

## I. Introduction to Discipline

Today is where most of you have been waiting for, and that basically deals with how to discipline your child. In reality, everything that we have talked about up to this point, everything that we have really laid a great foundation for, I got a tip from this. That is the autocratic parent, the permissive parent, the neglectful parent, and then, of course, the relational parent. We talked about correct thinking, correct teaching, correct treatment, and correct testimony. We talked about how you will never change your child until you are willing to change yourself first. The whole basis of you training up a child the way they should be with God is what you are looking at yourself and knowing and understanding what you have to change. So many times parents make that fatal mistake. We have grounded the whole thing in two great concepts: grace and truth.

Now today, we are going to take the next step or the next level, and we are going to look at, based on everything we have talked about so far, we now enter into probably the most important aspect of your child, and that is disciplining your child. This subject of discipline, and I am talking about disciplining your child now, we are going to begin again in an area of what we used to call corporal punishment, everything from spanking your child, whatever term you want to use. When you stop to look at it in the Bible, you are going to find that there are more references in the context of training up your children. There are more references to this particular aspect than really all the other ones combined. I am going to give you some verses today that will fit on your three-by-five cards that you can begin to look at and add to your other verses. Without a doubt, discipline is the absolute key. You can have everything else right, and if you fail in it, in reality, everything else brings you right to this point, and that, of course, is disciplining your child.

You should have picked it up by now, and you should have understood it, that a definition of discipline in your child's life, or even in your life and my life, a biblical definition, if you have not got it yet, a biblical definition of discipline in your life or your child's life is simply submission to authority. That is what it all boils down to. You and I, in our discipline, are being submissive to the authority of the Word of God, or the church, or your pastor, or your job, or your boss, or whatever. Life is about authority. Life is about structure, and discipline is submitting yourself to that authority and being submissive to it when it is the right kind of authority.

## II. Biblical Foundations for Discipline

I want to give you some verses here and make just a few quick statements about them as we move on through here and kind of use these to lay us in the right direction. Proverbs 17:6 is a verse that does not really deal with discipline, but it deals with the end of the day in discipline. All of these are going to be in Proverbs, Proverbs being one of the great wisdom books in the Bible.

*Proverbs 17:6*

*Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.*

That verse is an incredible verse. That verse has to deal with not only your own personal life, and the Bible says a lot about if you do not do what is right with your son or your daughter, they wind up being a shame to your family or a reproach to your family. But when you look at it from the long-range aspect of Proverbs 17:6, it is obvious that the context here is the judgment seat of Christ. The fact that you were smart enough as a parent, smart enough as a Christian, to realize that God has begun not only a good work in you the day you got saved, but He wants that good work to continue down through your family. The unbroken legacy of carrying the Word of God and committing to your children the faithful things of God, that legacy goes all the way down to the judgment seat of Christ. Obviously, they become your rewards at the judgment seat of Christ, your crown, and the crown of old men, and the glory of children are their fathers.

*Proverbs 20:11*

*Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.*

This is a great verse that simply says you as a parent ought to know your child. There is a reason why, before the outside influences come into your child's life, about five or six, when they maybe start going to school, there is a reason why, before those outside influences come into your child's life, that God kind of isolates the child with you, that you as the parent are the predominant influence in their life. They are around you 24/7, or maybe when they are at church, they are in the nursery, but the dominating time of their life is under your control. During this time, it is very crucial that some things happen. One of the things that has to happen is you have to learn your child. You have to learn. One of the terrible, tragic mistakes that parents make when they have more than one child is they look at both children together, and they think that one is like the other, and that is a tragic mistake in life. They are not like each other, and you have to get to know the fingerprints, so to speak. The Bible says, "A child is known by his doings." Each child will have a unique personality. Each child will have a unique footprint in life, and you need to understand that as you grow in your own personal relationship with the Lord, and that is why God does it the way that He does it.

*Proverbs 22:15*

*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*

That is a great verse, and that verse tells you right out of the shoot that your child has some issues. A lot of parents, another mistake they make, is they do not think their child has any issues, and of course, that is not true. The Bible says that foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child. Your child has an old sin nature, and he does not get that old sin nature, or she does not get that old sin nature, when they hit 15 or 16. That old sin nature is ingrained in them from the day they are born, and even though they may be under innocence as far as the blood of Christ is concerned up to the age of accountability, they certainly have an old sin nature, and you see it from the day you bring them home from the hospital that everything is on their terms. When they eat, when they sleep, and when they do other bodily functions is all under their control, not

yours. You see very quickly that as a child begins to come to the point where they begin to walk, they begin to talk, you see that foolishness bound up in the child, and that is why correction is so important to drive it from him.

*Proverbs 29:15*

*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*

It is a great aspect here: two concepts, the rod and reproof. You have to not only discipline with a rod, but you have to reprove them. You have to talk to them. You have to be able to explain, and this is the process that we are going to begin to go through here in the next couple of weeks. I want to go through week by week. This is such a vital thing. I want to go through week by week, and yet, basically, by the time we are done, lay out the complete, absolute process for you. You are all in different scenarios. Some of your kids are old and gone out of your home. Some of your kids are old and still live in your home, older. Some of your kids are 14 or 15 years old. Some of your kids are younger. Some of your kids, the majority of you, are very small kids. Some of you are married. Some of you are divorced. Some of you are struggling in a marriage relationship. You are all in different categories, but what I want to try to accomplish is quite an incredible feat, but God is up to the task, and if I just let Him deal with it, I just want to show you the principles and give you as many scenarios as I can. Obviously, this is where the real meat of our parenting classes come into play, and we are going to see that we can deal with that and lay the whole thing out.

*Proverbs 23:12-14*

*12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.*

*13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.*

*14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.*

My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. That is a great verse, and it comes to the point where you have to realize that this is absolutely vital.

