

THE GETTING EQUIPPED™ SERIES

The Christian Family

Lesson- 8



EQUIPPERS GROUP INTERNATIONAL

RAISING HEALTHY: NURTURE & TRAIN

Equipping for the Christian Journey



RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON

1. To learn ways to nurture a child's heart
2. To learn methods of effective communication
3. To understand that a child needs balanced and fair discipline

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AT END

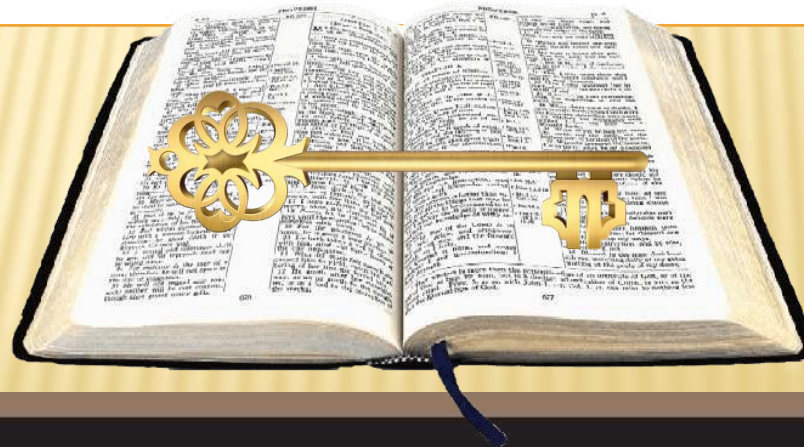


RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

KEY VERSE

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Proverbs 22:6



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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

As discussed in Lesson 7, a child's heart is like a field that needs to have the soil prepared to receive good seed (Mark 4:1-20). Children must be nurtured and cultivated if they are to bear positive, healthy, godly fruit.

When a farmer prepares his field, he must:

- Clear the field of rocks and limbs
- Plow the field to prepare for seed
- Protect the field from things that would destroy it (animals/insects)
- Cultivate and water the field so it will bear fruit



The focus of this lesson is to nurture and train your children with care, like the farmer who tends his field.



RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

“Nurturing” means giving specific attention to something in order to encourage growth.

How can parents nurture their children? Let’s look at four ways:

1. Spend time with your children.
2. Give loving physical touches.
3. Have meaningful communication.
4. Provide balanced and fair discipline.

(The last section will teach Biblical reasons for disciplining children)





RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN



There is no substitute for the time a parent spends with their child. Children understand love by the amount of time given to them.

Some parents may not see this as a wise use of their time, but that could not be further from the truth. Spending time together is what helps build the family bond.

Parents must be diligent about spending time with their children. They may need to **schedule time** in their daily life for their children and protect this time. Unless they make it a priority, other “good” things will end up taking their time instead of their children.

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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Children need both “learning time” AND “playing time” with their parents. Taking this time will help the child feel valuable. Time spent with loving parents can help defend the child against fear and insecurity.



Fathers and mothers must make time with their children a priority.

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NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

GIVE LOVING PHYSICAL TOUCHES

Another way to nurture is with loving touches and positive physical contact. They need to be held, kissed and hugged often. They also need other forms of physical contact to communicate they are touchable and loveable. Some of these include:

- A hand on the shoulder
- Holding hands
- Stroking their hair
- Rubbing their back
- A kiss on the cheek or head



Obviously, the older the child becomes, the more sensitivity is required. **Regardless of age children always need to be hugged.** It has been proven that children who are starved of affection exhibit destructive behaviors and have more health problems.



RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

GIVE LOVING PHYSICAL TOUCHES

Physical touch should always be given in the spirit of purity. Many nations/cultures deal with sexual abuse of children. Often, this sexual abuse happens in the home with relatives. This is demonic and evil.

The kind of physical touch being discussed here is the kind that communicates goldy love and nurturing. It will never embarrass or violate the integrity or personhood of a child.





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NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

HAVE MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

Children need to know they are significant. Communication is a powerful way to show a child they are significant. Parents need to communicate in loving and meaningful ways. The following suggestions will help a parent communicate effectively.



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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

HAVE MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION: *USE TENDER WORDS*

The atmosphere and relationships in a home are set by a person's words. Grumpy, harsh or sharp words can create negativity. Gentle, loving words create a positive atmosphere.

You cannot say, "I love you," too much. A day should never pass without love being communicated by parents. This communication speaks blessing into their spirit and soul.

