



Biblical Parenting

Study Guide

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Scott Gilchrist

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I am glad you have an interest in **Biblical** principles of **parenting**.

God's Word gives us key truths to follow in every area of life and that includes parenting. Even though today is a challenging time to be parenting, I am confident that as we seek His wisdom in this area and humbly obey Him, He will work mightily in the lives of our children. I write and speak to you as a fellow learner—my wife, Kristi, and I are seeking to do our best to raise our five children according to the principles that God has laid out in the Scriptures.

This study guide has been prepared to be used in conjunction with the four sessions in the seminar, Biblical Parenting. I hope it will be helpful for you and motivate you to dig deeper into God's Word on this crucial subject and I pray that you will be encouraged to a deeper trust in our Heavenly Father.

**“Unless the Lord builds the house,
they labor in vain who build it.”**

Psalm 127:1

Scott Gilchrist

The Goal: Godly Maturity

God loves your children more than you do.

God gave His Son for your children.

God gave us an instruction book.

God's Word is:

We can face today's challenge of parenting with confidence if we rely on and obey the truth of God's Word.



God desires Christian parents to raise Christian children.

► **FIVE FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS**

1) Man (therefore your child) is sinful.

2) Man is savable.



3) God has entrusted children to parents.

4) God has given us an instruction manual—the Bible.

5) If we humbly follow God's instructions, we can pray for and expect Godly results.



Our God-given task is to bring our children to maturity.

► **GOD'S CHARGE TO ABRAHAM**

Genesis 18:19 God chose Abraham in order that he would command His children to keep the **way of the Lord**.

Proverbs 22:6 universalizes this responsibility. It is our parental responsibility to train our children to keep the way of the Lord.

*“Train up a child in **the way he should go**; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6*

Like Abraham, our task is to command our children to keep the **way of the Lord**. Abraham was commanded to do this by doing righteousness and doing justice--choosing to live right by living according to the way of the Lord.

► BRINGING CHILDREN TO MATURITY

Hebrews gives us a Biblical definition of maturity: one who is able to discern (distinguish; choose between) good and evil.

“But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” Hebrews 5:14

Life is made up of choices, judgments and decisions. Our task is to raise our children equipped to make right choices, judgments and decisions.

► TRAINING TO DISCERN GOOD AND EVIL

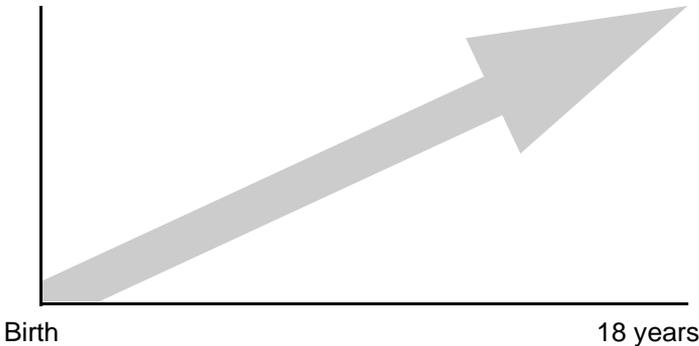
The word *train*, in Hebrews 5:14 comes from a Greek word from which we get the English word, *gymnasium*. The consistent training and practice that an athlete puts in at the gym is the idea behind the word for *train*. It is translated “discipline” in I Timothy 4:7.

*“On the other hand, **discipline** yourself for the purpose of godliness.”* I Timothy 4:7b

*“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been **trained** by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”* Hebrews 12:11



Maturity doesn't just happen. It takes training and discipline.

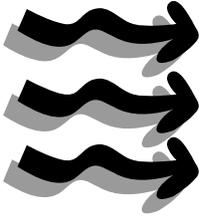


*“**Train** up a child in **the way he should go**; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6*

*“Do not hold back **discipline** from the child; although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.” Proverbs 23:13*

*“**Discipline** your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.” Proverbs 19:18*

The three essential ingredients in Christian parenting are:



MODELING

DISCIPLINE

PRAYER

► MATURITY AND DISCIPLINE

We will concentrate on discipline because:

- 1) The Bible does.

- 2) Discipline is often neglected, especially today.

- 3) We hear many general exhortations to prayer and teaching by example.

- 4) Discipline addresses the five foundational truths discussed earlier.



Assignment: Read the book of Proverbs. In the space below, list the proverbs that you find on the subjects of **parents**, **children** and **discipline**. On the following pages provided or on three separate sheets of paper, write these proverbs out.

