

Family God's Way #5 - Parents and Children

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon emphasizes the importance of mutual submission in the home, with children obeying their parents and parents being servants to their children.

Duration: 1:01:49

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:8

Topics: "Parenting Godly", "Discipline And Law"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of following God's law and using it properly. He emphasizes that the law is not meant for righteous individuals, but for the rebellious and lawless. The speaker also highlights the significance of discipline in parenting, including the use of physical discipline when necessary. He cautions against parents becoming submissive to their children's demands and shares a humorous anecdote to illustrate this point. The sermon concludes with the reminder that even if children seem unresponsive to the law, it is still important to share God's standards with them, as God will eventually honor it.

Transcript

In our last study, we looked at the relationship and the ministry between husbands and wives. We saw that husbands and wives are to function as mutual servants, each serving the other, submission. Now in this study, we'll look at parents and children and we'll see that the same principle applies here as applies to husbands and wives.

And let's be reminded of what that principle is, Ephesians chapter 5 verse 21, being subject to one another, submitting to one another in the fear of God. This is to describe the life of every Christian. We are to submit to one another out of reverence for the Lord.

We are to be serving one another in his name and for his glory. And this is universally the pattern for the body of Christ. And then here in Ephesians 5, some of the key relationships and roles in the plan of God are spelled out, applying this rule of mutual submission to it.

Parents and children are also to live like this, in mutual servanthood. That is, they are to be subordinating their interests, their needs, their desires, even their own well-being, that is, as a servant does. They're to be subordinating these matters to one another.

And the reason they are to do it is out of respect for and reverence for the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ was the servant of all, and he has ordained that we, following him, walking in his paths, will learn servanthood in all of our relationships. Now this matter of servanthood, being subject to one another, is going to be applied first to the children, then later in the passage to parents.

First to apply this matter of servanthood to children, Ephesians chapter 6, verse 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. And let's add the parallel passage in Colossians, a couple of books further on, a book with many similar patterns and parallels to the book of Ephesians. Colossians 3, verse 20.

When Paul wrote the church at Colossae, he was led by the Spirit of the Lord to put it this way in this letter, children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Children, obey your parents. The way children are to function in a subservient, serving role in the household is through obedience.

Children are to obey their parents, and we want our children to learn the importance of obedience toward their parents. Children are to do what their parents say. They're to live under their authority, to live under their guidance, and as we just read in Colossians, they're to do this in all things.

As the children are growing up in the household, in all things, in all matters, in all areas of their lives, they're to function with this kind of servanthood, obediently following the leadership of their parents. For all the days that precede the days of leaving and cleaving, children are to obey their parents, just be willing to do what their parents say. Of course, they're to be doing this with increasing measures of freedom and responsibility.

A two-year-old will have less freedom and responsibility to just be do and don't do, basically across the board, except, you know, might have three toys there, which one will I play with? And, you know, you can perhaps trust your two-year-old to that decision, if they can't tear down the house with two of the three toys, you know. But as the children grow up at 12, and then later, they'll have more freedom and more responsibility to enter into evaluating decisions and all. But from all the days of birth to the days of leaving and cleaving, children, they're to function as servants in this way, just obey the instructions, the leadership of the parents.

Now, notice, this does include the teenage years. You say, you said that like they're different. Well, if you can remember your teen years, they were different, weren't they? If you have had teenagers, you know they are different.

And this includes the teen years, and this presses on to those days that might be near or approaching the leaving and cleaving, where one leaves the family and cleaves to the mate God has given, and those are exceedingly testing and stretching times. But these years include the teen years when lives are so tempted to rebel. I, of course, don't know what you did with your teenage years, but I must say that I did significantly rebel when I hit the teenage years.

I did it rather quietly, but I did it quite persistently, and I'm sorry to say, quite effectively. And I have to add, extensively in years, from age 15 to 25, I was in major rebellion against the Lord and even the counsel of my own family. Now, two of our three children also, like father like children, two of our three children also entered into some rebellion going out into the world, though, praise the Lord, they did not go as long as I did, though I must say they didn't necessarily go as quietly as I did either.

But I do praise the Lord, though, that all three of them now are walking with the Lord wholeheartedly and serving Him very fruitfully, even if at times it is much to my amazement. I give the Lord great praise for that. This very month, our kids will be 23, 24, and 25, which obviously doesn't win us any awards for family planning wisdom, but it has given us much opportunity to see the faithfulness of God to both work through us as parents as well as the wonder of wonders and the critical aspect of working in spite of us as parents.

And each are a wonder to behold. And the Lord often has to forgive and rebuild both parents and children, and the Lord is able to do that. But this obey your parents, it's through all the years of their lives, from this birth up to the leaving and cleaving process.