*Proverbs 20:30*

*The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.*

Now, what that verse is saying goes right along with Proverbs 23:14, and this is why, "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell." Now, we are going to put this all in context here in a minute. A good whipping is good. A good whipping is good because it is like a blueness of a wound. It goes down to the inwards of the belly. In other words, have you ever smarted off before you were saved, maybe even after you were saved? Have you ever been in a situation where you were in a crowd of people, and maybe you said something to the wrong guy, and you thought you were as tough as he was, and you found out you were not, and he kind of wiped the floor up with you, and he just pulped you? Somewhere in that process, you were probably thinking, "My God, this really hurts. I wish I had kept my mouth shut. This really stings." Of course, the bottom line is it makes you think. When you get a good wound, so to speak, it makes

you think, and of course, when you whip a child, that is the process. You want him to think about it. It has to be hard enough that it gets his attention, but obviously not hard enough that it hurts him.

### III. The Urgency and Difficulty of Discipline

*Proverbs 19:18*

*Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.*

Now, I will tell you how this works. Every time Jamie and Danny have to whip the grandkids, I have to leave the room. I just... I will tell you what, and I know they need it, and I know if you do not do it, they are going to wind up being terrible kids. But it is... I will tell you what, when it is time to discipline your kid, Mom and Dad, here is what you do: you always remember how sweet they were when they were sleeping last night, or how those little... you make them pull down their pants, and you are going to whip them on the rear end, and those little buns look at you like a pair of Hostess Twinkies. You just cannot see yourself hurting that person. So it is tough, and you want to pull back from it. Then they start crying, and they say, "Don't, Daddy, I will not do it anymore." You know what, and the crying, hey, it is one of those things where you know what you have to do, you have to carry through with it. You have to carry through with it.

I am sure there are times that God, and we are going to see this before we are done today, I hope, I am sure there are times in your life and my life when we have not done things right that it pained God to have to deal with us. But He does, and the reason for that is, and I want to tell you this, when you start to fall into that trap, and we are human, you love your kids, you do not want to hurt your kids. I never met a parent in my life that was a good parent that enjoyed whipping their child, and for some women, bless your heart, it breaks your heart, and that is why you do not do it sometimes. But I want to bring your attention to the verse here that really is the key in Proverbs 19:18. It says this: "Chasten thy son while there is hope." I will tell you why you just got to gut through the little buns issue and whack the little sucker. I will tell you what that is because there is coming a day in your life if you do not that there is going to be no hope for him. If there is anything you have got to stay focused on as a Christian parent, it is disciplining your children. You have a very small window that you are up against here in the aspect of discipline.

These are very harsh words. I am sure somebody could take this CD and make a great case for child abuse, that I was teaching here at this church, because you see words like "beat him," "rod," "correction," "spare not for the little whipper snapper crying at you," "whale it to him." Like somebody, a preacher, said one time, "You want to get your children right, whale blubber." He said, "What in the world is whale blubber?" "You whale on them till they blubber." Of course, you have to be careful with this stuff today because the world looks at this, and it is facing... I am not going to pretend for a moment that the world does not think that corporal punishment in your child's life is wrong. Certainly, they do. Our society is so broken down in this authority structure itself. We today, in most cases, most parents are taught not to discipline a child at all. No corporal punishment. They come up with all the alternatives, the time-outs and all the little things that parents come up with to get them around having to whip their child and deal with their child

biblically. Of course, the tragedy of that is, by the time the parent figures it out that what they did was wrong and did not work, there is no hope.

Now, you wait until a child gets to be 10 or 12 or 13 or 14 years old to try to put this stuff in, it is going to be a long haul, and you really get to 16 or 17 or 18, and it is going to be almost impossible. What I want to try to accomplish in this session as we begin to move down through here, and like I said, all this has to be in the context of grace and truth, but what we want to begin to do is we want to begin to define for you the biblical process. We want to talk about why we discipline. We want to talk about when do we discipline/spank, and we want to talk about how, how do we implement it, how do we do it? Because the thing that you want to remember, and I want to burn into your mind, is that verse in Proverbs 19:18: "When there is no hope." There is coming a time in your child's life when if you do not get to it pretty quickly and you do not get it done, it is going to be undoable.

#### IV. Three Crucial Principles of Discipline

In disciplining your children, there are three things that I always want you to remember, and you need to put these down somewhere. If you have been following along in this study from our very beginning, I have built a lot of information around certain great principles that you as a parent ought to be fleshing out and putting into practice. I have told you in every one of them, but when it comes to disciplining your children, here is what you want to remember, and this goes right along with the why, the when, and the how. Remember now, the definition of discipline in your child's life is simply submission to authority, whether it be your authority at home, whether it be the authorities at school, whether it be the authority in the nursery, or may it be the authority of a police officer or in your own society.

The last time, if you remember, we ended last week, we talked about the concept of being blameless. I gave you a biblical definition of what it means to be blameless, and I showed you that blameless in the context of being a pastor, and I always talk about the aspect that a pastor should be blameless. Yet, if you took that at face value, nobody is blameless. I showed you that blameless is when you make a mistake, you fix the mistake. When you do something wrong, you go to that person or you correct the mistake. You deal with it openly. You deal with it honestly, and then you correct it, and then you move on. Once you do that, the fact that you did something wrong or did something stupid is irrelevant. Nobody can go back and blame you for it once you have done and corrected what you did wrong. Parents need to be blameless, and this is where we left it last time. Parents need to be blameless with their children.