Avoid words like "stupid," "dumb," "idiot," or "ugly." These become curses for your children. They can begin believing they are the truth and define who they are. This can be hard to undo and affect them coming to know Christ.



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HAVE MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION: *GIVE FREQUENT EYE CONTACT*

When children talk, parents should pay attention. Turn and look at them when they speak, so they know you are giving attention to their words. This can be hard to remember as a parent gets busy doing daily tasks, but they must try as much as possible to give eye contact. The child will feel acceptance, approval, value, concern, and a deeper connection with the parent when they do this.





RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

HAVE MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION: *PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING*

Listening is one of the greatest acts of love a person can give another. This is true in marriage and in parenting. There is a difference between “active” listening and “passive” listening. The following will compare the two types.



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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

HAVE MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION: *PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING*

Active vs. Passive Listening

Active	Passive
Parent looks at child with attention	Parent does NOT look at child
Parent responds positively	Parent does NOT respond
Parent gives appropriate feedback	Parent ignores or even walks away
Parent waits for child to finish	Parent interrupts
Parent asks questions to further understand	Parent starts talking to someone else

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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

NURTURE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN

HAVE MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION: *PROVIDE BALANCED AND FAIR DISCIPLINE*

Discipline must be practiced in a consistent and godly way. Disciplining children is a very important part of nurturing their hearts, so they grow to be responsible servants of God. They also need balanced and fair discipline for their protection. Because children have different personalities, attitudes, strengths and weaknesses, disciplining can sometimes be frustrating because it is not always the same for every child.

Parents need to understand the Biblical reasons for disciplining children and apply those principles when practicing this in their home.



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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

BIBLICAL REASONS FOR DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

Parents need to understand some foundational Biblical truths before they begin to was in the responsibility of disciplining children correctly. The Bible gives several reasons for disciplining in a godly manner.

- The condition of a child's heart demands consistent discipline.
- Proper discipline seeks a balance between correction and instruction.
- Consistent, balanced discipline promises to produce love, security and wisdom in children.



RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

BIBLICAL REASONS FOR DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

THE CONDITION OF A CHILD'S HEART DEMANDS CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE

Children are born with a tendency to rebel. This has to do with their sin nature. **People are sinners by nature and choice.** Being born into sin means the heart desires to stray and walk in self-centeredness. Rebellion naturally struggles with authority—no exceptions.

If you watch young children, you can see how self-centered they are, always wanting their own way. Sometimes they will scream, throw things, or hurt others in an effort to get their way. And of course, they may even tell their parent, “NO!”



RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

BIBLICAL REASONS FOR DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

THE CONDITION OF A CHILD'S HEART DEMANDS CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE

The Bible clearly says that people are born into a place of sinfulness with the desire to rebel.

- *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:5)*
- *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)*
- *Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. (Proverbs 22:15)*
- *Discipline your son, for I that there is hope, do not be a willing party to his death. (Proverbs 19:18)*

These verses are clear that children need consistent godly discipline. Without it, strong, negative and sinful patterns will be established in the child's heart and can affect their entire life.



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BIBLICAL REASONS FOR DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

PROPER DISCIPLINE SEEKS A BALANCE BETWEEN CORRECTION AND INSTRUCTION

*Fathers do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the **training [discipline]** and **instruction** of the Lord.* (Ephesians 6:4 emphasis added)

DISCIPLINE

This is a combination of two Greek words, *child and training*. Its original meaning conveys training a child, but *also implies punishment*. Hebrews 12:5-6 talks of how God corrects his children in love. Disciplining a child is about correcting them after instruction is given. *Correction* is a negative consequence as a result of breaking an established instruction.

INSTRUCTION

This word comes from a Greek word meaning *to put into the mind*. Correction means *to introduce children to what is right and wrong, to give direction, encouragement, and wisdom*. A Parent is to give their child information about what TO DO (Instruction) and what NOT TO DO (correction).

Together these help keep a child from rebellion.

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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

BIBLICAL REASONS FOR DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

CONSISTENT, BALANCED DISCIPLINE PROMISES TO PRODUCE LOVE, SECURITY AND WISDOM IN CHILDREN

He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him. (Proverbs 13:24)

It is essential that parents set boundaries for their children. This makes the child feel secure. Children will test these boundaries to see if their parents love them enough to correct and discipline them, thus keeping them safe. **Discipline is an act of love.**

Principles about love and discipline

- ✓ Discipline without love equals punishment in the heart of the child.
- ✓ Love without discipline creates insecurity in the heart of a child.



