings a special challenge for mothers.

Amen. Take your Bibles down. Turn with me, if you would, to the book of Proverbs, chapter 1. What an awesome privilege it is today. God lets you bring home a little bitty baby from the hospital. If you're like my daughter, they're all born at your house except for the twins.

But you've got this precious little life that God entrusts you with. I can't imagine anything more fantastic than that. I can still remember when we held Chris as a little bitty baby, and I can still remember two little 20, 21-year-old kids holding a little baby and realizing, boy, life has totally changed.

We told people that having children would not affect us. We told them that it wouldn't change us. We told them we would continue on just like we had as a childless couple. You know, that lasted a couple hours, and we realized quickly that it doesn't work that way.

Amen? It's a big job being a parent. And the God of heaven gives us instruction about everything. He is such a wonderful God. He's given us such a wonderful book.

[1 : 16] And there are three things I want to share with you this morning out of the book of Proverbs. That's how I'm going to group them for you. The number one thing I want to show you is that we ought to give direction to our children. Our children need to know how to live.

They need to know what to do with their life. And we're given a precious little life. I've said this so many times that you already know it, But in Spanish, the word for brat means poorly raised.

It is mal creado, bad raised. And so whenever you see a child that hasn't got direction in their life, the blame doesn't go to the child. The blame goes to the trainer of the child.

That's a pretty tough thing. So we ought to give direction to our children. The number two thing I'd like to show you is we ought to love our children. And I want to show you some things that the book of Proverbs says about loving our children.

And then the third thing is we ought to teach them the fear of the Lord. They ought to learn to know God, to believe in God, to know there is a great God in heaven, and to trust Him in their life. I want to take you all through the book of Proverbs this morning.

[2 : 19] Not long ago I was with a person who actually said, I have not got one good memory of my mother. I have not got one good memory of my childhood.

I've not got one good memory. And I think maybe these three points could be used in our lives today to help us as we raise our children. Look if you would in Proverbs chapter 1 and verse 8.

And I know this isn't our typical way of preaching, but this is Mother's Day, so I want to take you through some different things in the book of Proverbs. The first thing is give your children direction for living.

Proverbs chapter 1 and verse 8. The Bible says, My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. You know, if anybody is really working at raising the child, in many ways it's the mom.

She's the one that feeds them. She's the one that clothes them. Dad gets up and goes off to work. She's the one that oftentimes is found praying with the child at night. She's the one teaching so many things.

[3 : 23] And here Solomon's talking to his son. Daddy talking to his son. And he says to him, Now, son, I'm giving you instruction. And one of the instructions is, he said, Here are the instructions. And don't you get away from the law of your mother.

Don't get away from what your mama taught you. Don't get away from what your mother taught you. So I would like to show you some things, some things that are mentioned in the book of Proverbs.

Number one, Proverbs 22, 6. Our most well-known Bible verse about child rearing. Train up a child in the way he should go. And when he is old, he will not depart from it.

And so as we're given children, we know that they're going to go pretty much the way we direct them. We're going to follow that way. And so just let me mention a couple of things to our moms real quickly, if I could.

You know, the first thing, Mother, is you must be in the way. You must be in the way. You must be serving God and loving Him and living for Him. Because, you see, it's pretty hard to teach a child to be what you're not.

[4 : 28] It's pretty hard to teach a child to be what you're not. It's one thing if Mother said, Now, son, you ought not do this. But he's watching you and he sees a whole different thing. They're going to pick up on much more of what we are than what we say.

And Solomon wrote a proverb down. Train up a child in the way he should go. And so there's a way, a correct way. You know Jesus is the way. But there's a correct way.

Train him up in the way he should go. And he's old. He'll not depart from it. It just makes me think of a few things here for us. You should explain your faith. You should explain your faith to your child.

You should explain why you believe the Word of God and how you believe the Word of God. And you should realize those kids can understand so much more than you think they can. It's amazing. Our granddaughter Chloe lives in the basement.

