

## **The Parental Disciplinary Tool Box**

**Intro:** In our continuing series on "Taking care of families" we are addressing some of the fundamentals of family life, focusing on both building a solid marriage and developing good parenting skills. Today let's think about the parent's disciplinary tool box.

**Our goal as parents is to guide our children's behavior, helping them to develop internal controls that will enable them behave well as they mature. Through discipline, we provide motivation for them to develop those internal controls, so that we can finally release them into the freedom to act independently without the need for parental discipline at all.**

**The word "discipline" often has a negative connotation and is often reserved for physical punishment of children when they misbehave; but actually discipline may take place in several ways. A wise parent will seek to know all the methods of discipline that may help in parenting and determine which method of discipline is the best one to use in a given situation.**

### **Active Management of Their Needs (Providing for them)**

*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Tim. 5:8)*

**Not only is this the right thing to do. We are actually shaping our children's behavior, when we dedicate ourselves to being good providers for our children. Through conscientious provision for their needs, we help them develop the trust that we want what is best for them. It is that trust that we hope will enable them to listen to our instruction and advice as they mature.**

**On the other hand, neglect brings its own set of problems, causing insecurity, mistrust, and disobedience.**

### **Quality Time & Affection (Building Relationship)**

*that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, (Titus 2:4)*

**A wise person said, "Children spell love "t-i-m-e."**

**Parents sometimes justify the lack of time with their children on the basis that they are providing for them materially. Some of them also, laden with guilt for their absence, lavish them with material gifts hoping that this will compensate for their absence. Neither will work.**

**All children need their parent's undivided attention and affection--to talk with them, to play with them, to do things with them. Quality time is not merely being in the room or at the table with your children while you are texting people on Face book or doing something on your phone or tablet. It is amazing how many behavior problems could be solves if parents took that extra time to be with their children and to show love to them**

when they need it. They might find that they have to spend a lot less time trying to solve problems and correcting bad behavior.

The fact is that sometimes misbehavior is simply a child's attempt to say, "Pay attention to me. I need your love and affection." A wise parent will be sensitive to those signals from their children.

#### **Communication (Giving them good character instruction)**

**A positive means of discipline is teaching itself. The word "discipline" is akin to the word disciple, a learner.**

*And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. (Deut. 6:6-7)*

**Tell them stories about those who would be proper role models for them, showing them how in concrete ways they demonstrated good or bad behavior. Seek to instill in them a desire to please God.**

**By positive teaching we can cultivate good attitudes and a good understanding of what is required in the home so that we can prevent confrontations. In fact we could say, that the more proactively we teach the less we'll have to correct.**

#### **Corrective discipline (Consequent unpleasant experiences)**

**Of course the time comes, when after proper instruction and clear presentation of what you ask of them, children will defy their parent's values and rules that enforce them. In such cases we must consistently use the tool of corrective discipline which involves making them experience unpleasant things that will serve as a deterrent to future disobedience. Spanking. It gets strong endorsement in Scripture through the numerous references to the "rod" (which should be understood as a small cane.)**

*Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from Sheol. (Prov. 23:13-14)*

*He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently. (Prov. 13:24)*

*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him. (Prov. 22:15)*

*The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul. (Prov. 29:15,17)*

Some points ought to be made about physical punishment.

It ought not be used too early! Young first parents will be prone sometimes to resorting to spanking small children when what they really need is some patient redirecting and cueing when they come near something that is off limits.

The punishment needs to be directed toward rebellious behavior not childish forgetfulness. When the issue is, "Who's

in charge here?" physical punishment may be a fitting answer to that question to a rebellious young fellow.

Spankings should become less frequent with time. As a child grows older there are other points of leverage that we have to encourage proper behavior.

There should never be excessive force that would result in injury to the child. There is no justification for abuse of children in the Scripture.

### **Natural consequences (Actions they experience because of their behavior)**

Sometimes it is wise to let children face the consequences of their own decisions.

God Himself sometimes uses this form of discipline allowing people to experience the consequences of their disobedient behavior:

*"receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." (Rom. 1:27*

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.) (Gal. 6:7)*

A boy who would not get out of bed missed the bus. Had to make up work and explain his tardiness to the teacher. Not late anymore!

Kuzma's story of some kids who bought Dad a birthday present then proceeded to eat it on a daily basis. They had to give Dad an empty box! Their personal embarrassment taught them a valuable lesson.

A parent of course would not allow this when he knows that the consequence is too severe or permanently damaging to the child. But if it brings some personal embarrassment or temporary difficulty, so be it. It will be a good exercise in life. We all have to learn to accept the consequences of our own decisions. And when that happens, don't let little junior talk you into bailing him out of his jam! You'll have to do it again and again.

### **Logical consequences (Action you take which are attached to their behavior)**

In this method the child is forced to accept a punishment that is not necessarily the natural result of the behavior, but logically connected with the misbehavior.

Kuzma tells story of trying to get little boy to clean up room. Told him specifically what to do and set the timer to get it done. Child does not comply. When the buzzer went off, Mom said, "I'm going to the ice-cream shop to get a cone of ice cream. Junior thought he was going. No, you didn't clean up your room you can't go. Came back home with a quadruple decker and ate it right in front of him!. Needless to say, next time the room was clean and as a reward, he got an ice cream cone in the deal!

This is good to use in areas where a child is not being as responsible as they could.

Supposed expected to earn some money for an upcoming event. Plays around, neglects work. Let him stay at home.

Throw baseball through window, must pay for window!

### **Extinction (Removal of desired outcome)**

This involves not responding in the way the child might be seeking. A child's behavior is sometimes a way of manipulating a parent to do something that he wants.

A child wants a piece of candy, so he begins to whine for it.

Parents will often react by giving whatever the child wants to silence them. What have they just learned?

A statement we have used with our children is "I can't hear you when you yell... or whine, etc." That's extinction.

Give response when the behavior changes instead of rewarding the behavior with the desirable action.

Here is a good time to talk about "time out", in recent times has been a viable alternative in situations where spanking is risky. And some who reject physical punishment rely entirely upon it. The inappropriate behavior is extinguished by time in one's room or in the corner. Of course, this is ineffective if it is not particularly undesirable to do that or if the child goes to room and plays for period of "punishment".

### **Positive Reinforcement**

**All people can be motivated to make changes when something desirable is put before them to motivate them in that direction. It is not merely a form of personal bribery as is often charged.**

**Again there is a sense in which God has used the concepts of praise and rewards as an incentive for God's people.**

*His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' (Mt. 25:21)*

*Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:12)*

**The parent may reinforce good behavior by praise.**

Our children delight in our praise. The more we express our approval the more they will want to do those things.

So don't just become someone who responds to bad behavior. Spend much more time "catching them being good" and praising the good.

**The parent may reinforce good behavior by rewards.**

All children have something they really want; and it can be used as motivation to make needed changes in behavior, if the desirable thing is attached to a behavior plan.

Reinforcement can be used along with extinction for double leverage. Focus on the bad behavior and develop a strategy to extinguish it. Set

in its place a proper behavior goal and offer a reward to work toward it.

**Conclusion: These then are some of the effective approaches that also teach responsibility and compliance.**