

Ruling and Training Children

- I. We are living in times of a general disrespect of authority and also a lack of its proper exercise.
 - A. Police do not command the respect that they once did.
 - B. Civil leaders and magistrates are too often unfairly vilified.
 - C. The Supreme Law of the Land (Constitution) is trampled on by members of all three branches of civil power.
 - D. Schoolteachers are too often mocked by students, unsupported by parents and hobbled in their duties by ridiculous policies.
 - E. Clergy usually only make the news when they are involved in a scandal and good ministers seldom are afforded the rule of their flock as given them by God.
 - F. The idea of a man being the head of a woman in marriage is looked upon as being a relic of ancient, backward, patriarchal cultures.
 - G. Scripture denounces the inversion of order where those who should be in authority have abandoned their post or are demoted to servility under the hand of the ruled.
PRO 19:10; ECC 10:5-7.

- II. Parents must be particularly careful to not participate in the “topsy-turvy” mentality of modern politically-correct culture.
 - A. Our culture has largely bought into the idea of the supremacy of the rights of children to such a degree that parents are deemed a threat to the well-being of the child if the parent even exercises reasonable rule over the child.
 - B. Scripture declares that the condition of children ruling over elders is abominable and indicative of a people under judgment. **ISA 3:4-5, 12.**
 - C. Children are the “...heritage of the Lord...” (**PSA 127:3**) and are to be raised by parents in trust for God Who desires a godly seed. **MAL 2:15; PSA 144:11-12.**
 1. Children are to be trained up in the way that they SHOULD go. **PRO 22:6.**
 2. The way that children should go is obviously established by God. **EPH 6:4.**
 3. God's order for children is honoring and obeying parents. **EPH 6:1-3.**
 - a. Enforcing obedience in children in the home fits them well for life where they will be forced to recognize and respect authority in general.
 - b. God's kindness towards little children is limited by their lack of respect for those whom God has appointed as their authorities.
2KI 2:23-24; MAT 15:3-4.
 - c. So abhorrent is the sin of children disobeying parents that it is deemed a sin worthy of death. **DEU 21:18-21 c/w ROM 1:30-32.**
 4. Parents need to honestly evaluate what they are training children to become.
 - a. Are they training children to be self-willed, disrespectful, unrestrained, manipulative, undisciplined, complaining, irresponsible, entitlement-minded burdens and threats to society?
 - b. Or, are they training children to be respectful, submissive, honorable, self-restrained, disciplined, productive members of society who have learned early at home that their will is not preeminent?
 - c. HINT: The latter is *the way that they should go* because it is what God expects of people in general.
 5. Mind that children must be trained in order to acquire proper opinions and habits; they will not develop them on their own.
 - a. Left to his own inclinations, a child will develop bad opinions and habits.
PRO 29:15.

- b. Little more is needed to train children to become fools than to let them do as they please since they are pre-programmed for folly. **PRO 22:15.**