And when Chloe's upstairs, she can't say a lot of words. Or she can mimic you saying them. But if you say something, she understands it. And you can see that so easily. When you say something, especially if you say something about she's not getting that piece of candy.

[5 : 29] Or if you say something about she's fixing to go to bed, she may not even understand you are going to bed. But when you say it, she knows exactly what you're saying. It's amazing. And yet we have the most wonderful opportunity to share our faith.

You know what, Mom? There will be no greater memory than your child could have than of you being on your knees praying with that child. Of you being on your knees showing that child how to pray and how to get in touch with God.

Be careful to teach them to observe all things. You know, the greatest discipleship. Our church talks about discipleship a lot. Do you realize the greatest discipleship goes on in a home?

And that you are modeling discipleship? If it's ever existed, you're modeling discipleship more than I could ever model it as a pastor or as a man trainer. Every dad and every mom in this room, that's discipleship.

I mean, you've got the greatest opportunity in the world to get your child to understand the things of God, to know how to walk. And you can lovingly and kindly teach them. You remember what Matthew 28, 19, and 20 says?

[6 : 32] It said that we were to go and teach all nations. Then we were to baptize them. But I think often we forget that last part. The last part of verse 20 says, and teaching them to observe.

Teaching them to put into practice. Teaching them to live out all the things that they've been commanded. The easiest thing that ever happened to me was becoming a dad. I mean, that's not that hard.

Just to be honest with you, you and I both know it's not hard to become a dad. It's not hard to become a mom. A little bit harder on your mothers because you go through about seven, eight months, nine months of some things I didn't have to go through.

Praise the Lord for that. But, you know, it's not that hard to become a parent. But then to raise that child and to teach them to observe all things. To get that in. So teach them the way that they should go.

Teach them the way they should go. Here's another thing from Proverbs 1, verse 10. And I'm not going to read all the way down to 19, but I would like you to write it down. And maybe you could check it out.

[7 : 29] But you know what Solomon does? He starts off the book of Proverbs. And one of the first things he does is say, hold it, son. I want to talk to you. I want to talk to you about who you ought to hang around with and why.

I want to talk to you about who you ought to hang around with and why. Would you look this way just a second? You know, that's kind of, in our society, it's almost like a taboo thing to say, No, that's not the best place to hang around. Those aren't the most agreeable people.

And I'd prefer you not to be there. And I really want you here. And it's like, that's not politically expedient. That's not politically correct for you to say that. But Solomon said, Hey, my son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

And then he gives him a whole big explanation. Look at verse 11. Just so you can mark it in your Bible. Just keep your Bible open to Proverbs. Underline in verse 11. If they say. You know what he said?

He said, Now, so let me explain something to you. You've got to be careful. There's a lot of people out there that would get you off track. They would get you out of the way your mom and I are trying to teach you. They would get you to do things that you ought not to do.

[8 : 30] And they'd get you to do things that I'm not training you to do. And then he said that he didn't just say, Don't you go with those people. Those are bad people. Stay away from them. That's not what he did. He said, Let me just say this to you.

If they say. And then he says, This is what they're going to say. This is the way they talk. They're going to talk to you about everybody getting together. And us all being buddies. And us all working together. Doing wrong. And he said, If they say that.

And he explains down to it. Look at verse 15. Underline in verse 15. He says, My son, walk not thou in the way with them. He said, Son, now listen. This is what they're going to say.

This is what's really going to happen. And son, hey, don't listen to them. Walk not thou. Don't you go the way they go. Stay away from them. Then he says in that same verse, Refrain your foot.

He said, Now stay away from them. But I really like verse 16. If I could challenge moms and dads today. Look at verse 16. Verse 16, he says, Four. You've got to put a big circle around that.

[9 : 23] He said, Watch this. Here's Solomon talking to his son. Here's how a mom ought to talk to her. Hey, son, there's going to be people out there who want to get you off track. Fact is, let me explain what they're going to say.

They always make it sound really good. They always make it sound really appealing. And they're going to say all that. But son, don't do it. Here's what they say. Hey, stay away from them. Don't go around them.