I had an interesting talk with one of the ladies in our church this week, and she came over, and we were talking about some things. She is a fairly young Christian, and yet I think she has got a very good handle on it, and I am always impressed with her when I talk to her about these things. She was telling me how she had a crappy day, and she snapped at her children. She jumped on them, and she immediately, or shortly thereafter, knew that she was out of line. She attributed it to the fact that she had a bad day, and a bad day got her out of sorts a little bit. So when the children did something, and it did not go down the way that she should, she jumped on them. She reacted to them, and we have all done that. She reacted to them instead of responding to them,

and immediately she knew that what she had done was wrong. So, you know what she did? She went to those kids, and she sat them down, and she apologized to them. She told them that the way she did it, what they did was wrong, but how she reacted to it was just as wrong. What she did when she did that is she made herself blameless with her children.

We all make mistakes as parents. You are going to make mistakes as a parent. You have to understand that as a parent, you have to be able to be blameless to your children. I used to, early on in my ministry, as I was growing through the Bible and everything, I looked at it, and I thought to myself, "You know what, if you take the Bible and you just teach the Bible to your family and do everything that you are supposed to do, you are going to raise perfect kids." I found out very quickly that is not true. Somebody years ago drew my attention to a great fact that it was not the fact that you need to be a perfect parent because there are no perfect parents. You do not need to be a perfect parent; you just need to be a parent that is blameless in the sight of your children.

An old man one time told me this. He says, "Are you God's child?" And I said, "Yes, I am." "Is God your Father?" And I said, "Yes, He is." "Is He a perfect Father?" I said, "Yes, He is." He says, "Then why are you not a perfect child?" And I thought about that, and I put that into my own relationship. God is a perfect Father, and I am His child. If He is a perfect Father, and He is perfect in every way, why am I not a perfect child? But you know what the real answer is? God is a perfect Father because He is God. The real issue is that when I step on a line as a child, what makes God the perfect Father is He always remains blameless. He never allows me to get away with anything. He always calls me into account the moment I do it. If any verse in the Bible in a practical application where it says that the child is known by his doings, it is you and me when it comes to God. God looks at you and I. He knows exactly what we are going to do before we do it. You do not have that ability as a parent, but where we still have the same characteristic and quality of God that we do have one in the same, and that is to be blameless. God is a perfect Father. You and I will never be perfect parents, but in one aspect, you and God can be the same, and that is blameless to your children. You do not allow them to get away with anything. You hold them accountable based on the structure and the vision that you provide for them.

That is why when it comes to discipline, I am going to tell you right up front, and this is where many of you are going to fail, and I am sorry, but it is true. The reason why many of you, or maybe not many of you, but some of you will fail in this is because the greatest aspect of all of this with your child is the other great characteristic that God has that we can have, but many times we do not have. You know what it is? It is consistency. God is always consistent. God never allows me to slide for anything. He always brings my back to my attention. He may not come down and whack me, but He lets me know that was not pleasing to Him. He does it in a way with grace and truth that it makes me want to love Him more, and it makes me want, the older I get as a Christian, it ought to be where you are at. The older you get as a Christian, that there are times in our lives when we have to look out there at the opportunities that are out there for us, and we simply say, "You know what, I am not going to go there. I am not going to do that. I am not going to look at that. I am not going to think that. I am not going to be part of that because the moment I do, I am going to lose my fellowship with God." I am not worried about

God coming down and whacking me. I am worried about being out of fellowship with God for just 10 minutes. That is too long for me. Five minutes is too long for me. 30 seconds is too long for me. When you have that kind of relationship with God, I call that God consciousness. That is what I call that, being so conscious of God in your life that nothing out there do you want more than His hand in your life, and that is the way your children should come to the point as you bring them through this and everything that God wants you to do.

Okay, now let us look at these three things: blameless to your children. First of all, in disciplining your child, you want to follow the same procedure that God follows in your life, and that simply is this: you are going to have them in some cases, and I am going to explain this, this comes with an explanation here: breaking of the will, but not a breaking of the spirit.

### ➤ Breaking the Will, Not the Spirit

You have to understand that there are times in your child's life where you have to break his will, and we are going to talk about the different kinds of children: a strong-willed child, a situation where you have got to just really get a handle on the thing. I need to tell you this: you are much better off as a parent molding your child, molding the will of your child, than having to go back and try to break the will of your child. But it does not always work. Some children are very strong-willed right out of the box. They are very, very much in command, and you have to know your child. You have to see those traits. You have to understand where those traits are, but you always want to remember that you want to mold the will, or if you have to, you want to break the will, but you do not want to break his spirit.

### ➤ Your Home Must Honor the Lord

Second thing you always want to remember this because I think this is where a lot of parents break down. You always want to remember that as a parent, it is absolutely crucial that your children know that your home is a place that is going to honor the Lord. It is not a place where they can choose to live like hell and live like the world and come back and flop at night. They need to understand that this house belongs to the Lord. This house is God's house. We are going to honor God in it. Joshua said it better than anybody ever said in Joshua 24:15. In fact, somewhere in your house, when you come over my house tonight, if you are going to Joshua, look over the doors in the kitchen and see what you see over those doors at where the laundry room is. You know what it says?

*Joshua 24:15*

*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

There is no option to it. You do not allow your children to grow up in your home with the option that they are going to drink or not, or they are going to do drugs or not, or they are going to fornicate or not. You do not let the children grow up in your home with that option. They understand from day one, and it is your responsibility and it is your right as a parent, that your

home is going to honor God with what you do, and they are welcome to stay there as long as they abide by those rules. When they do not, it is time to pack her little bags, pack his little bags, and send them on to get a good taste of life without the comforts of home. Most parents do not see themselves as drug dealers, whatever their child is into, by aiding and abetting them. You are the dealer that is supplying them with the place that they can operate their ungodliness, and it is just that simple.

