

THE GETTING EQUIPPED™ SERIES

The Christian Family

Lesson- 8



EQUIPPERS GROUP INTERNATIONAL

GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

Equipping for the Christian Journey



GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON

1. To understand that it is the parents' responsibility to provide fair and balanced discipline for their children
2. To understand that discipline must be consistent if it is to be effective
3. To learn 10 guidelines for fair discipline

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AT END

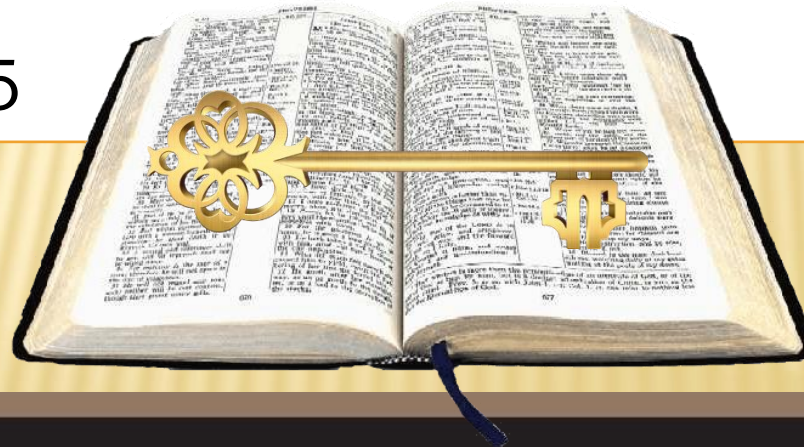


GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

KEY VERSE

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.

Proverbs 22:15



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GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

God has given parents the responsibility to be good stewards as they raise their children. Children are a gift from the Lord. They have divine destinies that God desires them to fulfill.



The focus of Lesson 9 is to give parents guidelines for fair discipline. Many parents do not understand the importance of discipline, or how to discipline correctly. They may simply continue bad patterns started by their parents or simply choose not to discipline at all. Neither of these are a good option.



GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

Fair discipline is essential in keeping the hearts of children open, teachable and tender. When parents are harsh or unfair children may become angry and resentful. Disciplining children is a very personal thing and not one size fits all, but the following will give basic guidelines to follow for keeping it fair and consistent.

TEN GUIDELINES

1. Establish behavioral guidelines
2. Give a clear warning with clearly understood consequences
3. Discipline on the first offense following the warning
4. Review the offense and define the discipline
5. Avoid embarrassment
6. Communicate sadness over the offense
7. Never discipline in anger
8. When spanking a child, always use a neutral object
9. Affirm and comfort the child
10. Always be consistent





GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

1. Establish behavioral guidelines

Let the child know what is desired or expected from them. It would be wrong to discipline a child for doing something if the parent has not communicated their expectations.

Define specifically what they are expected to do or not do.

Examples: clean the dishes, pick up your toys, do not jump on the bed



Make sure the child understands what the expected behavior is. Expectations should be appropriate to the child's age and ability to understand and do what is asked. You would never ask a two-year-old to carry out the same responsibility as a ten-year-old.

If a child does something you don't want them to but have not established as an expectation, then you should not punish. In this case, you should sit down and explain why this behavior is wrong and that you expect them to not do it anymore. Then ask if they understand. If they do, then the expectation is established, and the parent can give fair discipline if the child repeats the behavior.



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2. Give a clear warning with clearly understood consequences

If a child violates an instruction, the parent should give a clear warning and communicate what will happen if they do not stop or if they repeat the behavior. This step may be combined with Guideline #1 when you initially give the instructions.

For example, suppose a five-year-old boy get into the knives and starts playing with them. The parent can say, “Son, you are not allowed to play with these knives. If you get into these knives again, you will not get to play with your friends for one week.”

When giving a potential consequence you must remember that it should be proportionate to the severity of the offense and should always produce positive change.





GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

2. Give a clear warning with clearly understood consequences

The consequence should be proportionate to the severity of the offense.

- Make sure the consequence is fair to the level of disobedience.
- Discipline should never be cruel.
- Discipline should be redemptive, not simply to punish.
- Remember you will be held accountable to God for how you care for your children.