- III. Train: “III. 5. To treat or manipulate so as to bring to the proper or desired form; spec. in Gardening, to manage (a plant or a branch) so as to cause it to grow in some desired form or direction....6. To subject to discipline and instruction for the purpose of forming character and developing the powers of, or of making proficient in some occupation....”
- A. Oxford English Dictionary actually cites **PRO 22:6** as an example of this sense of “train.”
 - B. Mind that training involves manipulation. It is the parent that is to be doing the manipulating, not the child!
 - C. Consider the illustration of training a branch here: it is much easier to train a sapling than a 16 year-old oak. Form proper character in children early!
 - D. The responsibility of the training of a child is primarily that of the father. **EPH 6:4.**
 - 1. The man is the head of the household. **EPH 6:1 c/w 5:22.**
 - 2. As head, his position is comparable to a king. **1SAM 15:17.**
 - 3. A king is a leader and a commander. **ISA 55:4.**
 - a. A faithful father will not plea bargain or negotiate good conduct with his children. He will command it and enforce it. **GEN 18:19.**
 - b. God lauds as comely (beautiful, suitable) “...a king, against whom there is NO RISING UP” (**PRO 30:29-31**).
 - c. No king fares well where rebellion is allowed to undermine his kingdom.
 - (1) Rebellious attitudes and conduct in children must be driven out of the kingdom. **PRO 22:15.**
 - (2) What sensible Christian father would permit his child to become a witch? How could he then permit rebellion in his child?
1SAM 15:23.
 - E. Effective training is realized in two ways:
 - 1. A positive aspect of bringing children to maturity through good example and advice.
 - 2. A negative aspect of enforcing order when there is unwillingness to cooperate with parental rule.
 - F. A father sets the tone for government in the home and the pace for a child's performance.
 - 1. Good examples of effective fathers would be Abraham (**GEN 18:19**) or Mordecai. **EST 2:7, 20.**
 - 2. Bad examples of effective fathers would be David or Eli. **1KI 1:6; 1SAM 3:13.**
 - 3. Mark the emphasis on “restraining” and “displeasing.” A crucial attribute of the correct building of a child's character is limiting his conduct and making him unhappy by saying “NO” to his unhealthy desires.
 - a. The mark of a godly man is that he “...RULETH well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (**1TI 3:4**).
 - b. Rule: “*trans.* To control, guide, direct, exercise sway or influence over (a person, his actions, life, etc.)”
 - c. Control: “*trans.* To check or verify, and hence to regulate.....To exercise restraint or direction upon the free action of; to hold sway over, exercise power or authority over; to dominate, command.”
 - d. Regulate: “*trans.* To control, govern, or direct by rule or regulations; to subject to guidance or restrictions; to adapt to circumstances or surroundings.”
 - e. Mind how that *rule* profoundly involves restraining free action.

- (1) The Scripture does not specifically say, “Children shall not be defined by screaming at the top of their lungs when they feel like it.”
 - (2) But is permitting screaming for the sake of screaming training a child in the way in which he should go?
PRO 17:1; 1TH 4:11; 2TH 3:12; 1PE 3:4.
- f. We are to abhor incontinence (**ROM 12:9 c/w 2TI 3:3**) which is “want of continence or self-restraint...”
 - g. We are to strive to be marked by temperance (**GAL 5:23**), which is “the practice or habit of restraining oneself in provocation, passion, desire, etc.; rational self-restraint.”
- G. A virtuous wife and mother will back up the godly father's training program and enforce it in his absence. **PRO 31:11.**
1. Parents must present a united front to their children.
 2. If there is a weak spot in either parent, children will exploit it to get their way.
 3. Little children are not supposed to get *their way* when *that way* is contrary to a *parent's way* which should be *God's way*, the way in which the child should go!
- H. Remember, you will train your children one way or another. But will you train them in the way they *should* go, as **PRO 22:6** commands?
1. For example, consider training a small child not to touch something.
 - a. You can keep it within his reach and train him not to touch it by punishing him if he touches it.
 - (1) This teaches him to obey the command not to touch.
 - (2) This teaches him to restrain himself even in the presence of a forbidden object that is accessible.
 - (3) This prepares him for the real world, where things are well within the reach of little children. Likewise it prepares the child for adult life where actions have consequences.
 - b. You can put it beyond his reach.
 - (1) This teaches him that is off-limits only if it is out of reach.
 - (2) This does not teach him to respect your command not to touch.
 - (3) This does not prepare him for the real world, where things are well within the reach of little children. Likewise, it does not prepare the child for adult life where actions have consequences.
 2. Consider how you are training when you allow a child to get his way by persistent begging and whining.
 - a. Tolerating whining is training a child in conduct which God despises.
 - (1) Whine: “To utter a low somewhat shrill protracted sound or cry, usually expressive of pain or distress; to cry in a subdued plaintive tone...2. To utter complaints in a low querulous tone; to complain in a feeble, mean, or undignified way.”
 - (2) Murmur: “To make, produce, or emit a low continuous sound.... 2. To complain or repine in low muttered tones; to give vent to an inarticulate discontent, to grumble.”
 - (3) See **1CO 10:10; PHIL 2:14; JUDE 1:16.**
 - b. You are training the child that persistent begging and whining pay off.
 - c. The way to end persistent begging and whining is not by rewarding it, nor by ignoring it, but by punishing it.
 - d. Remember, the parent is the one that is supposed be doing the manipulating, not the child!

