

Discipline to Discipling

How To Make The Transition

By: Lee Ann Mancini

Introduction

There is only one letter change from "discipline to discipling." Jesus disciplined his followers in order for them to be effective disciples.

Words not only have meaning but they have power, recalling that God spoke creation into existence, and life and death are in the very words we speak (see Proverbs 18:21). King David should have spoken words of discipline to his sons. He was not a perfect parent, but he knew perfectly well he needed to be obedient to the commands of the Lord. However, David did not rebuke, reprimand, restrain, interfere, discipline, nor correct his sons. David's sins of omission were detrimental for his sons Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. Also, he did not set a good example for his children regarding how to raise the next generation. What are some ways you can help discipline your child so they one day will become a disciple for Jesus?



Teaching Self-Discipline

The ultimate goal of discipline should be for your child to learn self-control, self-discipline, and self-motivation.

- Children need to become self-motivated but will not learn this if they are constantly reminded of everything they should do; let there be a consequence for not complying with the rules.
- When they have self-motivation to serve others, they develop confidence and compassion while decreasing uncertainty and self-centeredness.

Matthew 25:40, "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'



Benefits of Self-Discipline

There are many benefits to teaching your child to have self-discipline.

- Learn how to be respectful
- Have good manners
- Resist unhealthy or dangerous temptations
- Have patience
- Have the ability to delay instant gratification
- Learn how to become diligent in their work habits even if they do not "feel" like continuing

Studies show that children recognize that their parents' desire is for them to become better people. Children also understand they are disciplined out of love, and this instruction through discipline is a connection with their parents' Christian beliefs. [1]



Example of Discipline

The self-centered toddler takes a bath.

- As the self-centered toddler takes their bath, they will throw out more water than you care to wipe up off the floor.
- When bath time ends, crying time may ensue because they do not want to stop the bath time fun.
- Empathy is an effective tool to defuse an angry out burst. "I know you are mad. You love to splash and have fun in the tub. Tomorrow you will have fun in the tub again."
- Acknowledging their emotions and offering solutions can help greatly.
- It takes time, love, patience, and most of all, consistency.
- They are famous for the word "no" as they seek independence.
- They need and want this independence, but it must be allowed in a measured and protected environment that calls for disciplinary actions when appropriate.

Parents, grandparents, teachers, or ministry leaders need to establish boundaries and disciplinary actions need to be clearly expressed.



Sharing & Patience

Telling a three-year-old they will not be able to play with a toy unless they can share it with their friend is a valuable lesson learned early. When children are young, they play side-by-side and usually do not interact with other children. When one child grabs a toy out of another child's hand, sometimes the child is complacent, but another child might react in a full-blown tantrum, which can be very disconcerting.

A good way to teach the concept of sharing and patience is to have your child sit in a circle with their friends.

Taking Turns

- Bring out a new toy for them to pass around
- Each child will hold the toy until a timer buzzes, and they will pass it to the next child
- Have each child talk about the new toy; What is it? Why do they like it? Have them "share" anything about the toy they like when they have their turn
- Tell them if they share nicely, everyone will have a fun snack

Waiting patiently for their turn is an important concept learned early.



Taking Turns in Life

In life, we as adults take turns; waiting in line at the grocery store; driving in the car, waiting for food at a restaurant. We wait our turn; however, it is how we wait that displays our character.



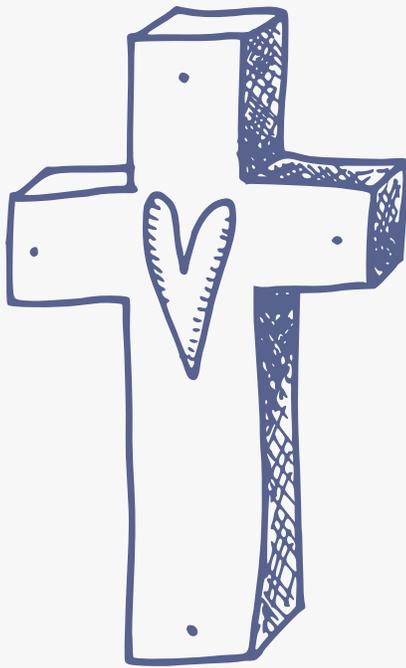
Do your children see you waiting patiently?



Discipline & Love

Children should never feel that a parent loves them because they obey the rules. A parent's love is conditional love, and we are called to love our children unconditionally.