Parents

Children

Discipline

Parents

Children

Discipline

God's Method of Bringing Maturity: Biblical Discipline

Parenting is an awesome privilege and responsibility. But God has not left us to figure it out for ourselves. He has given us His Word.



*“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.”
Psalm 127:1*

*“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.”
Psalm 119:18*

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Proverbs 9:10

► THE GOAL

Our goal is to raise children who are mature. We want them to be God-fearing and wise, not foolish. We want them to be able to discern good and evil and make right choices, judgments and decisions.

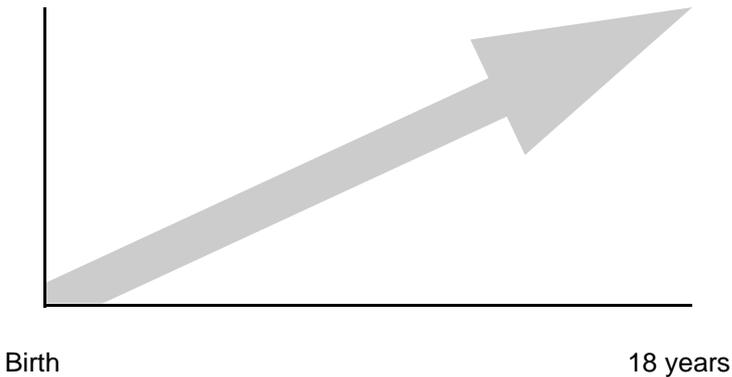
Since our goal is to raise our children to maturity, it is important to think clearly (Biblically) about where they are at the beginning.

There are two things that we can say about children. The first we learn from Scripture and the second from observation.

1. Children are **foolish**.

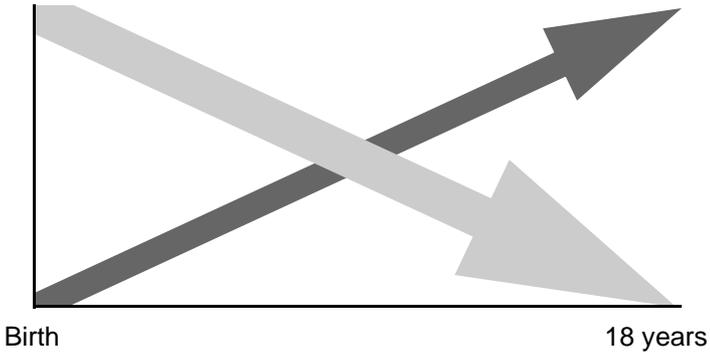
“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;” Proverbs 22:15a

2. Children are **smart**. By this we mean that children have great intellectual capacity. They are sharp!



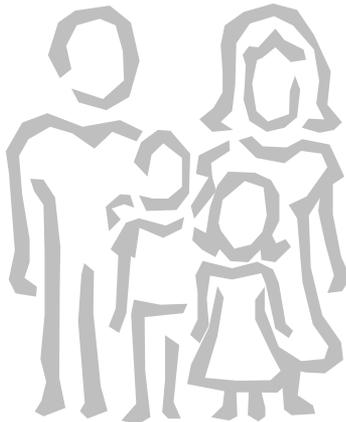
► BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE

Remember that maturity, as defined in Hebrews 5:14, is being able to discern good and evil. This discernment comes from **training** (discipline).



Discipline is God's way of removing foolishness and bringing a child to wisdom and maturity.

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him." Proverbs 22:15



► DEVELOPING A BIBLICAL CONVICTION

When God speaks to the issue of parenting, most of what He has to say is in regard to the subject of discipline. It is imperative that we develop Biblical convictions regarding discipline, because we will not get much encouragement along these lines from our culture today. In fact, we will face opposition. Our world today, having embraced a man-centered, humanistic philosophy—that man is basically good—often views parental discipline in a very negative light. One will face any number of arguments against discipline. The following are some examples:

MAN'S VIEW

(Based on the humanistic philosophy that man is basically good.)

“Is it right to impose **my** way on my child? Won't I inhibit or stifle my child by being so coercive?”

“Discipline seems so negative. What about positive reinforcement?” “Doesn't violence beget violence?”

“I'm afraid my kids won't like me—maybe even hate me.”

“He's too young. I'll wait until he's old enough to understand.”

“Maybe if you've tried everything else and nothing works.”

“I believe if you just love them, everything will work out. If you must discipline your child, you certainly need to balance it with plenty of love.”