3. Or, what lesson is a child learning who is given everything he wants when he wants it? Do not be surprised if such a child grows up to be overweight and floundering in debt.
 4. Or how are you training a child when you do everything for him? Do not be surprised if he grows up shirking responsibility. You trained him that way.
- I. Verbal communication plays an important role in training children.
1. Words may build or destroy. **PRO 18:21.**
 2. Parents (especially the father) are to be managers initiating productivity and creativity. Instruction should be:
 - a. *clear*. Is the instruction expressed as a wish or a command? As a child develops positive patterns, less instruction should be needed.
 - b. *well-defined and within the child's comprehension and ability to perform*.
 - (1) Time limits may be helpful because time passes slowly for a child.
 - (2) A timer or a suitable analog kitchen clock can help even little children gain a perspective on time: "...when the big hand points to ---, you should be all done."
 - c. *certain*. Do not train your child to respond only to increased volume of command. Delayed obedience should be considered disobedience.
 3. Here are five types of parents that fail in verbal leadership.
 - a. *The dishonest parent*. This one doesn't check for results when a command is given. He doesn't mean what he says.
 - b. *The threatening parent*. This one is really offering choices. Is not sitting still for an hour worth more than what Mom or Dad threatened would happen?
 - c. *The exploding parent*. This one merely throws tantrums, causing the child to focus more on the parent's reaction than on the ethic of his own behavior.
 - d. *The disinterested or silent parent*: "Do what you want, just don't bother me." This parent is really telling the child that he/she doesn't really care about him.
 - e. *The gutless parent*. This parent caves in when verbal instruction does not produce obedience in the child and so does not follow up with punishment.
 4. Verbal communication is limited in its ability to shape the child's character.
 - a. Very small children are unable to process verbal instruction but they can understand the stimuli of touch and pain.
 - b. Even in children that can understand verbal instruction, that verbal instruction will not drive their inherent foolishness and rebellion away. That will require the use of the rod.
- IV. One of the most critical areas of child training is that of physical chastening.
- A. The chastening rod is God's ordained means of driving foolishness from the child. **PRO 22:15.**
 1. Rod: "A straight, slender shoot or wand, growing upon or cut from a tree, bush, etc. 2. An instrument of punishment, either one straight stick, or a bundle of twigs bound together. *to spare the rod*, etc."
 2. A child's first driving lesson should be with a hot rod.
 3. Leaving a thick diaper in place on the "seat of understanding" is contrary to the very purpose of the rod: to inflict pain.
 - B. The parent who cannot bring himself to spank a child for folly or disobedience because he loves the child too much actually loves himself too much and hates the child. **PRO 13:24.**