But we're told here that they are to obey their parents in the Lord. In the Lord, very key phrase. They're to obey us in the Lord.

This is a part of the child's accountability to and responsibility before the Lord. And we want our children to understand this. This obedience is a matter of their life and our life in the Lord.

And the scriptures add, for this is right. For this is right. See, children obeying parents is not a mere tradition.

Now, in my parents' household, it was kids obey the parents, and their grandparents, and right on down the line. That's why we do it. If you have a heritage like that, praise the Lord.

But that's not the reason we do it. It's not just a mere traditional matter. And it's also not a matter of adult domination.

Well, it wouldn't have to be this way if you weren't bigger than me. Listen, sometimes we aren't bigger than them. And it still needs to be that way.

It isn't a matter of size. It isn't a matter just of age. Because we as parents, as we're aging, we still have some growing up to do too.

It's a matter of God's ordained plan. It's not our best result from trial and error. You know, well, society has tried this and that, and here's what seems to work relatively well.

You know, children, do what you're told. It's not a humanistic perspective like that. It's rather something that is divinely correct.

Obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. In fact, that's part of the word righteous or righteousness. Part of the righteous plan of God is children, obey your parents.

It's just righteous. It's right before God. And then I love the phrase added there in Colossians 3.20, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

And we certainly want our kids to understand this, that in their servanthood responsibility in the home, they're to obey the parents. Why? Because it's right from God's perspective. To put it another way, it's well pleasing to the Lord.

We don't want the parent-child relationship and their servanthood role of obedience just be because I said so. Now, they should respond because we say so, but we want to help them understand the reasoning behind this. It's because it's right, not just because we decided it would be like this.

It's right. And God wants them to do the right thing. We want them to do the right thing.

Furthermore, it's well pleasing to the Lord. Their obedience to their parents is a pleasing matter in the sight of the Lord. If they would like to be a blessing, an honor, a joy to the Lord God Almighty, here's one way they can do it.

How can kids serve the Lord? Here's one way. Learn to obey their parents. It's not just a matter of that makes the household kind of function better.

See, all of these Christian family issues are related to the Lord. The life and relationship of the Christian home, family God's way is dictated to, is determined by another person that can't be seen in the household, but lives in it and wants to rule over it. This is well pleasing to the Lord.

Then Ephesians 6 verses 2 and 3, continuing on the children's role of submission in the home as servants. Children, honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. This is a quote as we've cited in the outline from Deuteronomy chapter 5 verse 16, which you remember is territory in the word we've already spent some time in.

When God was speaking to the children of Israel through Moses and they were getting ready to go into the promised land, there was a powerful word given about family life. And just before that section, there was a rehearsing of the Ten Commandments. And this is one of them that was cited there.

And it's cited here. There are some matters under the old covenant in the Old Testament that change by the will, plan, eternally ordained purposes of God, and are clearly presented in the word, like we're not offering animal sacrifices now. We have rather the Lord's Supper when we recall and feed on spiritually the reality that the sacrificed lamb has been slayed.

And that's a difference in the Old and New Covenant. But here's something picked up and brought right along that's just through all of the ages, Old Covenant, New Covenant, and that is children are to honor their father and mother. This is the first of the Horizontal Commandments.

If you look at the Ten Commandments, they start out in which direction? Vertically, you could say. Commandments concerning man's relationship with God. And they're elaborated.

We're to have no other gods beside the Lord. We're not to worship other gods. We're not to make images of gods and bow down before them and such things.

We are to worship the true Lord God. And the Ten Commandments start out that way, then they shift to the horizontal relationships of people to people. And the first one listed in those horizontal relationships is this one of parents and children.

Very important in the eyes of the Lord. And children are to honor their father and mother. It speaks of respect, not mere cold compliance.

You know, a kid in the corner saying to himself, you know, I may be standing here, but, you know, inside, I'm really out doing what I want to do. That kind of a thing. It's not just mere cold compliance.

Well, I'm doing it, but you're wrong and I'm right and I hate it. And first chance I get, you know, and on and on. It's respect along with complying with the will of the parents.

It's respect. And, of course, the respect for parents lasts a lifetime, though the obedience to parents changes after the leaving and cleaving process of Genesis 2 and Ephesians 5. But this honor your father and mother. This comes with a promise of blessing.

It's the first commandment, it says, given with a blessing of a promise of blessing added to it. Now, of course, all the commands of God as they are walked in and obeyed and believe there is blessing. But this one has a blessing spelled out and tied right to it.

There's blessing for our children if they learn to honor their father and mother. They will be well and live long. This was sort of the Old Testament way of saying what Jesus spoke of in John 10:10.