And let me tell you why. Because when you do it, if you go ahead and read to the last of that chapter, you're going to really get hurt. And I know that. And I want to explain that to you. Teach them how to deal with temptation when it comes.

Because it will. Teach them how to deal with temptation. Get them ready. Have them ready to stand and face it. Tell them why and what will happen. And don't exaggerate. Boy, we are the older generation.

We're like, Man, if you ever kiss a girl, you'll probably die right there. Just don't kiss a girl. And then the next thing you know, they kiss one. They say, Dad lied about that. That was fun. And nothing happened. So you don't exaggerate.

[10 : 21] Tell the truth. Solomon said, Hey, son, if they ask you to do wrong, don't do it. If they do, this is how they'll talk to you. And hey, son, stay away from them. And let me explain to you what's going to happen.

The whole book of Proverbs is going to be him explaining to his son. He's going to talk to them about the women who will try to take him and use him sexually and get his money and everything else. He's going to talk to them, his son, about alcohol and what damage it could do to him.

He's going to talk to his son just about every, even about laziness he's going to talk to. Give direction to your children. God gave you children. What a wonderful thing. I won't take you to this verse.

I want to ask you to look it up. But in 2 Timothy 1.5, the Bible says, When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, I am persuaded that in thee also.

I just want to say, and I will get to that in the book of Proverbs. We're going to talk about the fear of the Lord. But can I just real quickly say to you that you ought to teach your children direction, and that means the way of salvation.

[11 : 22] The way of salvation. It ought to break your heart as you're raising your children. You ought to be like, man, I want to show my children about Jesus. I want to show them that we're all sinners.

I want to show them that we have no way to get to heaven. We have no way to get to God. And it's Jesus and Jesus alone who saves people and gives them a chance. And you want to explain that to your children.

You want to help them understand the truth. It was in the grandmother. It was in the mother. And now it's in you. Timothy, that's what he says to you. You and I have such a responsibility. I can remember when Betty called me way before the days of cell phones.

And she said, our daughter Joy was just asking her and talking to her about Jesus and talking to her about getting saved and going to heaven. And she said, and Joy said this, I don't want to go to heaven.

I love the devil. And I want to go to hell. Well, Betty was all torn up, of course. And I was all torn up. I said, well, she's only four years old. She don't mean that.

[12 : 21] And Betty said, oh, she means it. She is. And you know, it's kind of tough. And we prayed and begged God. I pray now for my grandkids. Man, I want them to know Jesus. Are you actively teaching your children?

Are you getting them in a Sunday school class where great teachers are sharing the gospel with them? Because, buddy, that's what happens. We've got some of the greatest Sunday school teachers that are just taking the Bible and sharing it with you. You've got an opportunity after church to sit down with your children and go over what was taught them.

Teach your children the way of salvation. There really is a heaven. And there really is a hell. And Jesus is the only way to escape hell. And he's the only way to get to heaven. And I need my kids to understand that.

I'll be honest. If I had to choose between the world and my kids, I'd choose my kids. I want my kids to go to heaven. I want to know Jesus. How many of you agree with that? Say amen. And take it seriously. Work at getting the gospel to them.

Let me give you one other thing about direction. I got in big trouble for saying this in Peru. So I may get in trouble today. Teach your children to get out of bed and work. That's a good direction.

[13 : 24] Look at your Bible at Proverbs chapter 6. Proverbs chapter 6 verses 6 through about 10. And I just say to you, we're going to give our children direction.

After salvation and after some character issues, the greatest thing my parents taught me was a work ethic. How many of you would agree with that? Say amen. Come on.

I need a better amen. Y'all are anemic. Say amen. All right. That's a command amen. You didn't mean it. But anyway, have you ever noticed that there's a lot of people that don't have a work ethic? Have you ever noticed that we suffer from a lack of work ethic?

You realize where that came from. You can't blame that on the president. You can't blame that on the Congress. You can't even blame that on the church. You'd like to blame that on us. And this is what Solomon told his son in Proverbs chapter 6 verse 6.

