

LifeGroup Discussion Questions
King David
August 30, 2020

Overview

Most of the time when we think of the word discipline it carries a negative connotation. This is because we associate consequences with discipline. In the Old Testament discipline meant to be under the authority or wisdom of another person. The consequence occurred when you rebelled against the authority or wisdom. The key to being under the authority of another is submitting.

To submit means to think of someone else as more important than yourself. This doesn't mean they are more important, but when it comes to submitting you are willing to set aside your wants and follow theirs. If none of us ever submitted the entire world would be in chaos. In Romans 13 the Apostle Paul tells us to submit to the ruling authorities. Within the confines of family, children are to submit to their parents. Discipline occurs by way of submission. Without submission there would only be consequences. If discipline is falling under the authority of another then submission is what will get you to that point.

The best way to illustrate discipline is by using the model of family. God instituted and designed the family. He did this because He knew the family was the best way of raising the next generation. Ephesians 6:1-4 states: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Wisdom is finding the balance between truth and love. Raising kids with only truth will make them become cold and hard hearted. Raising kids with only love and allowing them to do what they want is enabling. Children need to know both truth and love. True discipline is finding the balance between the two.

I set expectations for my kids all the time. I expect them to keep their rooms clean. I expect them to treat others with respect. I expect them to do basic chores around the house. This might come as a shock, but my kids do not always meet my expectations. I have a choice to make when this happens. I can exert my authority and come up with consequences or I can extend grace. Children cannot be in a constant state of consequences. This will just cause resentment and ultimately rebellion. The apostle Paul described this as provoking them to anger. I have heard it said before: "How can our children ever know the love of God if we are constantly angry at them."

Children cannot also be in a constant state of grace. This will lead them to do whatever they want whenever they want to do it. It is my job as the parent to determine the balance between them.

For every baby dedication at First MB we give the parents a jar of marbles. Each of the 936 marbles represents one week of the child's life from birth to 18yrs old. As the weeks pass the parents are supposed to take a marble out. This is to be a visual representation of the limited amount of time parents have with their kids. The kids are under their discipline until age 18. Psalm 90:12 states: "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." As parents we need to number our days with our kids. Children will not always be under the authority of their parents.

It is during these 18 years the children fall under the authority and wisdom of their parents. Words and actions count tremendously during this time. Proverbs 18:21 states: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." What we say as parents matters. King David missed opportunities with his children. There were times when he needed to exert his authority and he did nothing. His inability to decide between grace and consequences led to broken relationships in his family. It caused division not only between David and his children but also between the children.

How many parents have found ourselves in David's position? We cannot decide between grace and consequences so we end up doing nothing. Disengagement is not parenting. We can learn from David's life that disengagement can cause division within the family. As you look back at your own family in what ways has inactivity caused division? David allowed the majority of his 936 weeks with his kids to pass away. We need to make sure our time counts.

There is only one perfect parent and that is God. The rest of us make mistakes daily. Our hope in parenting is to lean on Him. We do not parent alone. God is with us. He stays strong when we feel like giving up. He gives wisdom when we are confused. He pursues prodigal sons and daughters when it doesn't make any sense. He left heaven behind to become our example. He is the perfect parent.

Bible Study

1. Charles Spurgeon once said: "Train your child in the way in which you know you should have gone yourself." How have the decisions you made in life impacted your parenting style?
2. How do you decide between grace and consequences?
3. Discipline requires submission. How is this lived out within your family?
4. Chip Ingram once said: "Character is always more caught than taught." Why is leading by example the best way to parent?