Jesus called it abundant life in the Old Testament. They viewed a long life and a healthy life as the hand of God upon them. And certainly that was part of it.

You know, disobedience and rebellion produces internal and external problems that can diminish both the length of life as well as the depth of life. And the Lord is interested in both, really. And he is involved in how long we live, but he especially speaks about how he wants us to live with depth of spiritual reality and significance.

So how children relate to their parents is going to have an impact on the kind of life they're going to enjoy, face and walk in while they're here upon the earth. So very important issue, children's submissive role, living in a servanthood way. They do it by obeying their parents.

It's right. It's in the Lord and it's well pleasing to the Lord. Now, how about the parents? This same principle in Ephesians 5:21 is now applied to the parents.

Same principle. Remember, we think of husbands, wives, children, parents as roles that are so different. It's hard to comprehend quickly and easily sometimes that all are kind of ruled over by some of the same truths and principles of God.

Not that we will live them all out in exactly the same way. But the same principle will be applied to our role as God instructs us in the word. And so it is here.

Parents see are to be in subjection to their children. Now, not in the way this age is describing that should quickly add that, you know, it seems like parents these days are learning to do what their children tell them. I think it was Bob Coy from Calvary Chapel, Fort Lauderdale.

He was teaching at a conference on how he was vacationing at, I think it was Disney World there in Orlando. And there was a little kid in the stroller barking instructions to dad. And the little child was, you know, I don't know, three years old or something.

And it was like barking instructions to the dad. You know, and the top was up on the little stroller and the dad wanted it down. He thought it'd be best with the son and all.

And the kid kept pushing it up, you know. And dad says, I said, stay down. The child, I said up.

You know, and the dad pushed it down one more time and the kid jammed his foot in the wheel and said, we're going nowhere. I said up. Well, OK, it's got to be up.

I mean, this is not right. This is helping train that child for disaster. It's not right.

But just because parents are not to be jumping at the commands of children doesn't mean that we aren't to be servants toward them, see. It's kind of like earlier, our last study, we saw that not only are wives to be servants toward their husbands, but husbands are to be servants toward their wives. You go, hey, wait a minute.

I thought I was the captain of the ship. No, that's Jesus. Thought I was in charge here.

No, that should be the Lord. I thought I was the head. Yes, that's right.

Now set the example. Be a servant. And it's sort of like that with parents.

You go, me? Serve my kids? That's why I had them. So they could serve me. Well, that's not good thinking.

It's bad theology when it comes to our role. We're also to be servants because all of these are elaborations on Ephesians 5:21. But how we do it is very different from how children are to do it toward their parents.

Just like the husband and wife servanthood role is different in the way it's worked out. So it is with parents and children. Now, parents, here's our application, verse 4. Here's how we are servants in the home toward our children.

And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition, the training, that is the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Fathers, notice the first word in verse 4, or the first role description. Fathers.

And you fathers, we are singled out, brothers, in this verse. Now both parents are to be involved in the raising of the children. You can see that all the way from a verse like Proverbs 1:8 in the Old Testament to right here in our context, Ephesians 6:1, children obey your parents.

It doesn't say children obey mom or dad, children obey your parents. So mom and dad are involved in the ministry of raising the children. Both parents are involved.

But look who's singled out here. Notice that the father is given here the primary call to responsibility. And you fathers, you know this fits so perfectly, Ephesians 5 that we looked at in our last study, where the husband is the head of the home.

The husband is the leader in the home. He is to set the direction. So the husband is to take the lead here as well.

He's the head of the home. And when it comes to the raising of the children, the father is specifically spelled out here. Obviously not exclusively, but I think the Lord knew that men in particular and all of us in general would need this underlined as it were.

Because you know the common cultural thing has been the moms raise the kids and the dads go fight the dragons, you know. Well, there are dragons everywhere. In fact, sometimes raising kids is like you're fighting the dragons.

But these are pictures that man has come up with. God spells out how he has family God's way. And fathers are to be involved.

Our domain is not just the office or the job or maybe the yard, you know. And then my wife takes care of the kitchen and the kids and things like this, you know, and the laundry. Well, we can all help each other in all kinds of ways.

And maybe as a wife you devote a lot of your time in some of those areas. And that's fine. And the Lord shows us as husbands and wives, as partners, Genesis 1, Genesis 2, Ephesians 5, how in wisdom to work in all of these arenas in the household.

But we still have to come to the Lord to get clear these strategic roles. Ephesians 5, the head of the home is to be involved, here we see, in the raising of the children. In fact, given primary singled-out responsibility.

Now, mom may spend more time with them, but the primary leadership, accountability to God and direction must be set through the life of the father. That's the will of God. It isn't always that way, and God is graciously able to work in situations of great hardship, but this is the will of the Lord.