Christian parents would do well to
memorize these Scriptures!

GOD'S VIEW

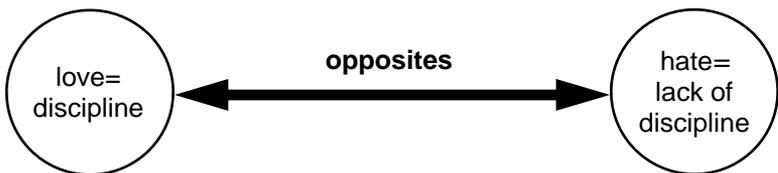
(Found in Scripture)

"The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother." Proverbs 29:15

"Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul." Proverbs 29:17

"Discipline your son while there is hope and do not desire his death." Proverbs 19:18

"He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently." Proverbs 13:24



► DISCIPLINE AND LOVE

Discipline and love are **not** at opposite ends of a spectrum. In Scripture, discipline **flows from God's love**. And so, disciplining our children is a very loving, positive action. Biblical discipline is for the good of our children and flows from our love for them.

*“He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who **loves him disciplines him diligently.**” Proverbs 13:24*

*“My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord, or loathe His reproof. For whom the Lord **loves, He reproves,** even as a father, the son in whom he delights.” Proverbs 3:11-12*

► THE “WAY HE SHOULD GO”

Proverbs 22:6 has long been a trusted text that Christian parents have applied with blessed results.

*“Train up a child in **the way he should go**,
even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

In our generation some have taught that “train up a child in the way he should go” does not emphasize a right and a wrong “way”, but rather according to his own personality bent. This interpretation (misinterpretation) has effectively robbed the proverb of its point.

The proverb is an encouragement to parents to guide, train and teach their children the **right** way through life. This is a common Biblical theme and a careful reading of the following texts will clearly show that the moral content of “the way” is crucial.

*“There is a **way** which seems right to a man, but its end is the **way** of death.” Proverbs 16:25*

*“In all your **ways** acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:6*

*“For I have chosen him (Abraham), in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the **way** of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice;” Genesis 18:19a*

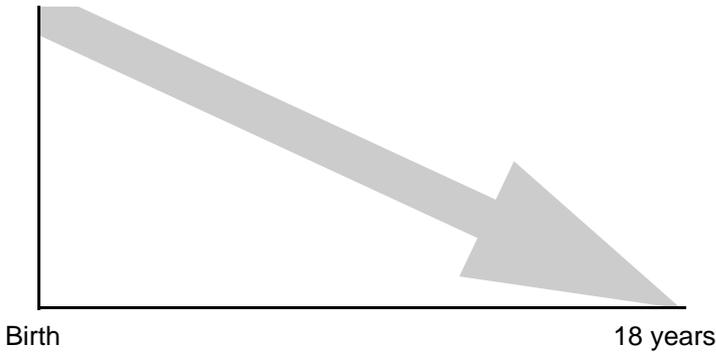
*“And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their **way** upon the earth.” Genesis 6:12*

*“For the Lord knows the **way** of the righteous, but the **way** of the wicked will perish.” Psalm 1:6*

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the **way** which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.” Psalm 32:8*

*“The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own **way** brings shame to his mother.” Proverbs 29:15*

In life there are right ways and wrong ways. There are godly paths and ungodly paths. God has instructed parents to **impose** God's way on their children when they are young. Then when they are older they will be able to discern His way for themselves.



A child who is consistently trained/disciplined by his parents will find it easier to be obedient to God throughout his life. He will experience the joy, security, freedom and peace that come to those who follow the **way** of righteousness.



Assignment: Write out Proverbs 3:1-12 and Hebrews 12:1-11. You may use the following pages. (See Deuteronomy 17:18-20. Writing out Scripture is a valuable way to get God's Word into our hearts.)

Proverbs 3:1-12

Hebrews 12:1-11

Additional Notes

Getting Practical: Seven Keys

REVIEW:

When the Bible speaks of parenting and children, most of what God says is regarding discipline. A Biblical foundation for convictions regarding discipline is essential because we will face opposition from a variety of sources.

Men, do not neglect this subject or merely delegate it to your wife. The Scripture indicates that fathers, especially, need to develop a Biblical philosophy and implement it.