I love this. Down through verse 11. Read with me. Go to the ant thou sluggard. Hey, you little lazy bum. Go to the ant. Go out there and look at the ant and see what she does.

[14 : 27] Consider her ways and be wise. I want you to think about ants. I want you to get an ant farm and I want you to study them. They have no guide, no overseer, no ruler. And they provide her, she provides her meat in the summer and she gathers her food in the harvest.

He said, you know what? This ant works. This ant works. This ant provides. This ant. Boy, look at how rough that was. He said, you sluggard. Had a lady in Peru challenge me over in the corner.

She said, I had to work when I was a child and my children are not going to work. They're not going to know what it's like to work. Well, that's really kind of like setting your kid up to fail. Amen. Teach them to work.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard. Consider her ways and be wise. I don't know what's wrong with us as parents, but I'm just going to show you what the Bible said and I'll just say this to you. For some reason, we think it's okay for our kids to learn to sleep till noon every day.

That's okay when they're one. That's okay when they're two, but sooner or later, they better get up and learn how to do something. And that's what he said to his son. Look at what he said, if you would, in chapter 6. Look at chapter 6 and verse 9.

[15 : 28] How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. And so shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth, and thy want as an armed man.

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands. Watch this. Moms can have a soft side. And so they want them to have a little sleep, a little slumber, and a little folding of the hands.

Sometimes dad's like the big old tyrant in the house. That kid ought to get up and go to work. Mama's saying, he's only 18 months old. Give him a break. And here's what Solomon said. Not 18 months, by the way.

I mean, you can put them to work. You don't need to put them to work for their two or three, really. I mean, they need a break. They're going to have to work all their life, you know. But, you know, they can learn little things when they're small. And here's what he said.

He said, a little sleep. You know, it's not a lot of sleep that ruins a man. It's not a lot of slumber that ruins a man. It's not a lot of folding of the hands. It's a little. It's a little here and a little there and a little here and a little there that will get that child messed up.

[16:37] And poverty comes their way. That's the first point I want you to look at this morning. We should give our children direction. It is a major issue that God gave you a child.

And you've got like 18 years, 20 years max. You've got like 10 or 12 years. You've probably got 6 or 8 years before that child really has got to be on the right path.

You've got to get them going as soon as you can and teach them the right things. Because you've got to form in them character. You've got to form in them character that will help them go on into adulthood. Give them direction.

The second thing I see in the book of Proverbs, he gave them love. Look at Proverbs 4, 3. I love this phrase for a mother. Chapter 4, verse 3, last phrase. For I was my father's son.

But look what he says. Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. I was tender and beloved in the sight of my mother. Boy, I was somebody special in my mother's sight.

[17:34] But I'm sure you heard the story of these young people. And I think I read it in Reader's Digest many, many years ago. And they were at their mother's funeral. And there were three kids in the family. And one of them was feeling extremely guilty because he knew that he had been his mother's favorite.

And he could remember when Mama told him how he was the favorite. They were at the swing set in the park. And Mama explained that he was the favorite. And everybody was crying. Everybody was talking about Mom. And finally he just broke down and said, I just want to go ahead and tell you how special I was to Mom.

I was her favorite. And the other one said, no, I was. The first said, no, I was in the park on the swing set when Mama told me. And the other kid said, oh, I was on the slide when she told me. And before it was over, they were all saying, I was Mama's favorite.

Look what the Bible verse says. Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. Treat them specially. All are different. They need special treatment.

They need special love and kindness. What a privilege to be married. A marriage, excuse me, a mom. But be married. And your wife, if you're a mom, it's really good to be married. Say amen there.

[18:38] But look if you would at this. Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. Do you realize how important it is that you in love realize?

See, we've got two kinds of moms. We've got the one mom that's a totalitarian. She'll beat you for walking in the room. And then we've got the other mother that is so full of love, she's never, ever understood the word discipline.