If I was to come to your home today, and I was to say to you, "We have got some terrible news, that we have got a terrible problem in your family, and we have got to deal with this problem." If I would stand up there and I would say to you, "You know what, we have just found out, and I have just been made aware that there is witchcraft going on in your family," would you get nervous? If I came to your house and I told you that there is witchcraft going on in your family with your little girl being there, would you want to do something about it? Absolutely. If I came to you and I said there is witchcraft going on in your house, would you be worried about it? You see the Bible, and this is where we get so outside the Bible, this is where we get in our own little world, this is where we fail to see things from God's standpoint. He says over there in 1 Samuel 15:23 that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft in God's mind.

*1 Samuel 15:23*

*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

Rebellion in the home, rebellion in the family, is as the sin of witchcraft because the end result in both cases is an absolute disaster. The incredible ramifications of not dealing with a child right and bringing him up and allowing him or her to exercise their own free will in your home of what you are going to do and what they are going to do about being honoring unto the Lord will be an absolute disaster, absolute disaster. I am telling you, your absolute duty as a Christian, if you are raising those little kids up right now, you have an absolute duty to decide by your own free will that your home is going to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is going to honor and be a home that is honoring and glorifying to Him. That is your right as a parent, and it is absolutely crucial.

Do you know why He equated the sin of witchcraft with rebellion in the Old Testament? Let me tell you why. If you go back and study your Old Testament, you will find that the problem with both of them is the spirit by which comes from both of them. We know that when Saul, in fact, this verse in here is about Saul, it is about Saul rejecting the Word of God. What did Saul do when he rejected the authority of God? What did he do when Saul got no answers from God? He went to the witch at Endor. He did not get anything from God's Spirit, so he went to a wicked, evil, seducing spirit from a witch. You know what Saul's real problem was? It was not witches. Saul's real problem was his rebellion against the authority of the Word of God. That was his problem. So you get the connection between the two where he says that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft because in both cases, a bad spirit, an unclean spirit, will destroy. Just like the witchcraft destroyed the nation of Israel under Saul, the rebellion in your home will destroy your family under your leadership. It is just that simple. It is not complicated at all.

That is why in the Old Testament, if you had a rebellious daughter or rebellious son, and you do not find too many rebellious daughters in the Old Testament, most of them are sons, but if you had a rebellious child, and they are under your authority in your home, and you tell them, "This is the way it is going to be," and they tell you, "No, this is the way it is going to be. You are not telling me what to do. I am 18 years old. I am 20 years old. I am 25 years old." "Yeah, but you are living in my home." "Hey, Dad, do not come at me with this. I want to be who I am. You have no right to tell me I have to go to church. You have no right to tell me this." And Dad said, "All right, son, come on." Took him down to the judges. They went down to the judges, and they put him in a circle, and the judges said, "We hear you are having a problem with authority in your home." He says, "Oh, you old bunch of fudge, I am doing what I want to do. I am not listening to anybody." And you know what they did? They took him down, they put him in a hole, they all picked up big rocks, and they stoned him to death. First rock concert in the Bible attended by a young person. They killed him. You know why? The punishment for witchcraft is death, and the punishment for rebellion in the Old Testament is death because God knows when that spirit gets into your family, when that spirit, which is as a sin of witchcraft, gets into your family, just like God tried to keep it out of the nation of Israel, it will destroy whatever it touches. I do not know what to tell you, but you have a right as a parent for your home to be honoring to the Lord.

#### ➤ The Longer You Wait, The More Hopeless It Becomes

Now the third thing: the longer you wait, the more hopeless it becomes. These are the facts of life. These are the facts of life in the power of parenting. The longer you wait, the more hopeless it becomes, and we have already seen in Proverbs 19:18 where the Bible, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, told you that you are to chasten your son while there is hope because there comes a time when it is hopeless. Parents wait too long many times, just like all through my life with people, that has been the number one thing. Husbands wait too long to get help in a bad marriage, and then it is too late. People wait too long to take the Bible seriously, then it is too late. We always wait too long. It is the number one problem we all have. We all wait too long to do what is right and then wonder why it does not work out. We wait too long to win somebody to Christ. We wait too long to begin to study our Bible. We wait too long for this. We wait too long for that. Parents traditionally just wait too long before they say, "Wow, I have a problem." Not only do you have a problem, you have a problem now that you are not going to get control of, or if you do, it is going to take some radical maneuvering. You want to remember those three things. Write them down someplace. Put them in the back of your heart. Put them in your head. Write them in your Bible. Put them on your refrigerator. Those three things are absolute, absolute, absolute.

## V. Understanding Will and Spirit

Let us talk about will and spirit for a moment. Let us get a definition of those from the Bible. I think that might help you. Now, the spirit that you and I have, and the spirit that your child has, like little Riley, the spirit is his drive. The spirit is what a man has that really is, the Bible defines it as the breath of life. It is that God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a

living soul. The Bible says when a man dies, the spirit goes back to God, whether he is saved or whether he is lost, because the spirit is that life that we have. It is the drive that we have. The spirit of man is what makes man survive when he is marooned on a desert. The spirit of man is what drives him to the top of Mount Everest. The spirit of man is what drives him beyond normal things in life because he wants to achieve. The spirit of man or woman is when they lose their job, that they immediately do not get down, they are out there, and they find something else. The spirit of a person is when life deals them a bad hand of cards, and they lose their marriage, they lose their spouse, or they have a death of a loved one, whatever the case, they do not fold up. They recognize that whatever happened to them, whatever just transpired in their life, does not take away their worth to God as a human being and a Christian, and they rise above the circumstances. They rise above the losing of a loved one. They rise above a bad marriage. They rise above whatever happens, losing their job. They rise above all of that because they understand that they have got a higher calling, and their spirit is what drives them.

An unsaved man has spirit. It is what makes Larry Johnson get the first down when nobody else can. It is what makes him run for over 100 yards every game. It is what makes a football player great, a basketball player great. It is what makes Barry Bonds, with steroids, better than the rest of them. It is what takes an ordinary... it is what makes guys like Audie Murphy survive in combat and do great feats of heroism that we all look at and admire. It is what makes ordinary men and women step into extraordinary circumstances and stay in control and get it done. That is what the spirit is.