Now, note, this does put very heavy loads on the shoulders of single moms. And I know there are a number of us together in this study who are single moms. This plan of God, when it isn't working out in His ideal way, is a heavy, heavy, heavy load on single moms.

Just a quick aside, if it's dad alone raising the kids, it's not to say it's an easy load for him either. And a few of you are single dad parents, and that's tough. That's tough too.

But for moms to be raising kids alone, and sometimes though there is a husband around, that is, at least he seems to eat, sleep and change his clothes at the same house, it doesn't always mean he's involved in the things he's supposed to be involved in. And many a mom and wife has been raising kids with dad in and out of the house for years, but not seeing or at least not willing to take the responsibility that God has set out here. So in cases such as that, their looking to the Lord for His help and strength and wisdom and protection is even more vital, though we all need it.

Even more vital. And the role of the church as the family of God is even more important. Because there, some of the family relationships are available to us perhaps in a way that they weren't long ago or might not even be now in our own household family.

So fathers, we are to be involved in the raising of the children, even take a lead in it by way of responsibility. And we're told here, fathers do not provoke your children to anger. We are not to drive our children to frustration or reactionary rages of exasperation.

We can do that dads. Now another quick aside. In fact, family study probably needs dozens of simultaneously quick asides.

But every time our children go into a frustrated mode or a reactionary rage of exasperation, doesn't mean we necessarily drove them to it. Sometimes they can do it without our help. They like to be independent and sometimes they can be in a rage in a very independent way.

But we're not to be the cause of it. They're not to do it, period. But we certainly, this is our instruction here, we're not to be the cause of it.

And Colossians 3.21 adds at this point, let's read that verse, Colossians 3.21. Fathers do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged. Lest they become discouraged and lose heart. If we exasperate our children, drive them into rages, it can discourage them and cause them to lose heart.

One might say, well what brings such to pass? What would cause a child to go into a rage or exasperation because of the parent's behavior or dealing with them? Well, in the simplest way, perhaps just the extremes of ignoring a child all the way to the other end of smothering a child. You know, if children are not given the God-ordained loving care and attention that parents should give, it can create a lot of bitterness. And that doesn't excuse it in the life of the child.

They're eventually accountable to God before that. We can't fall into the popular New American theology of victimization and all that, you know. They tried that in the garden, it didn't work.

It's still not working before God, though man is using it like crazy. Well, I'm like this because they. Kind of starts out like that.

And sure, the way they act, whoever they are, if it's toward us, affects us. But how we handle it, we're always answerable to God. So our kids are still accountable.

But if we ignore them, it can have an impact on their lives. And sometimes they can do very fitful things to get some kind of attention, you know. Even if it's not the best kind.

And if we smother them, the other end of ignoring them. You know, they can't make a move, but we're right there. Ah, not that, try this.

Oh, no. Ah, you know, just almost like a straight jacket. That also can certainly drive kids to exasperation and rage.

So what do we do? Well, the verse goes on to tell us here in Ephesians. Ephesians 6, the middle of the verse, there's a hinge. A conjunction of contrast, but.

You fathers do not provoke your children to wrath, but. Here's the alternative. Here's the will of God.

Here's how to avoid, or maybe that's kind of a radical word to use. Let's say minimize these possibilities of exasperation and rage. Not that we're necessarily going to avoid all of it, but how to minimize them.

What has God provided? What's the path that He has? Here it is. Bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is what God has designed and ordained so that we will not provoke them to exasperation or wrath. We're not to do one, but God has provided the other and called us to it.

The nurture and admonition of the Lord. We could call it the warning and training of God for us to give to the children. Warning and training.

You could also, therefore, speak of it as bring the children up in the law and grace of the Lord. The nurture and admonition, the grace and the law of the Lord. Remember, the word here translated training, that also could be translated nurture.

We're likening it somewhat here in the context of our study to contrast it with law. We're likening it to grace, which if you want to jot a little note in your outline, fits perfectly the description of Titus chapter 2, verses 11 and 12, which says the grace of God trains, or literally that word could be translated at the start

of verse 12, discipling us unto godliness. So the grace of God is the discipling power of God at work in our lives changing us, making us followers of the Lord.

We're to bring our children up in the nurture training, and then the admonition, the warning of the Lord. A good way to think of this is our children are designed to be ministered to by the law and grace of God. You say, well, I kind of like law myself.

Well, we'll read in a moment. The law is good if it's used lawfully. Someone else might say, I don't like anything but the grace of God.

