



Introduction

Parenting is a wonderful privilege and a tremendous responsibility. Much is at stake when it comes to the ministry of parenting:

- Each parent has a unique opportunity to shape and form the life of the child.
- Each child has a capacity to turn out either good or evil.

The ministry of parents in the life of the child is the strongest influence on choices the child makes. Others will also have influence. Teachers, family members and friends all will have an impact on the character of the child. But no one is as influential as Mom and Dad.

This study will identify scriptural guidelines that will help parents in their ministry to their children.

Establishing a Godly Environment

Establishing the spiritual environment in which children live is one of the primary ministries of a parent. God emphasize the spiritual environment more than any other aspect of living.

⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

- *The context of the passage is the book of Deuteronomy. By implication, New Testament commands are to the Christian what the commands in Deuteronomy were to the Jews.*
- Circle the place of prominence the commands were to have in verse 6.
- Circle the ones on whom the commands were to be impressed.
- Underline the four times the commands were to be talked about.
- Circle the method used to attach them to the hand.
- Circle how they were to be attached to the forehead.
- Underline where they are to be written in verse 9.

Notice how God wants His commandments to be visible and persistently discussed. His commands are to be impressed on children through repetition and everyday discussion.

A little later in the same book, the instruction is repeated.

¹⁸ Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

Scriptural Assumptions

Scripture assumes that parents will relate to their children by:

- > **Providing for them**
- > **Protecting them**

Consequently, there are not commands in scripture to protect or provide for your children. Providing for and protecting children is a key ministry of parents, but this study will not address those responsibilities.

"...Upon your heart..."

The only way to maintain the everyday dialogue described in Deuteronomy 6 is to have God's commands at the very center of your person. If they are not upon your heart they will never be upon the hearts of your children.

Bind them...

Pharisees took the instruction about binding God's commands to their hands and forehead literally. They used a device called a phylactery. Phylacteries contained portions of scripture they considered important.



- Notice that the sequence of the thoughts in this verse is different compared to Deuteronomy 6:6-9. The basic message however is the same.
- Circle where the "words of mine" are to be fixed.
- In verse 21, underline the reason why parents should practice these teachings.

Providing a Godly Example

Children are imitators. They learn by watching. The things they see their parents do become the things they do. They imitate both bad and good. Isaac picked up a bad practice from his father, Abraham.

and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her.

Genesis 20:2

* * *

When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful."

Genesis 26:7

- Underline in each verse the words each man used to describe his relationship with his wife.
- Abraham had no intention of influencing the actions of his child when he spoke those words to Abimelech, King of Gerar. Isaac's little eyes took it all in. When he found himself in a similar circumstance, Isaac followed the example of his father.

Everything a parent does sets an example for the child. Imitation is the byproduct of close family interaction. Providing a godly example requires godly living. Godly living is an option that must be chosen. Consider Joshua.

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua 24:15

- Underline the choice Joshua made.
- Circle those whom Joshua indicated would serve the Lord with him.

An example is more forcible than precept.

People look at my six days in the week to see what I mean on the seventh.

Children Imitate

Children will imitate whatever example is portrayed before them. If they see honesty, kindness and generosity, they will imitate honest, kindness and generosity. If they see lying, cruelty and cheating, they will lie, deal cruelly and cheat.

You will set an example. The only question is "what kind of example will it be?"

Train Your Children



Just as a young tree needs support to insure that it will not be uprooted, so a child needs support to insure healthy growth. The braces that are used on a young tree help it to remain firmly placed while its roots have a chance to develop. Training that is applied to a young child help to insure that habits are developed that will last a lifetime.

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Proverbs 22:6



- Circle in what a child should be trained.
- Underline the promised result of training.

Because a child grows in many different areas of life, training must address the development of the whole child. Consider the ways that Jesus grew:

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Luke 2:52

Using the four areas of Jesus' growth, write down some obvious areas of training needed for your child. Some examples are included in each box.

<p style="text-align: center;">Grew In Wisdom (Intellect)</p> <p>Ability to Read and Write Reasoning ability (clear thinking) Earn a living</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Grew In Stature (Body)</p> <p>Know how to cook Cleanliness</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Grew In Favor with God (Spirit)</p> <p>Know how to Pray Personal Relationship with Jesus Filling of the Holy Spirit</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Grew In Favor with Man (Social)</p> <p>Caring about others Manners Kindness</p>

Each child is different. A technique that is effective in training one child might not work in training another.

And, as a child gets older, the training must change to reflect the stage of life that he or she is in. Teenagers must be treated differently than toddlers.