Now, the will. The will is something else. The spirit is the life that is in you. The will that you have is your choosing aspect.

*2 Corinthians 7:1*

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

You see, when you look at this, you have to perfect yourself not only in your flesh but in your spirit. You know what that means? That means that you recognize you have a spirit, but you have a free choice of what you do with that spirit. It is just that simple. That choosing of what you are going to do with your spirit is your will. You want to think about it like this: look at the most gigantic boat you have ever been on in your life. Look at some aircraft carrier, 600 yards long, 50 million tons. Look at some gigantic cruise ship. That thing is absolutely humongous, and yet if you could pull it out of the water, that gigantic ship is turned left or right by one little piece on that ship that is minuscule compared to the whole ship. It is called the rudder. That rudder is a piece of metal on the backside that when the captain turns it this way, that big old ship goes this way, and when he turns it that way, the big old ship goes that way. That rudder is your will, and you take your will, and whatever you choose, whatever you choose to put your will toward, is where your spirit goes.

When the Bible says when you put the Word of God into your life, and it is called free will in the Bible, 17 times in the Bible, you find a reference to man's free will. You know what life is? Choices, ladies and gentlemen. I dare us to say, and this is true of all of us, we are in the situation

we are in today, good, bad, or indifferent, we are in the circumstances we are in today, all of us. We are in the circumstances we are in today because of the choices we have made, and it is just that simple. You have a God-given spirit, but that spirit is directed by a will, and it is a free will. You choose, and that is why, as I said earlier, when you take a little child for the first five or six years of his life, you are the only determining factor in his life. There are no other outside influences unless you allow them to come in. You are the absolute premier point in his life. You are the focal point of everything he learns, everything he knows, and that is why before he ever steps out the door to go to school, you have five years, maybe six years, of giving him and molding his spirit and shaping his will that he makes the right choices. You do not want to break that spirit. I hope I am around to see little Riley when he is 25 years old. He is probably a pastor in his church. He has got the fire. He has got the zeal. You see a lot of people look at little guys like that, and I will tell you another little guy, Ethan. Right now, we are calling Ethan the Antichrist, just kidding, by the way. Pray for little Ethan. He is on the way to the hospital right now. I think he got bit by a spider last night. They took him to the hospital. Too bad it did not bite Liz, but it probably did. Thereafter, it is probably dead, laying on the floor. But anyway, again, I am just kidding.

But you take those little guys, they have got a spirit. They have got a fire. They have got a desire. Right now, the little kid that has unbounded energy, if you can channel that will the right way up against that spirit, look out world, man, they will do something for God. That is the difference between somebody who accomplishes something for God and somebody that does not. You always want to remember, you want to mold the will, and if you cannot mold the will, you need to break the will, and we will talk about how to do that, but you never want to break that spirit. You never want to take that spirit from that child because that is what his drive is. You just have to make sure, "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth." You as a parent have the control over that will. It is a free will, but it really does not become free until he gets out there and experiences all the things that the world has. You have five or six years to guarantee with no outside influences that he makes or she makes the right choices.

## VI. Common Parental Mistakes in Discipline

In 35 years of ministry, I have seen every mistake a parent could make, and I am not by any stretch of the imagination putting myself off as a perfect parent. I made many mistakes. It is... but I also learned it is not about the mistakes you make, it is about the steps you take to correct them. That is the issue. But I have seen the problems. I have seen just about every problem that a parent can make as a mistake, and I think the number one problem most parents have, and I think it is true of most Christians, I think the number one problem we all have is that we just do not want to get honest with ourselves about where we are at. I really believe that is our problem. I believe that we just do not want to really believe there is anything wrong with us. I think we get our heads so far up in the clouds, and we are all human. Do you like somebody to tell you something bad about you or something good about you? I mean, you come to church, do you want me to say, "Man, I really like your hair," or are you going to say, "Wow, who did your hair? The north wind looks very nice." We want to hear good things. We only want to hear bad things. Now, given, most bad things that are said to you are not said with the right spirit, okay? But

come on, human nature is, "Do not tell me what I need to hear, tell me what I want to hear. Do not tell me the truth, placate me. Tell me what I want to hear. Do not tell me what is wrong with me, tell me what is right with me." It takes a rare child of God, a very rare child of God, to be able to shout out and say, "Okay, tell me what is wrong. Tell me what I need to work on." Very basically, most parents do not want to get honest about themselves. They do not want to say, and there are many, many reasons for that.

But I want to tell you the first mistake they make, past getting honest, is not providing a vision of discipline for your child. Just like you provide a vision of a life with God, you need to provide a vision of discipline for your child. You want me to translate that from the original Greek and Hebrew back to you? Providing a vision of discipline for your child in the original Greek simply means this: "Your butt is going to wear out before my hand does." A child needs to understand that. A child needs to understand that if it but offended you, I will run it by you one more time and give you another acronym on it. A child needs to know there are certain areas in this house that you do not cross. I asked you a while back, "How many times as a parent do you want to tell your child not to do something? How many times do you want to tell your child to do something before he responds?" Two? Four? Ten?

I will tell you, we paid \$70 yesterday, and that was a good time. We got a little Otis. Otis is a little dog about that big, a little Bichon, Bichon, whatever they are called. And Otis is a crazy nut. I do not know what to say. I like to say he is retarded, but he is too smart to be retarded. He is just a little monkey guy. When you come over to the house, he is all over the place. He is just out of control. He has a good time, but most of the time, and I know he is young, but you know what, Barb, Barb is an avid fan of the Dog Whisperer. She gets all these ideas. I love her. I am with you. So somewhere in the process of time, we found a guy who is the resident dog whisperer. Ray, you are going to love this story. Now you do not know it yet, but all of you who normally come over for your meetings throughout the week are now going to help us because I have some instructions I am going to give you this morning. When you come to our house, you now are going to be part of the process of the solution, and you are going to stop being the problem with my Otis.

