



Discipline in the Family

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

Introduction

1. Children are not all alike and training is not easy, but it is of great importance. The Creator has designed the child so that he is young for several years. This gives the parents time to search for skill in how to bring each child into subjection or into submission.
2. Parents must seek this skill in order to find it. Advice may come from friends, but this may be diverse and contradictory. The best advice is always from the Holy Scriptures. These instruction Manuals are consistent and do not vary from generation to generation according to the trends of philosophers and psychologists.
3. After becoming aware of how precious the peaceful fruit of righteousness is and of the fact that each child must be skillfully disciplined to produce this fruit, each worthy parent sets out to develop his skill in harmony with scriptural advice.
4. It was once advised that we need to raise our generations to respect the law. If they do not get respect for authority in the high chair, they most certainly will get it in the electric chair.

A. The Problems of Children

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

The children of Solomon's day were like children in our day. They basically had to go through the same process to reach adulthood. Comments of the early Greeks show that the youth of their day were just as prone to delinquency and rebellion, without discipline, as are the young now. Reasons for lack of discipline are:

1. **Companions' influence.** People have a tendency not to think for themselves when around others, or there is a fear to defying the crowd, and the feeling of liberation by losing oneself among others, thus the effect of gangs, rallies, lynch mobs, riots, and armies.
1 Corinthians 15:33 -- Do not be deceived. "Bad company corrupts good morals."
2. **School.** When our children are in the learning situation and mode, it is very easy for people (teachers) they normally respect to teach them error. The reason Socrates was executed was for his effect on the morals of his students.
3. **Influence of the Media.** It used to be proverbial that if something is in print it must be true. Today television, movies, music, and magazines all wrap error in pretty and entertaining packages. Even adults don't seem to understand that these arenas are usually owned by the rich for influence, or by those who want to become rich by any means possible.

Parents need to take greater control over the atmosphere of their children's lives. Parents cannot only lose the child, but ruin their own lives as well when a child becomes foolish or goes bad.

Proverbs 19:13 -- A foolish son is destruction to his father....

1 Timothy 3:4-5 -- He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. (But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)

B. God's Instructive Wisdom

Hebrews 12:5-11 -- ...you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.

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.

We often think of discipline as just harsh treatment, however, the term involves much much more. When one is trying to focus a child's life in a certain direction many things come into use. Not only the cattle prod method of herding, but the more productive methods of encouraging, directing, rewarding, leading, etc.

Following are some of the techniques, methods and procedures found in the Scriptures.

1. **Biblical instruction.** A child is brought into subjection so that he will listen and can be taught. It takes time and patience to do the teaching and should begin early. This requires of the parents a discipline of their own reactions to circumstances and a well-studied and planned out course of instruction. Consider Deuteronomy 6 and what is necessary to home school a child in other subjects.

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

2. **Communications.** Time with the child is one of the most important elements in the successful process of child development. Listen to them and learn how they think. Consider also that a child is not fully put together (neurons not completely hooked up yet) and make allowances for bizarre behavior at times.
3. **Examples.** Felons cannot teach respect for law, nor addicts sobriety. And children are repulsed by hypocrisy. A good parent must therefore set an example, not only of good logical processes and problem solving, but also of godly behavior.
4. **Training, not forcing.** Train a child to make wise choices. Training is repetitive actions that become ingrained. These actions may not be only physical, but also mental and spiritual.

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

5. **A united front.** Both parents need to work together or discipline becomes inconsistent and children almost instinctively learn how to work one parent against the other.
6. **Corrective discipline.** When a child shows a rebellious disposition, his stubborn will should be brought into subjection. Inconsistent and ineffective chastening may only agitate the problem. Some psychologists put this at a primal or pack level. At ages 2, 9 and 16 the young challenge the leaders. If quickly and decisively dealt with there is no problem until the next phase. Lose respect early and the challenge will be constant until new rule is established.

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

This does not mean that a child has to be beaten to death. Some children respond well to a spanking, some do not. But consider other means. Proper use of privileges and time outs, along with reward and withdrawal must all be considered. Spouses should confer, and when appropriate, even let the child input what might be proper punishment for certain infractions.

[Reference Charts 1, 2, 3 from Dr. James Dobson's book, *On Parenting*]

A well-disciplined child is a happy child, and the happy child is one whom everybody can enjoy. Every child deserves to be happy.

CHART 1

	Very Compliant	Rather Compliant	Average	Rather Strong-Willed	Very Strong-Willed	Totals
Number of cases	4,340	10,821	9,331	4,981	7,899	37,372
Percentage in category	11.6%	29.0%	25.0%	13.3%	21.1%	100.0%

CHART 2

Percent of Strong-willed and Compliant Children in Severe Rebellion at Various Age Categories

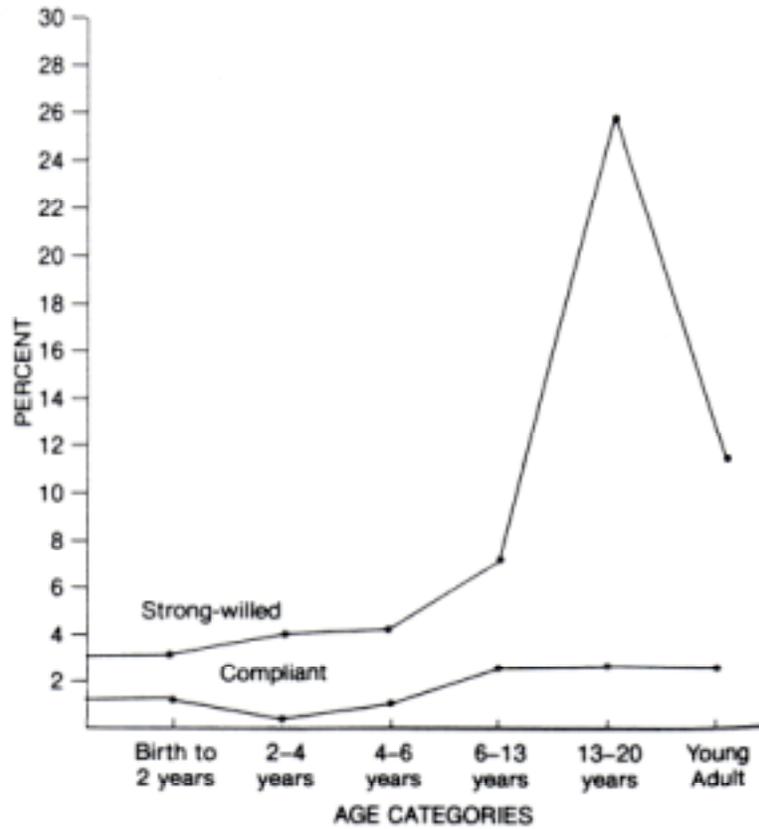


CHART 3

Acceptance or Rejection of Parental Values

	Accepted Parental Values	Rejected Parental Values	Somewhat Accepted Parental Values
Very compliant children, now grown	79%	5%	15%
Very strong-willed children, now grown	53%	15%	32%
Total	60%	12%	32%