



Insights for parents on
HOW NOT TO DISCIPLINE
(The characteristics and consequences of bad parenting)

THEME:

As parents, there are mindsets and methods to avoid as you train.
They can deflate children's soul and hinder their gains.

WHAT IS BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE? (Slide 4)

**Discipline is not to manage sin in life,
But to train my child how to win in life.**

When we look at the big picture in the Bible, discipline carries a rich, fully orbbed, multi-dimensional idea. In the Old Testament, the way God disciplines his "child" Israel, is by training through his words. It is about coaching through his Word that involves instructing, admonishing, correcting, reproving, and modeling.

WHAT IS BAD DISCIPLINE? (Slide 5)

What bad discipline or child training is not:

The occasional mistakes parents make as they discipline their children, which do not cause adverse effects on their children.

What bad discipline is:

1. Chronic negative mindsets and methods that often have negative effects on children.
2. Not edifying, encouraging, loving, or nurturing.



What are some mindsets of parents that lead to bad discipline?

(Slide 6)

1. Faulty or idealistic expectations

a. Expectations that are far beyond what is age or stage appropriate and suited to the child is harmful.

b. Perfectionism or flawless excellence.

“A person who pursues an impossibly high standard of performance and, in many cases, demands the same standard of others. Failure to attain the goals leads to feelings of defeat and other adverse psychological consequences.” *Mosby’s Medical, Nursing and Allied Health Dictionary*.

2. That children must fear their parents.

a. In the Bible, fear-revere is reserved for God alone. Children are called to honor their parents but not revere-worship their parents. But no place in the Bible are children commanded to fear their parents.

b. Fear does not lead to respect!

Fear – “an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger”
(Mirriam-Webster Dictionary)

Respect – to esteem, consider worthy of high regard

“Obedience that comes from a servile heart of fear is not acceptable to God.” – Rev. Sam Powell

Fear is enforced. Respect is earned.

3. An angry disposition

a. Anger is part of the original image of God in man. Anger is an emotion that is given in order to destroy something that is unrighteous, sinful, or evil in order to replace it with something good.

b. Anger isn’t sinful in and of itself.

- However, anger is bad when:
 - It is harmful or destructive (wrath)
 - It characterizes who you are.
 - You have a trigger temper and you can’t be trusted.
 - It is sinful and unrighteous



- What is sinful or unrighteous anger?
 - Sinful anger happens when we allow our hearts to claim a right or feel entitled to control life or other people. Selfish ambition, greed, selfishness, idolatry of own desires, covetousness. In other words, not getting what I want (James 3:13-4:2).
 - When it comes from Pride-hubris (Prov. 13:10; Jer. 48:29,30; Isa. 16:6)
 - When it is uncontrolled (Prov. 25:28; 29:11; 16:32)
 - When it is misdirected.
 - It injures a good and healthy relationship.
 - When it is unfair, unjust, and punitive (abusive)
 - It tears down people or things that are not evil and has no intention to build up.

Prov. 22:24-25 - “Don’t befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people. or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.” (NLT)

Prov. 29:22 - “An angry person starts fights; a hot-tempered person commits all kinds of sin.” (NLT)

4. Arrogance (Slide 7)

a. Pride, haughtiness, hubris

Conceit is an overestimation and exaggerated opinion of oneself with a strong sense of entitlement

b. Most everything is primarily for self.

Commonly known as narcissism: entitled

c. Sets oneself up as lord of the home, leads to tyranny.

d. Arrogance has its fruit

- Self-seeking and self-pleasing (Phil 2:21; James 3:16-17).
- Speech is about them, braggadocious and condescending (Psalm 12:3; 17:10; 2 Peter 2:10).
- Lying (Psalm 40:4; 59:12; 119:69, 78).
- Strife and conflict (Prov. 13:10; 28:25).
- Argumentative
- Overestimation, believes he cannot be defeated (Obadiah 1:3).

5. Controlling

A very common thing we hear is that parents must control their children.

a. If by control you mean influence, then that’s acceptable and doable.

- Influence to help our children learn internal self-control.
- Ultimate self-control is a fruit of the Spirit.



***As parents, our job is not to control our children
but to teach our children how to control themselves.***

- b. If by control you mean forced compliance as normal practice, this can lead to abuse and tyranny. That is unacceptable and creates many problems.

The greater control you exert on your family the more you imprison them. Prison is a life-sucking place to exist and not a place to thrive.

- c. There is no place in the Bible that tells us to control our children. Control (forced compliance) is called *lording it over*. God condemns that.

Lording it over is:

- To abuse, to treat rudely or with reproachful language; to revile.
- To conquer, control, coerce, crush, or subjugate.

- d. Why are parents controlling?

- Entitlement, insecurity, false expectations
- And fear

Dr. Bryan Post says,

“You seek to control your child when you are fearful. The #1 single most important parenting skill is the ability to influence rather than control.”

***When it comes to children the Bible is clear that we
must use persuasion and not coercion.***

6. Contempt for the child.

A disdain, disapproves of, and disrespects the child.



What are some methods of bad discipline? (Slide 8)

Bad disciplinary methods flow from negative mindsets with a pattern of harmful actions.