But in the Bible, and this is, boy, I'm telling you, I would get shot for a mother's day message. I asked me, I said, should I preach about mothers? She said, yeah, we'd really like that. But after this over, baby's going to say, you should have stuck to John.

You ready? Watch this. Guys, in the Bible, discipline comes with love and tenderness. They're not a contradiction. They're not a contradiction.

Look, if you would, in Proverbs 13, verse 24. Please put on your seatbelt. Please hang on. The Bible says, he that spares his rod. Would y'all read out loud with me what it says there next?

[19 : 38] Would you say that out loud with me? Hateth. I can hear you. He that spares the rod, what? Hateth his son. But he that loveth him, chasteneth him, betimes.

This discipline shows love. Discipline shows love. Every child needs boundaries. Now, we could discuss what it means here when it says, spare the rod.

Spare the rod. The old saying was, spare the rod, spoil the child. When I was a young kid, the statement was, children are made to be seen and not heard. And buddy, them old timers believed in discipline.

And I mean, sometimes that discipline was excessive and wrong, and I've been guilty. But watch this. There is a direct correlation in the Bible between love and spankings or discipline of some sort.

Watch this. Hebrews chapter 12, verses 5 through 11. And we won't read it for the sake of time and because it's not in the book of Proverbs for you. But listen to what God said.

[20 : 38] Listen to what God said. He said, if you're my child, I discipline you. And if I don't discipline you, you're not my child. He said, every child that I love, I discipline strongly.

He said, by the way, your parents disciplined you for their own pleasure. I discipline you for your profit. You were proud of your parents who disciplined you, but you get upset with me for disciplining you.

But here's the center of Hebrews chapter 12. If God loves you, He disciplines you. If God loves you, He disciplines you.

Now, can I take you to something right here? You know, as a parent, your kids need to know. Well, hey, my parents are going to get me on the straight and narrow. My parents are going to help me to do right.

My parents are going to help me to live and be what I ought to be. Because that's what's right. And that's what the Bible teaches. It's not pleasant, but it yields fruit. Look with me, if you would, at Proverbs 29, 15.

[21 : 39] Love. Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. But in Proverbs 29, 15, the Bible says, The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame.

Did you know God didn't... Listen to this. Did you know God didn't give you children to just feed them and clothe them and send them to school? And you just kind of like house them until they're grown? That's not what He did.

He didn't say to you, hey, just get them and they'll grow up on their own. And just however it turns out. That's not what He said in the book of Proverbs. You know what He said in the book of Proverbs? He said, hey, the rod and reproof, discipline and scoldings give wisdom.

But if you leave a kid alone, you leave a child alone, they'll bring shame to their mother. They'll embarrass their mother. They'll embarrass their mother.

I hope that you can realize that we are to prepare our children for life and we're to help them grow up. If you discipline them, you'll be able to rest and enjoy life.

[22 : 41] If you discipline them, you'll be able to rest and enjoy life. Look at what your Bible says in Proverbs chapter 29. And that verse was wrong, wasn't it? 29.15. If that's not, this one is.

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest. Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. And that's not Proverbs 29.17. Thank you there, Patrick. You're smarter than I am. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest.

Yea, he shall give delight to your soul. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that amazing? If you've ever raised children, you know that there can be some real turbulent times when you're raising children.

You know you can go through some stuff that's just really rough, and that's kind of like to be expected, and there's some things going to happen. But here's what he said. Hey, if you'll discipline your child, if you'll correct your child, you'll have rest and delight.

Rest and delight. You'll be able to enjoy your children. By the way, raising children, in my opinion, this is an Austin Gardner opinion, not a Bible opinion.

[23 : 41] It's the most wonderful, fantastic, beautiful, hard thing I've ever done. It's like the toughest, hardest thing, heartbreaking thing I've ever done. And it's the sweetest, most wonderful thing I've ever done.

Because I've had some problems with my kids. And here's what he said. Correct them. They'll give you rest. Correct them. Correct them. And they'll give delight to your soul. Proverbs 23, 23, and 24.