The consequence should always produce positive change

- If the consequence does not produce change, then the parent might need to try another form of discipline.
- The form of discipline that works may change depending on the child and the situation.
- It is healthy for them to associate appropriate pain, sadness and fear with acts of rebellion and disobedience.



GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

3. Discipline on the first offense following the warning

One of the biggest mistakes a parent can make is to not discipline the child after the first offense. When a child has been told not to do something and then they do it anyway, the parents are fully aware they have disobeyed. The child does not need more warnings. More warnings allows the child to control and manipulate their parents. A child will push their parents as far as they allow themselves to be pushed. If you keep warning without following through with discipline, then child will not respect you.

When you warn the child, it should include what they are doing wrong and the consequence for disobeying. Then you **MUST** do what you said if they continue the wrong behavior.





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4. Review the offense and define the discipline

When the child has done something that merits discipline, the parent should remind them of the specific instruction that was not followed and the consequence that was established. Then the parent should implement the consequence. *(If the consequence is being spanked, it is important to tell them how many spanks or swats they will receive.)* If you child wants to explain why they disobeyed, give them time to talk. After they tell you, help them understand why that behavior is not right, and that you will still be giving them their consequence.





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5. Avoid embarrassment

If you can avoid it, do not discipline a child in public or in the presence of neighbors or friends. When a child is disciplined publicly, they feel humiliated. This can result in resentment toward the parent(s). If you are in public, it is best to excuse yourself to a more private place to deal with the child. It is appropriate, however, to ask the child to communicate to those who witnessed their bad behavior that they are sorry for what they did or said.





GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

6. Communicate sadness over the offense

Be sure to let the child know how sad you are over their behavior. Also, let them know how it saddens you to have to discipline them. This would be a good time to talk about God's heart for His children. Be sure to tell the child that they are not just hurting their father or mother but hurting the heart of God too.





GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

7. Never discipline in anger



Many parents face the danger of feeling intense anger when their children show disrespect or walk in open rebellion. As a result, they may potentially punish their children out of anger. When they do this, they face the possibility of being too harsh and may communicate fear rather than love.

If a parent feels overwhelmed with anger after a child has disobeyed, it is helpful to send the child to their room or outside until the parent can deal with their emotions. When they feel they can discipline in a controlled manner, only then should they do so. Avoid cursing at or using excessive force and physically harming your child.

Dealing with discipline problems must start at an early age. If parents refuse to deal with disobedience and rebellion when children are small, the patterns of defiance may intensify and become set in the child's heart. This will result in further frustration for both parent and child as they grow. Starting early and being consistent is essential in raising healthy and balanced children.



GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

8. When spanking a child, always use a neutral object



Numerous times throughout the Bible parents are told to use “*the rod.*” (*Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 22:15, Proverbs 23:-13-14*)

There are good reasons “the rod” is used and not the hand. Children should associate their parents’ hands with hugs, love and affection; never pain and cruelty. Therefore, parents should never slap or hit their children with their hands or kick them with their feet.

A small neutral item, such as a wooden spoon, small tree branch, or small paddle that will cause a measure of pain but not bring harm should be used. Doing this helps the child learn that the item is for discipline and so not to fear their parents in an unhealthy way.

The child’s bottom, buttocks or “seat” was a part made God with extra natural padding so it can feel pain but not cause physical harm to the body. Spankings should be administered to this area. A parent must decide when a spanking is necessary over other forms of discipline. Some parents believe that spankings should only be used for extreme acts of rebellion or defiance, but each parent must decide for him or herself when it is appropriate to use this form of discipline.



GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

9. Affirm and comfort the child



After the discipline has been given, it is important for the parent to share with the child that they love them. They should tell the child they desire for them to grow up to be responsible, godly adults. They should let them know they believe in them. They should tell the child they are trusting in the Lord to make them into the man or woman he wants them to be. It serves no redemptive purpose to keep placing shame and guilt upon a child after they have been punished.



GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

10. Always be consistent

Consistency in discipline is what gives authority and power to the words of a parent. If parents stay consistent in disciplining their children, they will see wonderful benefits in the behavior and attitudes of their children. If the parent disciplines today and not tomorrow the impact is lost. Children need predictability in the area of discipline. When rules change from day to day or are not applied in a family with equality and fairness, children become frustrated, angry, insecure and rebellious. This is why there must be agreement on the part of both parents in what rules need to be set for the children and what discipline will be given if those rules are broken.





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RESULT: Healthy children—fulfillment of God's plan

Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127: 3-5)



Above all, parents need to understand that their children are God's children. Parents are stewards of destiny. God entrusts parents to raise their children to know and serve Him. Children are intended to be a blessing and not a curse. Parents can fulfill God's best by seeing each young boy or girl as a child of God who could some day turn a nation to Christ.

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A Brief Summary

- ✓ The family has always been God's idea.
- ✓ The family is intended to be the foundation upon which civilization is built.
- ✓ Marriage becomes the foundation of the family.
- ✓ Children become the promise and hope of God's heritage continuing from generation to generation.
- ✓ When families are built with God's wisdom and grace, blessing will exist without measure in the nations where they live.
- ✓ Parents are instructed to raise healthy children God's way.

Therefore, be committed to building Christian families and learn to enjoy the presence of Christ in your home. Where His presence is welcomed, you will discover God's peace, love and joy.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



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Discuss why it is important to begin discipline while the child is young.

Why is it hard to establish discipline with older children?



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Discuss what should be the proper attitude of the parents **BEFORE** administering discipline.



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Discuss the 10 guidelines for fair discipline given in this lesson.



GUIDELINES FOR FAIR DISCIPLINE

Using the information in this teaching, how would you communicate to a struggling parent why it is important that they discipline their child?



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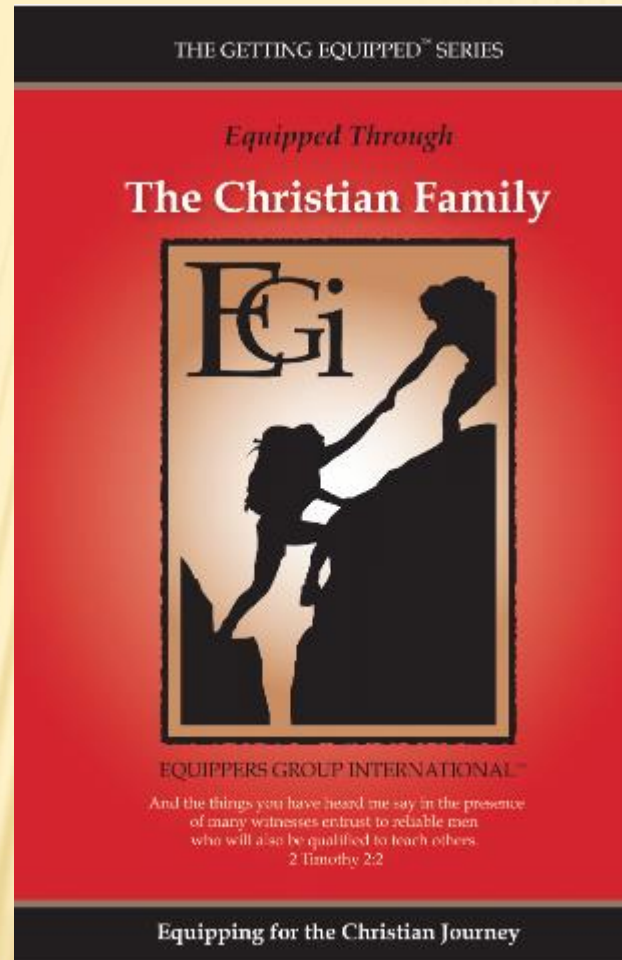
APPLICATION

Discuss with your spouse the 10 guidelines to discipline.

- Discuss which forms of discipline work best with each of your children.
- If you **are not** already disciplining your children, make a plan with your spouse to begin. Write this plan for the future reference. Then be sure to stick with it.
- If you **are** trying to discipline, discuss if it is effective and if not, what steps you could take to change.



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