Well, how about if we not do it by personal preference, but rather learn to do it the way the Lord says. And he says the nurture and admonition, the training that builds as well as the warning, or as it's put elsewhere in the word of God, the law of God and the grace of God. Now a good picture of law and grace at work are set beautifully together that we can see them as well as conserve our time here in our study, 1 Timothy chapter 1. In 1 Timothy chapter 1, noted along the way there's so many principles in this study on family, God's way, that apply to all of us in general, as well as these specific roles God has spelled out.

And here's some for all of us for sure. Law and grace. This is the end of side A. To listen to the rest of the message, please turn the tape over now.

Noted along the way there's so many principles in this study on family, God's way, that apply to all of us in general, as well as these specific roles God has spelled out. And here's some for all of us for sure. Law and grace.

1 Timothy 1 verses 8 and 9. But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, that is, the way God designed it to be used, knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, that is, the rebellious. The law is for the rebellious. Now let's read verses 12 through 14.

God's grace. Paul's testimony. And I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has enabled me, the enabling work of God is going to be tied in here to the grace of God, because he counted me faithful, putting me into ministry.

Serving God is going to be tied into the grace of God. Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief. Now our former wrongs and our former ungodly living is going to be tied in here to the grace of God.

Verse 14. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus. So there, a brief glimpse at the law of God at work and the grace of God at work.

Where do we see the law of God working here? Well, particularly here, it's spelled out, the law is for the insubordinate that is the rebellious. Now this certainly comes to bear on child raising. I mean, unless you have some very different children than we had.

Or unless you're a very different family with children, unlike you probably were, when you were a child. In the childishness of life, there's rebellion and insubordination that develops. Now there's a lot early on, a lot of sweetness to and innocence and just open trust.

That's why we have to become like a child to enter the kingdom. But there's some childishness that needs to be removed. Like rebellion and self-will.

The law is for the insubordinate, the rebellious. The law of God is designed to remind us of accountability and the consequences of judgment. And that's important in raising children.

There are times when children are rebellious, they're insubordinate. They don't function as a godly servant in the home towards the children, towards the parents. Listening and obeying and doing what the parent says.

Instead, they don't like the instruction, they don't like the pattern, they don't like the plan. And they let you know it and they keep pushing against it. What does the parent do? Oh, honey, I'm so sorry you don't like mommy's instructions.

I'll try to change them for you. What do you like? I mean, sometimes we're tempted to do that, but that isn't the way of the Lord. If the Lord is giving wisdom and direction for the children to the parents, that insubordination, that rebellion needs to be dealt with.

If the kids say, Dad, these standards, I can't live with them, I'm going to set my own. What do you do with that kind of rebellion? The law of God is for the rebellious. It's designed to remind the rebellious of accountability and consequences and judgment.

I can remember in the midst of the years, which, thank God, seems so long ago for our youngest, who's now this month 23, back when he was, say, 16, oh, my word, I can remember sleepless nights, sometimes night after night, agony, anguish because of rebellion and insubordination and clamp down a little more and next thing you know, he disappears in the middle of the night. And you go, oh, Lord, now what? And I'm not saying that we had all the answers. It's a lifelong matter of learning with the Lord in all things.

But I do thank God, as I recall the many times we sat down when I got my hands back on him. He was bigger than me then. Already.

And we sat down to talk about these things. I remember really laying down the law, as they say. Now, I must say, I, by personal inclination, preference, delight and interest, am much more inclined to the grace of God.

I probably shouldn't even say this thought that just came to my mind, but as a professor in the Bible College, as a teacher here at three of the campuses of the Calvary Bible Colleges, boy, I guess they'd probably say, he's a pushover. I mean, I'm just open. You had a problem with this? Oh, we'll work it out.

You know, it's alright. I love the grace of God. I thank God He's given me so much grace.

And I love to give it to other people. And I love to give it to our kids. But I thank God for those days we sat down with a rebellious teen and laid the law down.

Someone might say, well, did that change things? Not overnight. Three and a half years down the road, we began to see some fruit. And we'll talk about that in a little while, the process of child raising.

But the law is for the rebellious. And listen, if they don't even seem to listen, don't stop sharing it if there's rebellion. The temptation is, ah, they're not listening anyway.

Listen, you put it out, let God pound it on the heart and let Him take care of the long-range conclusions of it. Don't stop giving the law of God standard requirement expectation when the kids seem to not be able to care less about it. They still need to hear it.

And the Lord will eventually honor it. He's designed it to be used. And kids need to hear.

I can remember sharing about accountability. God's watching. God's heart is broken.

There's chastisement severe perhaps coming. And I know God can honor that in our lives as parents sharing with our children. Now, God's grace then for the other life.

We see here that the law of God is designed to remind of accountability and consequences and judgment. But God's grace on the other hand can take a rebel like Saul of Tarsus who became the Apostle Paul and make him a humble fruitful servant of the Lord. So when our kids are rebellious, they need to hear of the law of God.