*“And, **fathers**, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4*

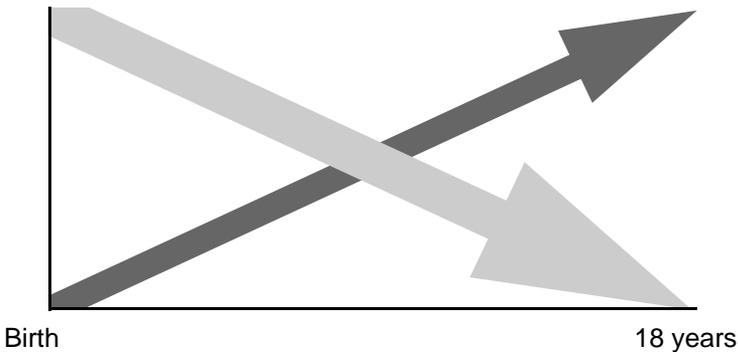
*“**Fathers**, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.” Colossians 3:21*

Our goal is to bring our children to maturity so they are able to live wisely, making good decisions, judgments and choices.

1

BEGIN EARLY

The amount of discipline is greater in the early years and then decreases as the child gets older and grows in maturity.



“Discipline your son while there is hope and do not desire his death.” Proverbs 19:18

From the day you bring a baby home, you are training him. From the very beginning, train him to obey you.

Biblical discipline and training is imposing God’s will on the child. God’s will is for children to obey parents.

*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”
Ephesians 6:1*

2

ESTABLISH VERBAL AUTHORITY

3 BE CONSISTENT

We train our children to **obey our word** by being consistent and following through on our instructions. It is important to remember that God has called us, as parents, to lead and guide when we are tempted to rationalize and redefine the issue. . .

"Is it really wrong for Johnny to. ?"

"Am I making a big deal out of nothing?"

"He's tired! He missed his nap, so I"

"Isn't he just displaying his God-given curiosity?"

"Shouldn't I let him learn by ?"



All of these arguments miss the key issue, which is **obedience**.

The correct questions to ask are:

Who wins?

Who is in charge? Who is the authority in this home?

Will this family be run by a baby (or toddler, middle schooler, teen) or an adult? In other words, will this family be led by your child, or by **you**, the parent?

Remember, you are training your children to **obey your word** so that they will more easily obey God's Word and learn to make wise choices, decisions and judgments.

4

SAY WHAT YOU MEAN AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY

5

NEVER REWARD ILL BEHAVIOR

CRYING

POUTING

NAGGING

TANTRUMS (or any other kind of manipulative behavior)

6

REALIZE THAT CHILDREN WILL TEST YOU

7

KEEP THE BIG PICTURE IN MIND

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” Hebrews 12:11

“If wisdom is life (Proverbs 8:35, 36), then a **hard** way to it is better than a **soft** way to death!”

Derek Kidner

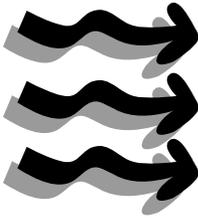


Assignment: Read I Samuel 1-4 regarding the sons of Eli.

TEN CRUCIAL ISSUES

REVIEW:

The three essentials of successful Christian parenting are:



MODELING

DISCIPLINE

PRAYER

1

THE PRIORITY OF YOUR MARRIAGE

“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.”

Colossians 3:18-21

(See also Ephesians 5:22-6:4)

2 BE A PARENT, NOT A PAL

*"Hear, my **son**, your **father's** instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching." Proverbs 1:8*

3

BUILD RESPONSIBILITY INTO YOUR CHILDREN

4

TEACH THEM TO BE HARD WORKERS

"I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles. Its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest. Then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man."

Proverbs 24:30-34

(See also II Thessalonians 3:6-15)

5 HAVE FAMILY DISTINCTIVES

Jeremiah 35—the example of the Rechabites

6

CONSIDER THE ASSOCIATIONS YOUR CHILDREN MAKE

“Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’”

1 Corinthians 15:33

7

HELP YOUR CHILDREN ESTABLISH PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL HABITS

“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 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.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

(See also John 8:31, 32)



WATCH OUT FOR SPECIAL DANGERS

“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither. And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Psalm 1:1-3

9

MAKE CHURCH INVOLVEMENT CENTRAL TO YOUR HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

“. . . let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24, 25

10

THINK CAREFULLY (BIBLICALLY) ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Remember to keep the long-term perspective. God has given you the privilege and responsibility of raising your children. It is imperative that you keep His truth in mind.

Remember Hebrews 12:5-11

Discipline flows from _____.

Discipline produces _____.

Discipline builds _____.

Discipline is for the _____ of our child.

Discipline is for the _____.