- C. Child-beating is scriptural. Do not be cowed by the world into perverting the very language of Scripture to satisfy current social fads. **PRO 23:13-14.**
1. **Beat:** “To strike repeatedly; to strike with repeated blows.”
 2. A mere slap with the hand does not meet the requirements of Scripture.
 3. The short-term pain of loving correction with the rod will save the child from much greater pain in the future (and save the parents much pain also).
- D. The rod is an instrument of chastening. **PRO 13:24.**
1. **Chasten:** “To inflict disciplinary or corrective punishment on; to visit with affliction for the purpose of moral improvement; to correct, discipline, chastise.”
 2. Chastisement is the painful consequence of a misdeed.
 - a. The purpose for chastening a child is to teach him that irresponsible actions have painful consequences.
 - b. Training a child to associate punishment with transgression trains him to understand the justice of God and the chastisement of Christ for our sins. **ISA 53:5.**
 - c. If a child is always shielded from the consequences of misbehavior, he will not be prepared for adult life.
 3. If a child does not consider the pain of his chastening grievous, he may not be getting the appropriate measure of chastening. **HEB 12:11.**
 4. The rod should produce real tears/crying (**PRO 19:18**) and most any parent can tell when the tears/crying are phony.
- E. Mind that chastening evidences love for the child whereas the failure to chasten is an act of hatred. **PRO 13:24.**
1. Discern between love, which looks out for the good of its object, and sentiment, which can be self-serving.
 2. Doing only what makes you feel comfortable is NOT loving another!
- F. The rod of chastening is a tool of instruction for the child to impart wisdom to him. **PRO 29:15.**
1. The object of training a child is to impart wisdom since wisdom will direct the child in the way which he *should go* and so bring his life to its fullest potential. **PRO 4:7-13.**
 2. Two things are actually needed to impart wisdom: the rod and reproof (the noun form of *reprove*).
 - a. **Reprove:** “To reject. 2. To express disapproval of (conduct, actions, beliefs, etc.); to censure, condemn. 3. To reprehend, rebuke, blame, chide, or find fault with (a person).”
 - b. The application of the rod without a notion of disapproval of specific conduct being conveyed along with it leaves a child in bewildered pain, not wiser.
- G. Establish sound disciplinary patterns when the child is young. **PRO 13:24.**
1. **Betimes:** “At an early time, period, or season; early in the year; early in life.”
 2. Early correction will likely see a gradual reduction of beatings, but late starters are likely to see the opposite (and not ever see the same positive results).
 3. A one-year-old child is generally old enough to start receiving correction with the rod to discourage dangerous behavior or defiant moments.
 - a. This is the time to start establishing boundaries for the child.
 - b. The establishment of boundaries is part of the exercise of *rule* which involves restraining free action (noted earlier): the parent establishes a boundary by chastening; the child learns to restrain his actions accordingly.

- c. Very small children will not understand verbal rebuke or reasoning, but they will understand physical pain.
 - d. Associating pain with dangerous behavior or misbehavior is the best way to help them know what is wrong.
 - e. Repeat the word “no” during the punishment which reinforces to the child what that word means.
 - f. Over time, verbal rebuke can be effective in warning about a wrong or a danger.
- H. Do not resort to anger or shouting to get action. Use action to get action!
- 1. Some parents repeat their instructions with increasing loudness until they reach an exploding point when they finally take action.
 - 2. Consider how this scenario trains the child.
 - a. It trains the child to recognize that point of action and obey only then.
 - b. It trains the child that he has several chances to disobey.
 - c. It trains the child to think that screaming is an acceptable way to enforce one's will.
 - d. Remember, delayed obedience is disobedience! **NUM 14:40-43.**
 - 3. Parents err when they assume their explosive anger secured the obedience.
 - 4. On the contrary, what secured the obedience was the fact that the child had learned to recognize the point of action.
 - 5. While anger may be revealed in punishing a child, it should not be the punishment in and of itself and it should be controlled.
 - 6. Adult screaming and frustration produce a disrespect in the mind of the child because he perceives your inability to control him or yourself.
 - a. Children will test your leadership to see if it is worthy of respect.
 - b. Children respect strength and courage as is evident in the characters they select as heroes.
 - c. Children will test to see if the rules hold.
 - d. Children feel more secure in an environment where the rights of others and their rights are protected.
 - e. As David found, there is comfort in the rod. **PSA 23:4.**
 - 7. Adult anger and frustration can also turn the event into a personal vendetta rather than training the child for his own good.
 - 8. If a child is allowed to harass a parent for a prolonged period of time, the result can be explosive. This is a major cause of child abuse.
- I. The readiness and visibility of the rod will contribute to less need of it.
- J. Do not let the child's tears dissuade you from administering appropriate discipline. **PRO 19:18.**
- K. Do not let the inconvenience of having to re-diaper stop you from proper chastening.
- L. Give consideration to sickness or fatigue when a child's conduct is less than sterling but avoid using those things as excuses for a child's intolerable behavior.
- M. The chastening parent is to be revered. **HEB 12:9.**
- 1. Do not allow a child to express contempt for your rule and discipline.
 - 2. One major objective of chastening is to instill in the child a respect for authority.
 - a. Train children to respect ALL legitimate authority. **ROM 13:1.**
 - b. The place to start is with training the child to respect parental authority. If they do not learn to respect you, how are they going to learn to respect other authority?
 - c. If you assign an older child or a babysitter to oversee the house in your