That is, His standards and His consequences. On the other hand, when our kids are humble and repentant or eager to please and learn, they will profit greatly in hearing about God's mercy, His forgiveness, and His abundant provision to change us, making us what He wants us to be. And usually there's such a dynamic of glory to impossibility in the household that there's always an ebb and flow and blend of these two anyway.

And always a need to seek the Lord for His wisdom. It isn't, you know, this week it's law, next week it's grace. Listen, you might have it backwards.

More than likely, you'll be switching every other hour. That is, if you're blessed with a lot of reason to lay out the grace of God. They're both there, the nurture and admonition, the warning and the encouragement.

The law and the grace of God. But notice, it's the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Of the Lord.

So many times in these passages on family, those are the key phrases. If it isn't the nurture and admonition of the Lord, you just can't run on your best effort at nurture and admonition. It has to be the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It must be the law and grace of the Lord. The law. That is, as we share it, it's not just here's what Grandpa always had Dad do and I always had to do and you're going to always have to do.

Listen, they could have been right or they could have been wrong. Or it may or may not be appropriate for this child now. Whatever it is.

But the law of God, when it is shared, we want to share with the kids that this is what God requires, what God demands, and what God plans in light of who He is. What does the law show about who He is primarily? That He is holy. Holy.

We want our kids to grow up knowing God is holy. In fact, that's the Old Testament summary of the law. Be ye holy for the Lord your God is holy.

In Leviticus and elsewhere, after some commands are given, it's applied instantly. Be holy for the Lord is holy. So we want to share the admonition or the law of the Lord.

It's this way, kids, because it's the Lord's way and it's the Lord's way because He's holy. So we want to go a holy path, stay away from an unholy path. Then the nurture or the grace of the Lord, that is what He offers, what He can do in cleansing us and renewing us and transforming us in light of who He is.

And what characteristic of God's very nature is most beautifully shown in His grace? His love. The law of God is holy. The grace of God, He's loving.

The Lord wants us to raise our children appealing to these two realities. Sharing them appropriately, blending them as they are needed in each life. And perhaps the more and more we rightly share the law of God at the right times and ways and reasons and purposes, you know what it leads toward the great privilege of? Sharing more and more and more and more about the grace of God.

Seems like with our kids now, there isn't a lot of call to share about the law of God. What a blessing! I mean, God knows my heart. I never liked sharing it anyway.

I came loving, obeying God and did it with joy eventually. Especially when you see them presuming upon your grace and realizing that you can't really offer God's because they don't even know what the law is about, which is kind of like that tutor to bring us to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. I love sharing with our kids now.

It's just grace upon grace upon grace. Their hearts are so tender toward the Lord. They're fruitfully serving, teaching the word, daughter teaching the kids and the guys teaching Bible studies.

What a blessing! And get together and talk about the Lord. It's how great He is, how He can change your life, what He's done, what He can do. What a blessing! That doesn't mean that a father of grown children might not have a word of admonition to share at times, you know, as counsel.

But law and grace. But the law is there to be shared with children. Proverbs is a place that reminds us that it's part of it.

Proverbs. Proverbs, the wisdom of God that much of it stretches throughout the Old and New Covenant. Proverbs 10 13.

Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding but a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding. We're going to read a few verses about this word rod and we're going to select a few that are about child raising. It's the exact same Hebrew term used here for rod.

And it's shown here as being applied to the back side of him who is devoid of understanding. We'll read an implication into that in just a minute in chapter 13 verse 24. He who spares his rod, same word, which is a stick or a switch, hates his son.

Wow. Sometimes you might think oh, I just love him too much to be that serious with him in this discipline. He who spares his rod hates his son.

Really I think what it is is we love to spare ourselves the agony of that. It's hard as a kid to believe this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you. But boy, once you become a parent that makes so much sense.

Oh, I just didn't like applying physical discipline to our children. And maybe didn't do a whole lot of it. This day and age I'd probably be put in jail as a child abuser.

But it was there. And oh, just boy, to me it's painful for the parent. Just like it must be for God when he has to chastise us.

Surely he takes no pleasure in that. Oh good, I get to be rough on him. I get to be tough on him.

Trapped him. What a sick view of God. And a parent that loves to make it rough on their kids even when they need it.

But he who loves him disciplines him promptly or early. Part of loving our children is discipline and here it's even shown to partly be physical discipline. Listen, there is a time when time out isn't enough.

That's real popular in this day and age. I never heard of it until we had grandchildren. We asked our granddaughter, Carissa, did everyone behave in Sunday school today? No.

Oh, who was it? Carissa? No, no, it wasn't Carissa Grandpa. Who was it? Next guess was usually Murphy. Nine times out of ten.