You'll even save his life eternally. You'll even save his life eternally. Withhold not correction from the child. Hang on, please.

For if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shall deliver his soul from hell. Don't stop discipline.

It's always tough. What can I just say? After 40 years of pastoring and working in churches, it's better for your child to be disciplined at home than from society and a school system or with the police.

[24 : 45] It's a whole lot better for you in loving kindness and when they're small to discipline them lovingly and kindly. I'm not talking about beating them with a rod. That's what the Bible says right there.

But, you know, in a way, I think sometimes we've got to hear really strong words because we just about leave correction alone.

Undisciplined, disrespectful children will suffer all the days of their lives.

Will suffer all the days of their lives. Look at Proverbs 30 verse 17. The eye that mocketh at his father and despises to obey his mother. The ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it.

Boy, what an awesome privilege to be a parent. But what an awesome responsibility. But if they don't get disciplined, if they continue or if they rebel against the discipline and they mock and they despise, look what's coming to them.

[25 : 48] Third thing I want to talk to you about is teaching your children to fear God so they can be wise. Proverbs chapter 10 and verse 1. Last thing. Teach them to fear God.

Now that term, I used that recently and I probably had more people come to me and say, what in the world does it mean to fear God? What in the world does it mean to fear God? It's an awesome reverence and respect.

It is realizing he's big and I'm small. It's realizing he makes the decisions and I obey. It's realizing I am not on his level. When the Bible says, come, let us reason together.

Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. That wasn't you coming and give your excuses. That was you coming and realize he said you as a sinner and he'll give you forgiveness if you'll repent and ask him to.

We're not on a plane to go and talk to God and explain. The Proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

[26 : 47] They need to be taught to fear God. Real quickly, Proverbs 1.7. What is the beginning of wisdom? It's the fear of the Lord. It's to realize there is a God. It's to realize that our lives are lived in light of the fact that we are created.

It is to realize that there's somebody bigger and it's not really mom and dad. You realize that if we're doing our job, we're not trying to get them to obey us. We're trying to get them to understand there's a God in heaven and they need to obey him.

We're going to teach them Bible principles. Not your principles. Not Baptist principles. But God principles. That's what we want to teach them. And when you teach them the fear of the Lord, you will teach them to avoid sin and its consequences.

Look at Proverbs 8.13. What a wonderful promise. Proverbs 8.13. Look what it says. The Bible says the fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride and arrogance in the evil way and the froward mouth do I hate.

So when you fear God and when you teach your child to fear God, they're going to learn to hate evil. Because they're going to learn to love right and light and not darkness. And they're going to learn the things of God.

[27 : 52] And you're going to teach them what does the Word of God say and what does God think about this. And it's not because mama says and daddy says it's because it's right. It's because it's wrong. He says the fear of the Lord teaches them to hate evil.

And notice in that it says the evil way. It even says a smart aleck mouth. The mocking froward mouth that so many are guilty of. In Proverbs 10.27.

The Bible says the fear of the Lord prolongeth days. You'll even give him a longer life because he'll learn to trust God and believe God. You'll give him confidence in a world where every kid is so insecure and everybody has to fall in line.

Look what happens in Proverbs chapter 14 and verse 26. And the fear of the Lord is strong confidence and his children shall have a place of refuge. I know.

I know I'm right with God because I learned of my sinful condition and I trusted in Jesus and I'm saved. As I teach him the fear of God, I teach him. Hey, even the way you were made is fabulous and wonderful.

[28 : 53] And as your mother, it's not because you're my child, I tell you that. But God said that he formed you and he puts you together. You're just exactly made right. Because if you teach them the word of God, you're going to give them a confidence beyond anything that we could ever understand.

Teach them to fear God. I've got other verses here, but let me go back over this. Number one, teach them direction. You know, I struggled. I'd rather stay than John because I'd just follow along with what the Bible said.

And not a lot of things I could preach out of the Bible and really take it straight out of the Bible about moms or dads either. But watch this. When God gave you children, he gave you an awesome responsibility.