This guy came over, and he was a nice guy. He was there an hour and a half, charged \$70, which is cheap. Gave us a lot of good information, but I felt like when he left, he owed me not only my \$70 back but my other \$70. You know why? John, you know what he did? His stuff he gave us, he got off my tape on child training. He used the same exact principles in training Otis that you ought to have training your child. I wanted my money back and more money besides. It was incredible. He says, "Your child, your dog, does not understand yes or no. It does not matter what words you use to your dog. Your dog associates with your body language, your inflection. He associates, he does not understand." He says, "You know what?" He said, "He said the same thing I said." He looked at me and he said, "You are a pastor." He says, "Let me ask you a question. What is the..." And he caught me off guard because I was dozing off because it was pretty boring. And he says to me, he says, "What is the definition of discipline?" And I said, "Keeping the rules." He said, "Well, that is close." He said, "But really, discipline is being

submissive to authority." I said, "You have been listening to my CDs in your car on the way over here."

So he went through a whole bunch of different things that taught Otis to be submissive to authority, and I have got to say, I was amazed. I was amazed after what, 20 minutes, 25 minutes, Otis was, you are not going to believe this, Ray, he was obeying. He was laying down on command. But I watched as he did it. Now, I am not suggesting you get a leash and strangle your child like he did Otis yesterday. In some cases, maybe. But he made Otis, in 20 minutes, he had that dog laying down and walk over here, and that dog would not move. Man, I tried. That dog would be up one leg, down my back, down the other side. But he said to me and her, he said, "You know what, in training your dog, it is all about consistency. Do the same thing every time, the same way." And I am thinking to myself, if Otis, little goofy Otis, in 20 minutes, who has no soul, sorry, who cannot read the Bible, who does not understand great sermons like this one, if he can be taught to train with just a leash on his neck of what to do and what not to do, and in 20 minutes have Otis towing the mark. He even showed us the way dogs lay. He said, "Now look at that. She way length. Now he is mad. Now he is glad." See, my dogs have been changing positions all the time, but I downstairs, but I thought they were happy because they are always smiling at me. Oh yeah, I am thinking, "Well, he is happy." He says, "Look the way he lays. You see how he has got his back to me? He is mad. Now you see how I made him lay down, but he has got one foot tucked under? He is saying to me, 'Um, um, you may want me to lay down, I am laying down, but I am standing in my mind.'" It is incredible. And I am telling you, it is consistency. It is consistency.

You have to provide a vision of discipline for your child.

*Job 9:4*

*He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?*

Great verse Mike used last Sunday night down at the mission talking about God. It says, "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength." Hey, you know what, first thing you need to know about God and your own personal life, me and you both, He is, the Bible says He is stronger than you and I are, and He is smarter than you and I are. He says, "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength." First thing I want, if I just had that one verse to give you as a Christian, it would be all you needed because the first thing it says that He is... I know we think we are smarter than God, and I know sometimes we think we are wiser than God, and sometimes we think our will is stronger than God, but I am telling you, He is smarter than you and I. He is wiser than you and I. Then the last part of that verse says it all: "Who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?" You know what the answer to that is? Nobody.

Your child needs to understand the concept of that verse on their level. You are the parent. You are mighty in strength, and you are greater in wisdom. You are smarter than they are. You are mightier than they are, and they need to have a vision that them hardening their heart against your authority will not prosper in their little lives. I call it the brick wall effect. I will tell you what, if you... you can have the best intentions of getting through the other side of that kitchen

without going out that door. I know some of you are hard-headed. I would say to Justin, "Justin, go get me something out of the kitchen, would you please?" Justin says, "Yeah, I will, Bob. I will get it, Bob." I will say, "Justin, Justin, Justin, here, just go out the door and go on down there." Justin says, "No, Bob, I will get it." After nine or ten times, you know what Justin is going to come to the conclusion? "I am not going that way. That wall is tougher than I am." That is what your child needs to understand about the authority structure in your family. "Ouch, this hurts. Whoa, this is tough. Whoa, Mom and Dad are not giving an inch. Whoa, I think I am going to find another route. Whoa, it pays to do what Mom and Dad says." You have got to give them the vision of that.

Too many parents, and I will tell you the second thing, second thing is this: you, Mom and Dad, you have got to be absolute together on your discipline. These are two mistakes they make: one, they do not provide a vision; two, Mom and Dad have not sat down and divided what the rules are. Do you know what the kid does? He plays one against the other. That is exactly what they do. Now, this gets even more complicated when you get into marriages that have multiple moms and dads, and we will talk about that at a later time when we deal with so many other issues. But the bottom line is there has to be a solidarity. Your child has to find no alternative to doing what is right. You have to sew it up, lock it up, brick it up, cement it up, put steel around it, and it is like Justin going into the kitchen through that wall. It is not going to happen. And as many times, after nine or ten times, and his head has got knots on it all over the place, his eyebrows are bleeding, he has got a concussion, and we are taking him to the hospital, he says, "Man, whoa, you know what, now that I think of it, I wish I had listened to Bob and went the other way. The other way was a lot easier, Justin, because as big as you are, as tough as you are, and as strong as you are, you are not going through that wall." "He that hardened himself against that wall shall not prosper." That is the way it is with God. He is bigger than you are, and He is stronger than you are. Your child needs to know that. Your child needs to understand the concept that He is bigger than me, He is stronger than me. When he gets to 18 or 19 or 15 or 16, you can transfer that over into his little life as an adult, and he begins to understand that in the God concept. Right now, you have to teach it in your concept. You have to get him to understand that, "Hey, you know what, a life outside of the structure of this home, because this home is going to be honoring to the Lord, this home is going to be absolutely what God wants it to be, and outside of that, it is just not going to work." Parents have to sit down and have a plan together. No cracks in the wall.