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CONSISTENT, BALANCED DISCIPLINE PROMISES TO PRODUCE LOVE, SECURITY AND WISDOM IN CHILDREN

An interesting study of children on a playground showed that when a protective fence was placed around the yard, children ran freely and played all the way up to the fence. When the fence was removed, the children remained near the center and could not play freely because of fear. **The study showed that boundaries actually help a child.**





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BIBLICAL REASONS FOR DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

CONSISTENT, BALANCED DISCIPLINE PROMISES TO PRODUCE LOVE, SECURITY AND WISDOM IN CHILDREN

It is extremely important that parents learn how to discipline and love with fairness and sensitivity. Parents do not want to break the spirit of their children. Strong-willed children need to have their wills brought under control and submission. However, parents do not want to destroy their children in the process of discipline.



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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

A Brief Summary

- ✓ It takes a lot of effort to raise children correctly.
- ✓ Their hearts are very impressionable and vulnerable.
- ✓ This teaching has revealed how a parent can prepare the hearts of their children so fruitful lives can result.
- ✓ This lesson has also presented four ways to nurture children so they will live godly lives.



RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



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RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN: NURTURE & TRAIN

Divide into four (4) small groups. Discuss each of the following areas. Have each group report their findings. Discuss what it means to nurture the heart of your child?

- Provide scheduled time
- Give loving physical touches
- Have meaningful communication
- Provide balanced and fair discipline



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Review the differences between “active” listening and “passive” listening.

- How is the child negatively affected when their parents practice “passive” listening?
- How is a child positively affected when their parents practice “active” listening skills of communication?



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Read and discuss the following Bible verses regarding discipline.

- *The condition of a child's heart demands understanding discipline (Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 53:6, Proverbs 22:15, Proverbs 19:18)*
- *Discuss how correction and instruction can be balanced and fair. (Ephesians 6:4, Hebrews 12:5-6, Proverbs 29:15)*
- *How can parents produce love, security and wisdom in their children? (Proverbs 13:24)*



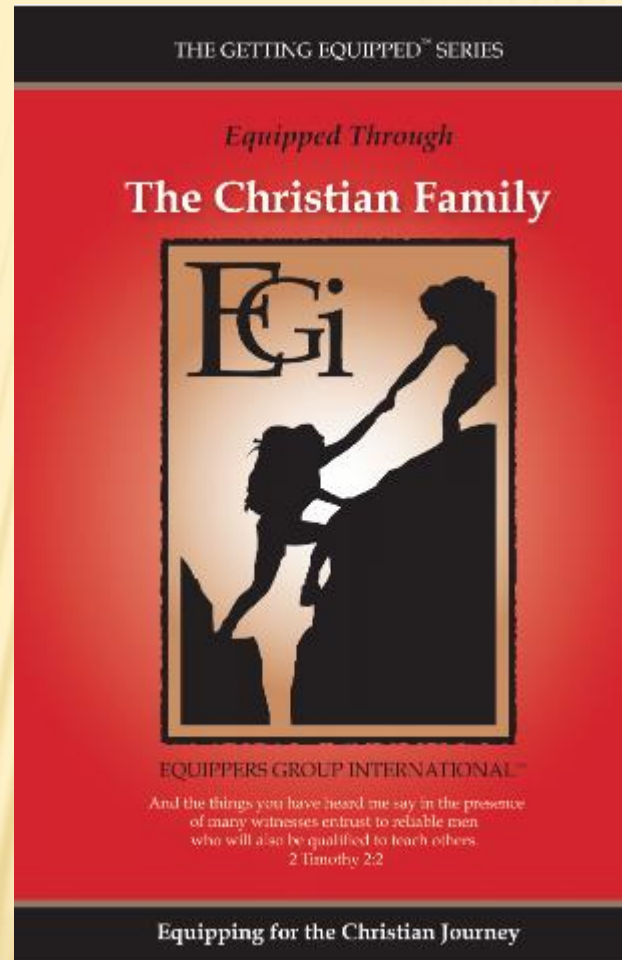
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APPLICATION

- Make a list of way you can nurture your children better. If you are married, discuss with your spouse.
- Consider how you should communicate with your children. Some of these ways include:
 - Use tender words
 - Give frequent eye contact
 - Practice active listening
 - Provide balanced and fair discipline
- Do you always communicate effectively with your children?
- Which one is hardest for you to do?
- Discuss with your spouse how you can improve communication with your children. Write your thoughts. Practice these skills in your daily life.



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