It is far more than putting diapers on them and burping them and giving them clothes and get them in a soccer league and taking them to school.

You are going to lay the foundation for an entire lifetime. And you've got only a handful of years to do it. And by the way, every year they live, every year they live, or it's closer to the launching date, it's closer to the leaving date, and it's faster than you believe.

[30 : 05] Give them direction now. Give them direction. You say, my child's only three. Good. You've still got time. If your kid was 13, you'd be running out of time.

If you have older kids, you know that's true. Give them direction. Love them. Let them know they're tender and only beloved. Let them know they're super special to you.

But remember that real love will discipline them. Real love will discipline them. It's amazing. It's amazing how many times we send undisciplined children to school and we want the teacher to straighten them out.

We want the teacher to make them grow up. And then we get mad at the teacher for disciplining our child because we didn't discipline our child. Then we get really mad when they have to put them in an alternative school because we're like, man, what's wrong?

I know I raised a brat, but y'all ought to put up with him like I did. I won't shake hands today. I'll just go hide. But it's true. Give them direction.

[31 : 04] Give them love. Love and discipline go together. Three, teach them to fear God. Teach them to know there's a God in heaven. You know, I'm not responsible for my children living right.

They may reject all the teaching I give them. They may walk away from right and truth. But I'll be honest. I want to be sure and give them the foundation. I want to show them how to live right.

I want to teach them and put them in the right way. I want to do it with love and tenderness and kindness and discipline. I want them to know there's a God in heaven. You do know, I'm sure, that everybody in the world was saved at least two times.

In Adam and Eve's day, they were all saved. It was just two of them. They were both saved. They were covered in the coats of skin. They were covered. It doesn't take but five short chapters after that for moms and dads to fail to teach their children to fear the Lord.

And God is so angry in Genesis 6 that he destroys the entire world with a flood. Then Noah got off the ark. There were eight people on the whole planet, and they were all born again, saved and used of God.

[32 : 12] And it's only a handful of years. Your child is going to be rebellious. Your child isn't going to like to be taught what to do.

Your child is going to stand up. But if you do this right, the thing, you're going to point them to Jesus. You're going to show them Jesus. You're not going to teach them moral platitudes. You're going to teach them grace.

You're going to show them that God sent His Son to die on a cross so they can be saved. You're going to show them because you really do want your children to go to heaven, I think.

And you really do want them to live for God. This isn't a game. This isn't a joke. It's not something we wait to get through in 18 or 20 years and get back to the empty nest. This is important. And suppose you've not used the time wisely.

Go home today and say, God, help me be the right kind of dad. Why don't you read the book of Proverbs, a chapter a day from the next six months, and mark everything about how to raise your children. Why don't you go to Deuteronomy chapter 6 and learn how to raise your children.

[33 : 11] Why don't you figure out, hey, man, I've got this awesome responsibility. I think it's really sad that they won't let you adopt a dog almost without a home study.

Are you going to sell the dog? Are you going to mistreat the dog? Are you going to put the dog on a chain? They want to know everything if you want a dog. But it's like we get kids just by natural reproduction, and we don't even have the same training.

It's an awesome responsibility to be a parent. Yes, it's a privilege. Yes, it's beautiful. But more than that, they could not give you, no one could give you anything more precious and more responsibility than being a parent.

Don't take it lightly. Don't take it lightly. Work at teaching your children. Give them direction. Love them. Discipline them. And teach them about God, about Jesus, about fear in the Lord.

Father in heaven, I pray you'd help us today. I pray you'd honor yourself in the lives of the moms here. God, there's such wonderful ladies here and wonderful dads and wonderful people.

[34 : 19] God, help us today to honor you by raising our children according to what you would have us do. God, help moms today to make some decisions and dads to make some decisions.

God, help some young people to decide now that they will live like they should, and they'll start respecting their mother, respecting their dad like they should. Help them to realize today that those truths are Bible truths and not just what mom and dad say.

Help them to be thankful for the wonderful mom and dad that would teach them, God, do a work in our lives. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church.

For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com.