Up to this point, everything we have talked about has just gotten you, or should have gotten you, here. I have told you to sit down as parents. I have told you to look at yourself as individuals and find out what is wrong with you, what you have got to change. I have walked you through this. Everything we have done to this point is to get you here. You wanted to go here first just because you wanted to whack your kid. Well, whacking your kid without understanding how, when, and where is not the best way to do it. You have to have a strategy. You have to understand what you spank for and what you do not, and consistency, my friend, is the key. Be it in building your child right, using the form of material after you build yourself right, you change about you what you have got to change, will produce the right attitude not only in you, but then you have the ability to change it in your child for strong discipline. Consistency, without a doubt, ladies and gentlemen, is the place that most parents fail. But let us be honest, boys and girls, consistency is

the place where most Christians fail. It is our biggest problem, our biggest dilemma. Remember the concept we talked about earlier today and a couple of weeks ago about the broken fellowship with you as a father and a mother. The fact that they lose that fellowship is more important to them and more painful to them than any whipping you can ever give them.

Most children are punished or whipped out of anger or frustration by the parents. Parents who come to the end of the rope, they are fired, they are fed up, they have got no answer, seemingly nothing. So instead of love, they do it out of ignorance. They do it out of anger. They do it out of frustration instead of wisdom and understanding. Hey, disciplining your child and whipping your child, and I hope you know this by now, is more than just making them pay for their crime. It is more than just you getting some satisfaction because you were irritated or the fact that there was a distraction to something you wanted to do, so now that you made them pay for it. You have got to know it is more than that. Obviously, next week, or the weeks out in the next couple of weeks, we are going to walk through the whole format. I am going to take you on whatever level you are at with where your children are, and I am going to say, "This is how you... this is the starting point, and this is the guidelines that you want to follow," and then you have to invariably change that to each child.

## VII. Discerning When to Discipline

A parent asked me one time, "When do you spank?" You know, that seems like an easy question with an easy answer, but it is really not because really the issue of when to spank really is not depending so much on the kid, though it is, but really on your attitude about it because you are the determining factor. I am going to give you some clear guidelines here of when to spank, but you know what, it still comes back to your attitude. You come home from work, and you are tired. You have worked all day, and then you get in the door, and 10 minutes after you are there, you have got a discipline problem. You have got to deal with one. You are tired. Two, you are not in the best frame of mind. Maybe you had a bad day. Three, you do not want this, or it is not what you had planned. You wanted to sit down and watch a little television, get some dinner, and kick back and relax. Now you are confronted with an issue that you think that either your wife should handle or it has not been handled, and now you have got to deal with it. You know what, you take that frustration out on your child because you do not discipline yourself to get ready to be the parent. Hey, my God, you are the adult. We need to act like it. He is the kid. This is part of parenting. This is part of the responsibility. Coming home when you are tired, it is like the ministry, coming home when your wife is worn out, nothing left to give, and then you have got to find it to give some more because somebody else needs you. That is what parenting is. It is exactly what it is.

It goes back to knowing and recognizing your children. It goes back to the correct thinking. It goes back to being able to know the difference between a deliberate act of rebellion against authority or childish irresponsibility and immaturity. There is the problem. Parents have a real tough time discerning which is which because they do not know their child. Willful disobedience, as the name applies, is a deliberate act of disobedience. It occurs as early as six or eight months, if not before, and it always will be a test of their will against yours.

I watched a little four-year-old boy one time, and he had some problem with his parents. Parents were not doing what was right. They are into that mindset that they do not spank either. The dad said there was a thing here, like a fish pond. You know, they have a little wall around it, have a little goldfish in it. Obviously, the kid is mesmerized by the fish. Obviously, he is going to be a great fisherman someday because he wants to get the fish out of there now. And his dad says to him, "Now, do not get in there. Do not get... do not get into the water. Do not get near that pool. You can go up to the ledge, but you cannot go past the ledge." And you can just see the kid's face. He did not like that. You know what he did? He walks over that thing, looks at his dad, puts one foot up on the thing, never said a word, put one foot up on that thing, looked back at his dad. You know what he was saying? He was saying, "I am going to test your will because I know if you say, 'Hey, I am not going to tell you again,' he knows he is going to tell you again." He is going to push that as far because why? Because the parent trained him to be that way. The parent trained him to be that way.

Willful disobedience implies a deliberate act of disobedience, and it is a test of their will against yours. In short, it is a defiance of your parental authority, and they are not being submissive to it. They are doing what every good military tactician does: they are probing your defenses. Whenever you have an objective you want to take as a military man, and you do not know how strong it is, you probe them. You send out three or four patrols. You test the strength of the wire. You find out where their heavy weapons company is located because that is not where you are going to attack. You go in, you probe them. You take a little hit and run. You send six guys out, they hit the wire, and they pull back. See what they do. You probe for weaknesses in the wire, then when you find the weaknesses, that is where you attack. That is exactly what that kid was doing. He was probing the wire. He was checking the perimeter. He was seeing what he could get away with and what Dad would allow him to get away with, and then he will live in that latitude, and he will use it against you. That is willful disobedience.

Then you have a situation when your child is 18 or 19, and you have no control over him. You say, "We are going to church." He says, "I am not going to church." You say, "Okay, we are going to do this. This house is honoring God." He just laughs at you. You have a situation now when you get to that point, you can probably write it down someplace that you have lost control of your family, and the deed to your family was signed over to that girl or that kid when they were probably four or five years old. You just signed it over to them by allowing them to get away with what you got away with back then and not dealing with it and dealing with the process. Now it is an out-of-control situation. That is willful disobedience.