- absence, that delegated authority should be respected by those under it.
- d. The child who refuses obedience to another by saying, “You can't tell me what to do. You're not my father/mother” is showing contempt for authority in general.
 - e. If you train your children to obey other authority figures, then to disobey them is to disobey you!
3. It is just as important to train *attitudes* as it is to train *actions*.
- N. Here are some guidelines for effective punishment.
1. Don't lose control. **EPH 6:4.**
 - a. This relates back to the concept of being temperate, noted earlier.
 - b. Believers are to be temperate in all things. **1CO 9:25; TIT 2:1-2.**
 2. Be consistent. This helps the child know exactly what behavior will not be tolerated.
 3. Match the punishment to the person. The level of punishment appropriate to a nine-year-old would not be appropriate to a three-year-old.
 4. Match the punishment to the misdeed. Childish infirmity is one thing. Rebellion is a different story.
 5. Do not let a child take advantage of your concerns about punishing in public. Promise the child that the rod will be administered upon returning home and then keep the promise!
 6. Be thorough. Make an impression upon the child. Make it hurt.
 7. Do not lose sight of the objective of chastening.
 - a. Chastisement should be for the benefit of the child rather than a venting of your frustrations.
 - b. Know the situation you are dealing with before you react with haste and force. **JOH 7:51.**
 - c. The rod and reproof that is not founded upon righteousness can provoke a child to wrath. **COL 3:21.**
 - d. The object of discipline is to correct and direct the child, not to make him think that he cannot do anything right. **COL 3:21.**
 8. Have a beginning and an end.
 - a. Begin by explaining the reason for the punishment.
 - b. End with complete forgiveness and restoration.
 - (1) Affection after punishment shows that the behavior, not the child, was detested.
 - (2) You thus train the child to understand God's mercy. **PSA 103:8-18.**
 9. Remember, discipline of children and imposing restraints upon them can save them from hell in this life. **PRO 23:14.**
 - a. It further prepares them for life in a real world of laws, civil powers, bosses, rules, rewards and punishment.
 - b. Much of society's ills can be traced back to a lack of godly discipline in the home.
 - c. Hell is associated with destruction. **JOB 26:6; PRO 15:11; 27:20.**
 - (1) Biblical child-beating is meant to deliver a child from destruction.
 - (2) Thus, untempered, injurious child-beating which destroys a child is exactly the opposite of what is intended by **PRO 23:13-14.**
 10. Be careful to not allow a child to develop a pattern of always apologizing his way out of punishment. Know your child and be sensitive to trends.
 11. Parents should agree on their punishment policy.

- a. The father sets the tone as the head, king and chief justice of the home.
 - b. Punishment of unruly children should be a shared responsibility. If one parent is left to do all the punishing, children may tend to view that parent as the tyrant and the tranquil parent as their ally.
- 12. Do not be a pushover or your children will ignore what you say. **GEN 19:14.**
 - 13. The disciplined child brings rest and delight. **PRO 29:17 c/w HEB 12:11.**

V. The ideal for Biblical child-training is set forth in **DEU 6:4-15.**