That one was right. I don't know why. Was it him? Well, he's just a dynamite little kid just bursting at the seams.

She says, yes, he had to have a time out. You know, you can't sit in the activity. You have time out over here.

Listen, sometimes time out is enough. Sometimes time out is enough. Sometimes time out just crushes a very gentle spirit.

You know, just, oh, time out. But there are a lot of kids. Time out? No problem.

I can do that on one finger. Or, you know, oh, time out. Some kids, it's like nothing.

It's like nothing. I guess that's why God designed also the rod. Chapter 22, 15.

I'm going to comment on this in a minute, though. Especially in this day and age, there's some things that need to be said about that. Proverbs 22, 15.

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. My goodness, how do you get it out of there? Oh, look. Isn't God good? This meets us right where we are.

The rod of correction will drive it far from him. An extended time out will always do it. Not quite.

The rod of correction will drive it far from him. Proverbs 23, 13 and 14. Do not withhold correction from a child.

And you go, correction? See, I knew it wasn't a rod. For if you beat him with a rod, that's kind of a rough word. That word in our day and age, you know, beating kids the way we think of that term, I don't think is biblically right.

But the word could also be translated correct, admonish, punish, discipline. With a rod he will not die. Doesn't the Lord know us? You're killing me, Dad! This is killing me! I remember once I pulled an awful one up in Oregon when I was 14 years old.

My dad came home and caught me out of the trailer house we were living my 5 year younger sister in there alone at night. I was to be kind of guarding the homestead. I was out romping around the trailer park.

He came home and caught me and took one whap to the side of my head. And I went down like I had been killed. Probably because I thought more were coming.

You know, it really didn't hurt all that much. Oh! Oh! Give me a 10 count, Dad. You're killing me.

If you beat him with a rod, he will not die. I mean, if you correct him physically, he will not die. That's not to say that kids haven't been tragically brutalized unto death.

I don't want to minimize that at all. Not disciplining a child at all the way they need it and disciplining them too much the way they don't need it, both are atrocious crimes before God. Verse 14, You shall, let's say, correct him with a rod and deliver his soul from hell.

And then last, 29.15 29.15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom. The rod and rebuke. Some have said, you know, the rod is only a word.

No, look. Here's the rod and the word. The rod physically and the strong word of rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

This rod, as used here in Proverbs, it's both literal and figurative. It can be used. Figuratively, it's used as a symbol for authoritative correction or discipline and leadership, and that fits many places.

It's just authoritative correction. Some of the passages we read, they're obviously literal, not figurative. They were talking about a stick or a switch, even where it was being applied to the anatomy and all.

So it's both kinds, and children need both. Sort of a literal, physical correction, but also a more figurative, authoritative leadership correction in words. Now here are some of the issues that are stirred by the verses we read in Proverbs about the rod and relating back to the law of God and correction and consequence and judgment and such things.

Number one, children, clearly from the verses we've looked at, need discipline and correction, and we're living in an age that has very much forsaken this. Often in the church world, it's a tragedy in the world. It's a shame before the Lord in the church.

Children need correction. Now verbal and or physical and or here the consequences kind of correction can all be used, but they need correction. Number two issue, spanking is not equal to child abuse.

However, our culture and our government are trying to define the two as the same. A warning also, maybe especially for men, but I'm sure you gals aren't immune to this. Physical correction of children can easily become abuse, especially if it's done in rage or anger.

Most of the time, I think a principle of wisdom God gave in our home kind of prevailed when a need for serious correction arose. Kids or kid, go to your room. Dad wants to come and talk to you and deal with this.

It's good for them to be alone a little while, savoring the fear of the Lord, you know. It's probably very good for dad to be alone a while, thinking, praying, seeking wisdom, asking for patience, love, discernment, not just a shoot from the hip kind of child raising, you know, that can sometimes wound heavily. So it can

easily become abuse in an anger or rage.

A third issue here. Arguing about using the hand or using the spoon or never using the hand or never using the spoon or whether you never always or sometimes use one or the other, I don't find it as the biblical point. And I don't know if you've gotten into these, but I've heard a lot of debates like this lately.

You know. Don't ever discipline that child physically with your hand. Why? Well, because he's going to identify that hand with you.

Well, that's what I want. This is me doing this, you know. They say, you know, only use that spoon or I like the one we have at home.

We've got a grandpa and grandma's paddle. It's about eight inches long, wrapped in foam. Like our kids one day said to me, Daddy, why does Grandpa always say yes and you always say no? You know, there's a difference.

There's a difference. But some argue, oh, don't ever use the, some say don't ever spank, period. Some say if you don't ever use the hand, only use the spoon.