Notice these are means of control and manipulation.

1. Angry aggressiveness (Slide 9)

Assertive is okay but aggressive ruins the day.

The parent who consistently disciplines in anger (Psalms 38:1; Ephesians 4:26,27; James 1:19,20)

a. Threatening gestures or behaviors.

b. Physical aggression

(1) *Pugnacious* (1 Tim. 3:3; Ti. 1:7)

This refers to elders who are commanded not to be pugnacious. Elders are to be models of Jesus.

This is someone who is aggressive, belligerent, confrontational, and contentious and uses physical force (beating, striking, hitting)

(2) Pushing, shoving, kicking, pummeling, or other ways to inflict pain.

2. Using fear

Distress and fear make the negatives appear.

3. Being consistently inconsistent (Slide 10)

a. Being fairly inconsistent with discipline

(Ecclesiastes 8:11).

b. Failing to keep promises (Psalm 15:4-5; Matthew 5:37; Colossians 3:9).



4. Punishment (Slides 10 – 11)

In the Old Testament law: the primary ground for inflicting punishment is not the reformation of offenders. The core and underlying idea behind punishment is about justice.

It has to do with the law of vengeance for crimes or breaches of God's law such as:

- Blasphemy
- Breaking the Sabbath
- Witchcraft
- Adultery
- Rape
- Incest
- Kidnapping
- Idolatry
- Murder

The types of punishment included:

- Stoning, hanging, burning
- Retaliation
- Restoration by compensation
- Putting the person in stocks or some sort of imprisonment
- Whipping or beating

Nowhere in the Old Testament is there a call to punish children under 12.

What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

(Slide 12)

Discipline

- Is about building up: instructs, trains, corrects, guides, models, etc.
- Methods: train through words, speaking, and correcting.
- Sometimes refers to children.
- Often used in the context of youth (13-20 years) but is applied to all God's people so they can live in the righteous way of God.

Punishment

- It's about justice: a penalty inflicted by God or someone authorized by God.
- Methods: physical chastisement, confiscation of property, retribution, or vengeance.
- Never refers to children.
- Can apply to youth (13-20 years) but is applied to adults.



More Methods of bad discipline

5. Shaming and humiliation

- a. Not the same as guilt. Guilt is the result of doing something objectively wrong, violating a rule.
- b. Shame is the painful feeling of being fundamentally flawed.
- c. Chastising in front of others; calling them names; cutting them down. Verbal abuse.
- d. Criticizing

When you criticize or shame you make it hard for your child to change.

6. Showing contempt or disrespect

- a. Not praising or acknowledging a child when they deserve it.
- b. Not listening to the child's opinion or their side of the story.
- c. Presuming or assuming your child is at fault for doing something wrong but you have no evidence or you do not give the child an opportunity to present his case.
- d. Making rash judgments – condemning without proper investigation.
- e. Using silence to frustrate the child.

Note: The 10th Commandment informs us of these things.

7. Verbal tactics (verbal abuse)

Speech that curses instead of blesses. It tears down but does not build up. It is presumptive and not beneficial.

- a. Argumentative, quarrelsome, contentious – bicker, dispute, squabble; to be adversarial.
- b. Verbally harsh, irritating, shouting
Or malice – holding grudges, being spiteful so as to hurt.
- c. Slander or gossip.
- d. Scolding – to revile with loud speech, barking.
- e. Disapprove.
- f. Mocking or calling them names.
- g. Grumble or complain.
- h. Condemn instead of commend.



C. What are some consequences of bad discipline?

When the child sees you as a threat, he will respond to you in an internally unhealthy manner even if he is outwardly compliant.

- **Unintended consequences**
 - It provokes a child to frustration or anger (Do not provoke means do not embitter or stir them up) Eph. 6:4 cp. Col. 3:21
 - Provokes defiance. What does he have to lose?
 - You can provoke more defiance if your goal is compliance.
 - Provokes fight, flight, freeze, or fawn response

- **Destroys trust and love**

When a parent has disrespect, disdain, and disapproves of their child, they have basically destroyed the relationship and seriously injured their son or daughter.

- **Causes trauma**

Trauma negatively impacts the brain:

- "Wires" the brain to expect danger (fearful, anxious)
- Increases stress hormones.
- Affects one's perception of self and reality.

- **Causes ACEs**

Advanced Childhood Experiences results in PTSD and poor, long term mental and physical health, such as cancer and heart disease. Check out [Dr. Nadine Burke Harris's TED Talk](#).

Other consequences of bad discipline:

- Forced compliance might be effective with behavior in the short run but it is not effective in teaching the child to develop good character, how to think, healthy life skills, or wholesome relationships.
- Forced compliance conditions the child to be subservient to any who exercise power-over ways in relationships.



Summary: What is the Main Idea in Biblical Discipline? (Slide 16)

It is instructive, not punitive.

When it comes to the matter of discipline of children, the Bible's thrust is about whole-souled positive measures to train children through words; informed by God's Word. The purpose is for them to be skilled in the issues of life.

It is not about punitive measures to adjust bad behaviors. Discipling our children in the Lord is all about tending relational gardens where children can flourish in life. Hence, the point of discipline is so our children will win in life.