Willful disobedience and disrespect to authority must be absolutely crushed while they are little. You cannot tolerate it. It is as the sin of witchcraft. The spirit that comes along with the spirit of disobedience is the same spirit that is found in witchcraft. Did you not understand that? You allow that to happen, you allow that to transpire, it is like a cancer. It will affect everything. If you have other children, it will find its way right down into every one of them. It needs to be crushed now.

By contrast, childish irresponsibility, like accidents due to age or lack of understanding, forgetting things, spilling stuff, not paying their full attention, not fulfilling tasks all the way,

breaking something, knocking something over, now they should not be whipped in those cases unless it is an act of defiance of authority. But let us face it, kids make mistakes. Parents need to be able to understand, as Proverbs 20:11 said, "A child is known by his doings." You ought to have the discernment and the discretion to know your child. You need to be able to discern between what is willful disobedience and what is just something that he stumbled into. In the first one, the child knows he is wrong. It is deliberate. He is simply testing the perimeter and the system at three and four and putting a plan together to run the family when he is 18 or 19. That is all it is. In the second case, it is childish immaturity. He may have been wrong, but he simply blundered into a situation, and he made a mistake.

The difference is a four-year-old told to close the door. "Johnny, will you close the door?" And Johnny runs over and only closes it two-thirds of the way. Then saying, "Johnny, pick up your toys," and before he does, he picks up a Tonka truck and throws it at you before he has a meltdown. You see the difference? I am not going to spank him because he did not close the door. He may not have understood the concept. He may have understood what I said. I may not have said it very clearly. He just may not be mature enough to know that he did close the door. He did not know I meant all the way. See, there is a lot of room in that one. But the Tonka truck past your head? Not a lot of room. Not a lot of room in parenting, ladies and gentlemen. It is just as important to know when not to spank as it is to know when to spank.

Without question, and this is where the balance is, without question, rebellion, hurting someone, hitting, biting, kicking, temper tantrums, I one time, and I was years ago, I was at a mall in Ohio, and it was not like the malls they have got today. It was enclosed, but the center was open to the sky, and there were steel poles down both sides about every eight or nine feet, holding the roof up. You walk down, and all the stores were walking here, all the way down and around and make a big circle, but the inside was open, and when it rained, it got wet, but it did not get you wet because you had the thing over here, and the poles were all the way down through there. I remember I was walking down there one day, I do not forget what I was doing, and I saw a kid and a woman come out of a store, and obviously, the kid did not get something that he wanted in the store, and he was throwing an absolute incredible... I mean, and the woman was embarrassed. This kid literally, when you are out of that store, well, I do not know what he wanted, but boy, he wanted it bad. He wrapped his legs around that pole, screaming, yelling, just terrible. And she would get him off that pole and get him down, and she was not smart enough. She stayed in line with the pole, and he just went all the way down that mall. Everybody was stopping. People were sticking out the stores. She often, years later, I looked at that, and I thought to myself, "You know what, that is a great example of how God gets some people home to heaven, hanging on to one pole, life at a time. You just cannot think you can live without screaming and kicking all the way." I thought to myself, "What an example of how God gets some of us home to heaven." But I thought to myself, "What an example of a woman that is completely out of control." Her child was running... I hate to see what that kid is today. She had totally lost control.

The temper tantrums are something that you just, you know what, you just cannot permit them. Rebellion, hurting someone, hitting and biting, temper tantrums, any and all willful acts of disobedience or test of your authority. They have to understand and have the vision: this is God's

house, and we are here for Him, all of us. I call these offenses "Second Coming offenses." You know why I call them Second Coming offenses? Because the judgment on them is swift. Second Coming of Christ. God does not come back and say, "Well, the Antichrist, huh? Yeah, we are going to whack him a little bit." He whacks him. He comes out of that eastern sky up that King's Highway. He whacks him. There is no discussion about it. There is no debate about it. The Antichrist gets both feet, and he gets like dumped into a wine vat and gets trampled with the feet of Almighty God. Those offenses are Second Coming offenses. No reprieve, no discussion other than this process I am going to bring you through. But I mean, you have got to deal with them now. Rebellion is a sin of witchcraft. Your kid telling you and your family instead of you telling him why you are just... you are down here, you probably got a Ouija board down in your basement, but you hang garlic around your neck at night, do you not? I bet you have got chicken claws and chicken scratch blood all over your thing, but you have got little dolls you stick pins in. Witchcraft, man. That same spirit of disobedience that brought Saul to the witch of Endor will bring your family to its knees, and you have to crush it. A zero tolerance level when it comes to those kind of deals.

## VIII. Conclusion and Call to Action

So we are going to hold up there today. Next week, we are going to move on into the second aspect of it. Things I want to define for you is I want to bring you through a complete and understandable breakdown of how you deal with your child and every gift. We already know now, you want to remember the three things I gave you. Those three things are absolutely crucial.

- You want to break his will, but not his spirit.
- You want to have him understand that this house is God's house, and it is the way it is going to be.
- You understand that the longer you wait, the more problems you are going to get into. It is called the compounding effect, and you just have to crush it right now, one way or the other, however you have got to deal with it.

We will pick up next week, and we will pick up where we left off, and we will walk through this thing, and I will show you how you walk through in every step on every level. There is no reason where the individuals are in this room and the quality of the Bible you get, not from me, but from the Bible itself, there is no reason why there should be any parent in this room who cannot get their family where they want to get them. The only reason it will not happen is because you will not get honest with where you are at, and you want to continue to live a life that is not reality, and you are not willing to deal with the circumstances as they need to be dealt with. But we will pick it up next week. Let us pray.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You.