

Small Group Study

Raising Solid Kids in a Scary World

From the sermon series, "Family Matters"



Icebreakers

Use the questions below to help people open up and to focus your meeting. It is very helpful to go around in a circle with the leader going first. (Remember if you have new members or guests you should take time to introduce everyone.)

1. Tell us about a time when you got in trouble as a kid. How did your parents discipline you? Did it work?
2. Tell us about a time when you endured discipline as an adult. What was the outcome? Was it positive or negative?
3. What is one of the hardest but most valuable lessons you've learned in your life?



SCRIPTURE

Have a volunteer read the following scripture: **Hebrews 12:7-11**

INTRODUCTION

How to best discipline children can be difficult task to learn, but it is crucially important. Some claim that physical discipline (corporal punishment) such as spanking is the only method the Bible supports. Others insist that "time-outs" and other punishments that do not involve physical discipline are far more effective. What does the Bible say? The Bible teaches that physical discipline is appropriate, beneficial, and necessary.

Do not misunderstand—we are by no means advocating child abuse. A child should never be disciplined physically to the extent that it causes actual physical damage. According to the Bible, though, the appropriate and restrained physical discipline of children is a good thing and contributes to the well-being and correct upbringing of the child.

Many Scriptures do in fact promote physical discipline. "Don't fail to correct your children. They won't die if you spank them. Physical discipline may well save them from death" (Proverbs 23:13-14--NLT; see also 13:24; 22:15; 20:30). The Bible strongly stresses the importance of discipline; it is something we must all have in order to be productive people, and it is much more easily learned when we are young. Children who are not disciplined often grow up rebellious, have no respect for authority, and as a result find it difficult to willingly obey and follow God. God Himself uses discipline to correct us and lead us down the right path and to encourage repentance for our wrong actions (Psalm 94:12; Proverbs 1:7; 6:23; 12:1; 13:1; 15:5; Isaiah 38:16; Hebrews 12:9).

In order to apply discipline correctly and according to biblical principles, parents must be familiar with the scriptural advice regarding discipline. The book of Proverbs contains plentiful wisdom regarding the rearing of children, such as, "The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his

mother” (Proverbs 29:15). This verse outlines the consequences of not disciplining a child—the parents are disgraced. Of course, discipline must have as its goal the good of the child and must never be used to justify the abuse and mistreatment of children. Never should it be used to vent anger or frustration.

Discipline is used to correct and train people to go in the right way. “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11). God's discipline is loving, as it should be between parent and child. Physical discipline should never be used to cause lasting physical harm or pain. Physical punishment should always be followed immediately by comforting the child with assurance that he/she is loved. These moments are the perfect time to teach a child that God disciplines us because He loves us and that, as parents, we do the same for our children.

Can other forms of discipline, such as “time-outs,” be used instead of physical discipline? Some parents find that their children do not respond well to physical discipline. Some parents find that “time-outs,” grounding, and/or taking something away from the children is more effective in encouraging behavioral change. If that is indeed the case, by all means, a parent should employ the methods that best produce the needed behavioral change. While the Bible undeniably advocates physical discipline, the Bible is more concerned with the goal of building godly character than it is in the precise method used to produce that goal.

QUESTIONS

1. The word “discipline” has several different meanings. It is training that corrects, molds, or perfects one’s mental facilities and moral character. Within this definition there is discipline from God, discipline from our parents, discipline from other people, and self-discipline. Which is easiest and which is hardest to accept?
2. For discipline to be effective in correcting or molding character and behavior, what is also necessary?
3. Consider God’s approach to training and molding us and getting us to listen to him. What does He use in this process? Where does discipline fit in? (Amos 3:1-2, Jeremiah 31:18-20, Psalm 89:30-33, 1 Cor. 11:32)
4. How does God want and expect us to react to his discipline? List four or five specific things God wants us to do. (Prov. 3:11-12, 13:1, 15:5, Job 5:17-18, Heb. 12:5-11, Rev. 3:19)
5. God expects parents to discipline their children. (Eph. 6:1-4, Prov. 6:23, 12:1, 13:1, 13:24, 15:5, 22:15, 22:6, 23:13-15, 29:17) How does God’s recommended discipline for children jibe with the views of the world?
6. What do you think is the reason why children want to do as they please and refuse to listen to authority?
7. Why do some children grow up without any discipline or punishment?
8. Give comment about the following: Do as I say and not as I do.
9. Self-discipline is often more difficult than being disciplined by God or others. Can you think of some examples of self-discipline that you practice regularly? Are there things that you would like to accomplish that require self-discipline?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. The New Dare to Discipline by James Dobson
2. Parenting With Love And Logic by Foster Cline and Jim Fay
3. Guiding Your Teen To a Faith That Lasts by Kevin Huggins and Phil Landrum

God bless,

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