What if you're 300 miles from your spoon? It'll wait. It'll wait. Oh, I think not.

I think not. And I know there's a lot of debates in the child raising, this is a very sensitive issue to many, and particularly, partly because of two big things, I think. The irresponsible lack of discipline and standards in the whole world, period.

So you dare raise issues like this, my word, what are you, a monster? But then there's the other end of it. Out there in the world, there's a lot of sick, cruel, vicious, oh, carnal to the extreme, if not satanic in nature, physical abuse of children. And both are a heartache before God, I know.

And certainly this is no way to encourage people to be knocking kids around. Not at all. But the debate isn't hand or spoon or never physical.

I mean, let's just take it from the word of the Lord and then ask His wisdom on how to apply it. A fourth issue here, all of this does not lead to this kind of debate either. That is aligning ourselves as followers of this child expert or that child expert.

That's not the solution. I hear that among Christians too. They hear someone on the radio.

Oh, I do it the way Dr. So-and-so says. Oh yeah, but I get Dr. So-and-so's magazine and he does it different. Yeah, but I got Dr. So-and-so's tapes and here's how he said to do it.

Listen, how does God say to do it? Maybe they're tapping into some of that. Maybe they aren't. Just because they're Christians doesn't mean they've necessarily gone before the Lord to get it from the Lord or all from the Lord or refined by the Lord.

I follow this man. There's trouble right there. You know.

Let's just follow this Lord and King of kings. The fifth point in all of this on discipline is the point is we need to learn more and more how to raise our children the way the Lord tells us to and the way He raises us. That's what we need.

And that's why Hebrews 12 is in our outline because it gives insight into how the Lord raises us. And we'll just read that before we conclude. Hebrews 12, verse 5. My son do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you're rebuked by Him for whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges that speaks of physical correction even, every son whom He receives.

If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you're without chastening, you never get corrected ever by God, of which all have become partakers, true children of God become partakers of His correction, then you're illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us and we paid them respect.

Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they, earthly fathers, indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our prophet that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful. Nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

God trains His children, He disciplines and chastises us. And note, by these very words, it's a process and it will be with our children. For those who are trained by the disciplining of the Lord, afterwards it yields this peaceable fruit of righteousness.

So it is with us raising our children. We train them and after they're trained, perhaps afterwards it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. It might not happen as fast as we'd like to see it, but if we keep doing what the Lord leads us to do in His Word and by His Spirit, through that process there can be progress and afterwards the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

It is a process. There are time lags. There seem to be failures at times and falling back.

But here's the pattern the Lord is using with us as we do the same with our children and can anticipate this righteous fruit more and more. It's why we can have the expectation of a verse like Proverbs 22.6. Train up your child in the way he should go and when he's old he'll not depart from it. It's a promise to the people of God.

And be warned, some are teaching that verse with a new translation. Train up a child according to his way and when he's old he won't depart from it. And the whole point is you watch that child and make everything kind of develop and go the way they seem bent to go.

Oh boy, my kids were bent for hell I must say. Love them dearly, but thank God He turned the bent. It's according to His way, not according to the way of the child.

His way the child. The whole book of Proverbs is God's way and wisdom not the child's way and bent. But it's a promise to the people of God and I believe God wants us to stand on it.

What's the necessary resource for all of this? It's not man's best effort. It's not just learning more, reading more books, more ideas. We need the fullness of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

Remember Ephesians 5.18? It's the very context of our study. Be filled with the Spirit. That's what makes us those submitting to one another.

That's what lets children obey parents and parents properly lead and train their children. This is our essential need as we go into the Word, as we apply it in our own lives and in the lives of our children. And

you know something? We need to teach such spiritual dependence to our kids.

It's not just that mom and dad need to be filled with the Spirit. We need to teach our kids they need to be. That's how each of us can be mutual servants in the home one to another.

Now in conclusion, just a couple of thoughts of response and personal application. For those who are singles among us or listening and really for all of us remember that the Lord is still raising us as His kids as described in this study. And let's be sure to stay submitted to that process or all the rest we might as well forget.

Second, what if we failed a little or a lot or miserably? Well, let's humbly seek the Lord for forgiveness. Ask Him to mercifully give a new way and a new opportunity to correct the things of old even if our kids are quite raised and independent adults. God can still work.

He's able and I've seen it with many grown kids that got raised wrong and then re-raised by God as adults with the counsel of their parents. Perhaps tonight some men may need to tell God that they are ready to take their proper leadership responsibility in the raising of the kids. Perhaps some need to seek salvation.

Maybe many if not all of us need to seek a fresh new filling of the Lord. And it would be right for all of us to be praying for the body of Christ, His church, and for our nation concerning these issues.

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