Jesus used discipline tactics to set a standard of truth and explained hard-to-understand concepts. He nurtured and admonished when necessary.



1 Peter 4:8 , "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."



Honor & Truth in the Home

Honor in the Home:

It is imperative that children learn the concept of honor in the home, and it is best learned through honorable interactions amongst family members on a daily basis.

Dishonor and disrespectfulness should be dealt with swiftly. If you do not nip disrespect in the bud, it will grow into an uncontrollable weed, resulting in severe consequences.

Remember what happened when Elisha was dishonored by the youths who insulted him? "Go up, you baldheaded; go up, you baldhead!" What did God do? Two bears came out of the woods and killed the forty-two disrespectful lads (see Kings 2:23-24).

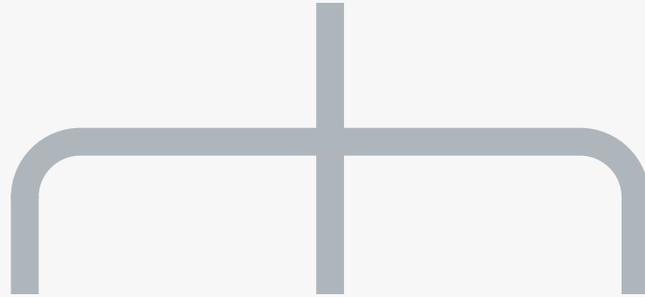
Truth in the Home:

When your child blames the dog for breaking the toy, or blames others for something they did wrong, express that "Mommy and Jesus love truth. Truth means to tell what really happened," and, "Jesus is happy when you tell the truth."



Corrective Discipline

Impact of Discipline on Children



Children's Behavior Their Love for Jesus Love for themselves

Likewise, reward systems help reinforce correct behavior.

Moreover, encouragement over reward inspires children to be good and to do good things. Encouragement fosters a good feeling, a preferred feeling, in which the motivation comes from within and helps combat the lack of resiliency, which can weaken motivation.

In addition, we need to give our children the opportunity to make wise decisions instead of issuing the threat of punishment for disobeying: "If you don't hurry and put your pajamas on, we will not have enough time for a bedtime story," as opposed to, "If you don't put your pajamas on, I will not read you a bedtime story."



Corrective Discipline helps to correct a wrong behavior.

- If they leave a toy on the floor, they must pick it up
- If they leave a door open, they must close it
- If they dirty something, they must clean it
- If they break something, they must do chores to pay for it

Consistency is key with corrective discipline.

If we "constantly have to coax or remind a child to come to dinner, you are simply teaching him that the first call doesn't matter." [2]

When this happens, we become angry with ourselves for not being consistent in our discipline, because somewhere along the lines they learned that our first command is not a command.

Being a "loving parent" who disciplines immediately sends the message to your child that they are worth the effort and the time it takes to bring effective correction at all costs.



Cleanliness & Entitlement

Cleanliness:

Children's bedrooms need to be clean. More importantly, do not permit anything in their bedroom that might allow a foothold from the devil (video games or television shows, for instance).

As horrible as it sounds, children can become demonized (see Mark 9: 22-22). In Mark 9:28-29, there was a child who was possessed, and Jesus told the disciples it was only the power of prayer that could remove that evil influence.

Pray over their bedroom, as it should be a sacrosanct area.

Entitlement:

An attitude of entitlement in your child can cause major problems later in life when people do not give them what they demand.

Offer age-appropriate chores and, once they are completed, reward them by "paying" them for the job well done. They will value a toy when they buy it with the money they earned. By doing this, you will instill an attitude of gratitude in your child.

Children should earn money, not just be given an allowance.



Guilt vs. Shame

If your child feels guilty for wrong doing, that in and of itself is not a bad thing. However, there is a difference between guilt and shame.

Guilt tells a child that they did something wrong or bad and they need to not do it again.

Shame tells the child that they themselves are, as children often say, "bad, stupid, or dumb."

We as parents need to be aware of this difference, as frequently causing a child to feel shameful tells the child that they will never measure up, and this can cause terrible, psychological damage.



Closing Thoughts

Young children correlate their view of God by what they see modeled by their parents, therefore do not make a judgment call based upon your anxiety or irritation level.

Make sure you are in control of your emotions before you take control of your child's behavior. We all need to learn from our mistakes.

Be wise in making good decisions: you do not want to send them the wrong message about God's character.



"Blessed is the one you discipline, Lord, the one you teach from your law; you grant them relief from days of trouble..." (Psalm 94:12-13).

