

DISCIPLINE

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1986 (Rev. 96)

Lesson #17
Proverbs 3:11-12

Introduction: Parents often find the area of exercising discipline with their children to be difficult. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon instructs his son on the subject of discipline.

1. REPRESENTATIONS OF DISCIPLINE (What types of discipline are there?)

Solomon reveals many kinds of discipline in the book of Proverbs.

A. Proverbs 3:11 "**chastening**" (Hebrew "musar") meaning oral instruction and often used with verbal pronouncement of physical punishment that will happen. Also translated "correction" in Proverbs 7:22; 15:10; 22:15; and 23:13. It is used 50xs in the book of Proverbs, 5:32; 13:18,24; 15:32; and in Lev. 26:18 and Deut. 11:2.

B. Proverbs 3:11-12 "**correction**" (Hebrew "tokahat") meaning to render judgment verbally. Translated "rebuke" in Proverbs 27:5.

C. Proverbs 9:8 "**rebuke**" (Hebrew "yakah") meaning to render a judgment verbally, but may be accompanied by physical consequences. Used in Proverbs 9:8; 24:25; 28:23. Also translated "reproof" in Proverbs 1:23,25,30; 5:12; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:5,10,31,32; 29:15.

D. Proverbs 17:26 "**strike**" (Hebrew "naka") meaning to hit, spank, or beat, sometimes a non-fatal strike and sometimes a beating that results in death. Used 500 times in the Old Testament. Translated "smite" in Proverbs 19:25 and "beat" in Proverbs 23:14.

E. Proverbs 17:26 "**punish**" (Hebrew "anash") a legal term for punishing someone with a monetary fine. Found in Proverbs 19:19; 21:11; 22:3; 27:12. Also used in Deut. 22:19; Ex. 21:22; and 2 Chron. 36:3.

F. Proverbs 19:18 "**chasten**" (Hebrew "yasar") meaning instruction or knowledge given to change wrong behavior or action, but may not be restricted to just words. Used 36xs in Proverbs and translated "instruct" 25xs. Found in Proverbs 9:9, 13:1,18; 19:20; 29:19; Job 5:17; Ps. 6:1.

G. Proverbs 10:13 "**rod**" (Hebrew "shebet") which can mean staff, scepter, dart or spear, but often referred to a corrective instrument for either remedial or penal punishment. Used in Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13,14; 26:3; 29:15.

(Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, Vol. 1, pages 376-377, 386-387, and Vol. 2, pages 577-579, 685, 897)

Summary notes:

1. ". . . Failure to use the preventive discipline of verbal rebuke and the corrective discipline of physical punishment will end in the child's death." (Vol. 2, page 897)

2. ". . . The theological basis for an earthly father's discipline over his son is in the [Mosaic] covenant. He bears the image of his covenant Lord, and as such stands in parallel relationship over his children - chastening, correcting, instructing, providing - which are expressions of an interpersonal relationship of love. In Proverbs 3:11-12, reproof and correction are said to come from Yahweh for who the Lord loves he reproves, even as a father the son in whom he delights. Hence discipline gives assurance of sonship. Reproof primarily points to a God-centered way of life, and secondarily to ethical behavior." (Vol. 1, page 387)

2. RENDERING OF PROPER DISCIPLINE (How can discipline be administered?)

There are at least five types of discipline as summarized from the above Hebrew words.

- A. Instructionally teaching: Proverbs 3:11-12; 29:17
- B. Orally rebuking: Proverbs 9:8; 24:5; 27:5; 28:23; 29:19
- C. Physically spanking: Proverbs 17:26; 19:25; 23:13-14; 29:15 (Lev. 26:18,24,28)
- D. Corporally restricting: Proverbs 9:8-9; 13:1,18; 19:20; 7:22
- E. Monetarily charging: Proverbs 17:26;19:19; 21:11; 22:3; 27:12

Summary note: There are several facts to consider when administering discipline

1. Discipline should not be administered without love.
2. Discipline should not be administered without the view of accomplishing a greater good.
3. Discipline should not be administered in public if it is personal or a family matter.
4. Discipline should not be administered without knowledge of the circumstances.
5. Discipline should not be administered without an understanding the child.
6. Discipline should not be administered without control of the situation.
7. Discipline should not be administered without limits.
8. Discipline should not be administered with anger or rage.