God will give you wisdom if you ask him to guide you in the training plan you create for your child.

Discipline Your Children

Discipline, along with positive training is an essential ingredient in the life of every child.

He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

Proverbs 13:24

- Circle the action that indicates hatred for a son.
- Underline the action taken by someone who loves his or her son.
- The Hebrew word **shibet** is translated “rod”. It is generally used to describe the tool a shepherd would use in caring for the sheep.

While physically disciplining of a child has many opponents in the 21st Century, no such opposition existed when the Bible was written. Consider:

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.

Proverbs 22:15

* * *

¹³ Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. ¹⁴ Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.

Proverbs 23:13-14

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The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.

Proverbs 29:15

- Underline the effect that discipline will have on foolishness..
- Circle the effect of punishing with the rod in Proverbs 23:14.
- Underline that which the rod of correction imparts.

The underlying assumption and premise of scriptural discipline is that the one disciplining has a loving concern for the one being disciplined.

because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Proverbs 3:12

- Circle those whom the Lord disciplines.
- The Hebrew word **yakach**, here translated “disciplines”, has a broader meaning of “corrects” or “chastises”. It has the sense of inflicted pain.

The teaching of scripture is that those who fail to discipline their children really do not love them. But for those who do discipline their children, there is a wonderful promise.

Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.

Proverbs 29:17

- Underline the thing your son will give you if you discipline him.
- Circle the result that discipline will bring to your soul.

To Spank or not to Spank

Opposition to spanking (using the “rod”) has become overwhelming in the 20th and 21st Centuries. This opposition has grown out of abusive parents inflicting great bodily harm on defenseless children.

A loving use of physical discipline can insure that children are never abused or injured though the application of discipline.

Some guidelines to follow for those who choose to use physical discipline with their children:

- > **Never in anger** –take a break and cool down before you administer discipline. Anger impairs your judgment
- > **Explain their fault** – make sure they understand the reason for the discipline.
- > **Inflict pain** – but not bruises. The object is to get them to fear the discipline so that they will make correct choices and thus avoid pain.
- > **Hug them afterward**- let them know that you make a distinction between them and the thing they did (or did not do). Love the sinner but hate the sin.

Unrestrained

Many godly men in scripture failed to discipline their children:

- > **Eli’s** children were out of control (1 Sam 2)
- > **Samuel’s** sons were immoral (1Sam 8)
- > **David’s** children were out of control (2 Sam 14-16)

A proper inclusion of discipline would have saved much pain and heartache for these men of God.

Pray for Your Children

Of all of the ways that a parent can minister to children, nothing is as important as prayer. Prayer is an acknowledgement of the parent's dependence upon God for the decisions being made about the child's development. Many great men in scripture offered prayer for their children.

¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" ¹⁹ Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.

Genesis 17:18-20

- Underline Abraham's prayer in verse 18.
- Draw a box around God's answer to Abraham's prayer in verse 20.

Abraham was concerned about his son Ishmael and sought God's blessing on his life. God heard his prayer and promised to bless Ishmael, but God's covenant would be fulfilled through another son to be named Isaac.

When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have [his children] purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

Job 1:5

- Underline the action Job took early in the morning.
- As he was offering his sacrifice, Job was praying for the cleansing of his children for sins they may have committed. Though the verse does not record his prayer, it does explain the reason for his action. The whole activity of offering a sacrifice was a form of worship, a type of prayer that was appropriate for Old Testament believers.

Job was concerned for the righteousness of his children. He sought God on their behalf.

David also prayed for the child that resulted from his sin with Bathsheba.

David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground.

2 Samuel 12:16

- Circle the intensity with which David prayed.
- Underline the posture David assumed in his prayer.
- As punishment for his sin, God had told David that the child would die. Yet, David persisted in prayer for the child because he knew that God was a God of mercy. Even when he knew the answer was "no" he prayed for his child's life.

One of the tools available on the **vDRC** website is a prayer guide for your children.

Go to **www.vDRC.org** and select the **Tools** button and the **Prayer Tools page**. You can download the prayer list and use it to guide your prayers for your children, or use it as the basis for developing a prayer list of your own.

Prayer changes things

Review

Summarize each section of this study in the space below. Try to state the points of that section as concisely as possible.

Establishing a Godly Environment

Providing a Godly Example

Train Your Children

Discipline Your Children

Pray for Your Children

Application

What has God spoken to you about in this study?

What do you think your need is?

What is it that God wants you to do?

How are you going to check-up on yourself?

Don't Skip the Application

Applying God's Word to your life is the most important part of study.