

IS BIBLICAL [FAMILY] DISCIPLINE EFFECTIVE AND/OR
PRACTICAL TODAY? Text: Hebrews 12:9-11

INTRO: One of the greatest problems of modern society is that our lives are undisciplined. Our schools are largely undisciplined, & many homes are basically undisciplined. This lesson seeks to answer the question, "Is Biblical discipline effective and/or practical today?" In keeping with the theme of this series of lessons, we will limit ourselves to aspects of discipline that pertain to the home/family relationship.

I. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS TO BE USED. We will use basically two words that are sometimes used interchangeably.

A. Chasten. The basic meaning of chasten is *to punish for correction or improvement*. A secondary meaning is *to prune of excess*, etc. A tree is often pruned, not because it has grown in the wrong direction, but to prevent it from doing so in the future.

B. Discipline. RSV uses this word instead of chasten most of the time. In the NT the word for chasten is probably best understood when we use the more general term, discipline. Discipline, as we will use the term involves:

1. Instruction.
2. Training that corrects, molds or perfects the mental faculties and moral character.
3. Punishment for the sake of correcting.

II. THE BIBLE RECOGNIZES THREE BASIC TYPES OF DISCIPLINE OR CHASTENING: instructive, preventative, corrective.

Illustrate:

1. My mother **told** me in a stern voice, "Don't touch that stove." Instructive.
2. I reached in the direction of the stove, she slapped my hand. Preventative
3. She turned her back. I touched the stove and

burned my fingers. Corrective. Now, hopefully I have **learned** my lesson. Now let's look at these 3 forms of discipline in the Scriptures.

- A. Instructive. By command & example, we learn that it is the duty of both father & mother to instruct & guide their children. READ EPHESIANS 6:1-4; 2 Tim. 1:5

Moses *was learned* in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22).

[Paul was] *taught* according to the strictness of our fathers' law (A 22:3)

- B. Preventative. Certain rules have been set up, not because we are in trouble, but to KEEP US FROM getting into trouble. Bedtime, curfew, get your homework, your Bible school lesson, do your chores, eat your spinach, etc.

The Lord plagued Pharaoh & his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. (Gen. 12:17).

God said to [Abimelech] in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; for I also withheld you from sinning against Me: therefore I did not let you touch her." (Gen. 20:6).

1 Cor. 9:27; Phil. 1:12

Illustrate: An athlete gives up smoking, drinking, partying, carbonated drinks, coffee, tea, etc. Eats vegetables he doesn't particularly like. Not to punish himself for some supposed sin or crime, but to *prevent* problems, to discipline himself.

- C. Corrective.
1. Not because they **deserve** it. If we got what we deserve, we could not survive the penalty.
 2. Because we love them.
As many as I love, I rebuke & chasten

(Rev 3:19)

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.
(Prov. 13:24).

3. That they may learn, 1 Tim. 1:20.
The rod & rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.
(Prov. 29:15).
4. That they may avoid more serious punishment.
But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Cor. 11:32).

Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod & deliver his soul from hell. (Prov. 23:13-14)

NOTE: The Bible is not primarily a manual on different forms of discipline, but it does very clearly endorse corporeal punishment as well as other forms of discipline. But never forget that discipline is to be done in LOVE, for TRAINING, and for PROTECTION against more serious injury. The words “beat” and “rod” as used by Solomon conjure up in modern minds a far more aggressive treatment than Solomon & the HS were actually endorsing.

III. IS BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE IN THE HOME EFFECTIVE AND/OR PRACTICAL TODAY?

- A. Yes. Discipline in the home is a subject of both Old and New Testament Scriptures.
 1. We do not live under OT law regarding worship, etc., but the basic underlying principles of morality and ethics have not changed. Human

nature has not changed. The need for discipline has not changed.

2. When Jesus was asked a question regarding the home/family relationship, He went back to the beginning of human history & to God's original intentions. Matt. 19:4-6.

3. Paul says the OT examples & precepts are for our learning as well as for the learning of those to whom they were originally given, 1 Cor. 10:6; Rom. 15:4.

B. There are numerous statements regarding the Divine source & the enduring nature of the Scriptures.

A. The Divine source. 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Gal. 1:11-12

B. The enduring nature. 1 Pet. 1:23; Matt. 24:35
John 12:48; Heb. 12:25.

CONCLUSION: There is need for discipline in our homes beginning with self discipline on the part of father & mother and going on to instructive, preventative, and corrective discipline as our children mature to the point where they, too, can practice self-discipline, and begin the cycle again for another generation. And certainly there is no better pattern for such discipline than that which was Divinely outlined over the centuries by our heavenly Father, and by which we will be judged in the world to come. Biblical discipline, when put into practice, will be as effective as it ever was. It will not, and never did, set aside the free will of those being disciplined. But for those willing to learn, it will teach them to be productive members of society, and effective servants in the kingdom of God. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training & admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4).

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