3. REASONS FOR DISCIPLINE (Why should parents practice discipline with a child?)
Solomon records several reasons for discipline in the book of Proverbs.

- A. Proverbs 3:12 = Because you delight in your child
- B. Proverbs 10:13 = Because of your child's lack of understanding
- C. Proverbs 13:24 = Because you love your child
- D. Proverbs 19:18 = Because there is the hope of change
- E. Proverbs 22:15 = Because foolishness dwells in the heart of a child
- F. Proverbs 23:13 = Because you are commanded not to without correction
- G. Proverbs 23:14 = Because you want to deliver the child from hell
- H. Proverbs 29:15 = Because you want to teach a child wisdom
- I. Proverbs 29:17 = Because you need a rest (quality of life)

4. RESTRICTIONS TO PROPER DISCIPLINE (What can hinder parents from discipline?)
Parents should be careful of several items that may hinder discipline.

- A. Proverbs 9:7-8 = There may be fear of the responses.
- B. Proverbs 13:24 = There may be actual hatred of the child.
- C. Proverbs 15:10 = To the flesh, punishment is grievous.
- D. Proverbs 17:13,26 = There may be improper discipline.

E. Proverbs 17:27 = There may be a parent who spares words.

F. Proverbs 19:18 = The child's response of crying.

G. Proverbs 23:13 = The parent may withhold what is needed.

5. RESPONSES TO DISCIPLINE (How should those under discipline respond?)

Those under discipline may respond in several positive ways.

A. Proverbs 12:1 = to love instruction and knowledge

B. Proverbs 15:5 = being prudent

C. Proverbs 15:10 = a willingness to forsake the bad way

D. Proverbs 20:13 = laziness

6. REJECTION OF DISCIPLINE (Why do those under discipline fail to benefit?)

Those under discipline may respond in several negative ways.

A. Proverbs 3:11 = despising chastening

B. Proverbs 3:11 = detesting correction

C. Proverbs 12:1; 15:10 = hatred of reproof

D. Proverbs 15:5 = despise instruction

E. Proverbs 29:1 = hardening of the neck

Summary note: What do you do if discipline does not work?

1. Check your attitude and motivation for discipline.

2. Check your method and procedure for discipline.

3. Check your spiritual life for sin. (see Romans 2:21).

4. Remember discipline is a way of life not just a single activity.

5. Remember a child is still responsible to follow instruction (and may not) and you are still responsible to administer discipline (regardless of the reception).

6. Remember to be consistent.

7. Remember to keep a balance between: mercy and grace; and instruction and justice.

7. RESISTANCE TO USING DISCIPLINE (Why don't parents use discipline?)

The world has made statements to excuse parents from using discipline. Notice the following incorrect statements used by non-Christians and Christians alike.

A. "Discipline is negative and creates negative results!" WRONG - Proverbs 22:15; 23:14

B. "Physical punishment does not express love!" WRONG - Proverbs 3:12; 13:24

C. "Physical punishment causes a child to hate!" WRONG - Proverbs 13:24

D. "Physical punishment harms a child!" WRONG - Proverbs 23:13

E. "Leaving any kind of a mark is child abuse" WRONG - Proverbs 20:30

F. "It is better to leave a child learn his own limits!" WRONG - Proverbs 23:13

G. "The only discipline that works is talking!" WRONG - Proverbs 3:11-12 (Hebrews 12:)

H. "The rod was a staff and never used for physical punishment!" WRONG - if you compare the words rod and staff, this statement does not hold up. see Psalm. 23:4 and Proverbs 23:13-14.

Conclusion: Discipline is very important to parents, children, and the godly life.