

LifeGroup Discussion Questions

Proverbs 22:6, Proverbs 22:15, Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 29:15 & Psalm 127

September 6, 2020

Overview:

Last week I referenced the tradition of First MB to give all new parents a jar of 936 marbles. Each marble represents one week from birth to 18 years of age. This is done for parents to have a visual representation of the limited time they have with their kids. I think it might have another meaning as well. Raising kids can make you lose your marbles. Sometimes they don't behave, speak, or act the way we expect them to behave, speak, or act. Psalm 127:3-5 states, "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!" This is very true. Children are a blessing, but that doesn't mean that parenting isn't full of challenges that sometimes push you to your mental capacity.

How can children be a blessing and a challenge at the same time? It is because all of us are sinners. No matter how cute you think your child is they are a sinner in rebellion to you and to God. Parents never have to teach their children to be disobedient. I never taught my kids to be disrespectful, be rude to each other or to be greedy. These are things they have learned by living in a sinful world and being raised by redeemed yet fallen parents. It is our job as parents to mold and shape the character of our kids so they will eventually want to obey out of love and not fear of consequences.

The book of Proverbs is full of advice on parenting. Proverbs 22:15 states: "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him." Proverbs 13:24 states "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." Proverbs 29:15 states, "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. These are great bits of wisdom, but they don't necessarily guarantee results. **They are Proverbs not Promises.** This is what can drive Christian parents crazy. They feel like they have correctly disciplined their kids and yet they still rebel. These verses in Proverbs are great guidelines for parents, but we are still dealing with sinful parents correcting sinful kids.

One of the most quoted parenting verses is Proverbs 22:6 which states, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." A lot of parents place their hope for their kids on this verse. A study by LifeWay in 2019 found that 66% of Young Adults between the ages of 18-22 will stop attending church. This means that roughly 7 out of every 10 graduating

seniors will stop attending church. It is usually only when they turn 22 or get married and have their own children that they start attending again. Does this statistic mean parents are failing? I believe it means all kids will ultimately be responsible for their own decisions. Parents can guide, discipline, love, and pray for their kids, but when they are young adults they are responsible for themselves.

I have been listening to the book of Ecclesiastes this week. Throughout the book a phrase “under the sun” is written to describe our earthly perspective. When it comes to raising kids our understanding is limited to “under the sun”. Some day, on the other side of the sun (heaven), the craziness of our kids will make sense. God can redeem our parenting failures. He has a greater perspective that is not limited by time and space. He knows that the most rebellious child now can one day become someone who shares the Gospel with everyone around them.

Generally speaking there are 4 parenting styles: Authoritative, Permissive, Authoritarian, and Neglectful. A fuller description of these styles can be found on <https://www.verywellfamily.com/types-of-parenting-styles-1095045> and <https://www.parentingforbrain.com/4-baumrind-parenting-styles/> . Please copy and paste these links into your web browser to get a better understanding and for diagrams. Authoritative parents set clear rules and value obedience, but do so in the context of relationship. Permissive parents don't enforce the very rules they have established. Authoritarian parents set high expectations and demand obedience. Neglectful parents don't set expectations or get involved with their kids. No parent is perfect. The best we can do is extend grace when grace is needed, extend discipline when discipline is needed, but above all we must love at all times.

Bible Study:

1. What encourages and discourages you as a parent?
2. Where do you fit into the 4 styles of parenting? Look at image on next page.
3. What parenting advice would you give to new parents?
4. How does looking at Proverbs on parenting as guidelines, but not as guaranteed promises, help you when things don't turn out?
5. How would you explain to a nonbeliever “parenting with grace”?



Authoritative

Parenting Style	Associated Outcome
Warm and Responsive	Higher Academic Performance
Clear Rules	More Self-Esteem
High Expectation	Better Social Skills
Supportive	Less Mental Illness
Value Independence	Lower Delinquency

Authoritarian

Parenting Style	Associated Outcome
Unresponsive	Lower Academic Performance
Strict Rules	Less Self-Esteem
High Expectation	Poorer Social Skills
Expect Blind Obedience	Mental Illness
	Drug / Alcohol Abuse
	Delinquency



Permissive

Parenting Style	Associated Outcome
Warm and Responsive	Impulsive Behavior
Few or No Rules	Egocentric
Indulgent	Poorer Social Skills
Lenient	Problematic Relationship



Neglectful

Parenting Style	Associated Outcome
Cold and Unresponsive	Impulsive Behavior
No Rules	Delinquency
Uninvolved	Drug or Alcohol Abuse
Indifferent	Suicides



