



## Introduction

We are on a mission. We are to consider ourselves "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:20) in every area of life. For parents, this means being a faithful steward (1 Cor 4:2) in using biblical principles to raise our children. We are to call our children to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:18) and to serve the Lord (Col 3:20).

On this journey, our ambassadorship takes on several different roles in order to help us fulfill our ultimate goal.

## The parent as \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Unbiblical discipline

- Depends excessively on controlling the child
  - May provoke a child to rebel, lose hope and respond in anger
  - May prevent the development of inner convictions (Phil 2:12)
- Disciplines in uncontrolled anger (Prov 14:17; 16:32)
- Disciplines just because the child is an inconvenience
- Disciplines without a balance of encouragement (Rom 13:7; Heb 10:25; 1 Thes 5:14)
- Thinks discipline will hinder creativity and potential
- Thinks discipline will warp the child (Prov 22:15)
- Neglects timely correction (Prov 19:18; Ecc 8:11; e.g. 1 Sam 3:13)
- Withholds the use of the rod (Prov 23:13-14; 22:15; 13:24; 19:15)

Discipline is unbiblical when it depends excessively on correction without a balance of instruction; is done in anger or with selfish motives; is done without a balance of praise; is delayed; or if the rod is completely withheld.
---

### 2. Biblical discipline

- It is loving (Heb 12:5-15)
  - Helpful limits provide a good setting for learning
    - Learn good habits and submission to authority early on.
    - As they grow they will cultivate an understanding of God's Word and the child's need to obey it.

→ Helpful limits establish order

Order is related to self-discipline, prudence, wise living, and hard work.

→ Helpful limits also protect the child from things he cannot handle

Limits on what they can read, listen to, watch.

Limits on where they can go and with whom.

→ Helpful limits reveal the need for teaching

Bedtime so that you can get up in time to do all you need to do before going to school.

→ Helpful limits expose his inability to keep the standard and his need for a savior

Some of your limits are simply "house rules" (for example, rising at a certain time in the morning). But some of your house standards will be directly from God's Word. Just as the law is the tutor to lead us to Christ, so God uses the standards parents set in the home to reveal the child's sin and draw him to Christ (Gal 3:23, Rom 5:20).

No standard → no sin → no need for a Savior

Low standard → Pharisaism → no need for a Savior

God's standard → sin abounds → need the Savior's grace

- It is wise

→ Wise rules are reasonable

→ Wise rules are definable (Prov 4:20-22)

Clarify general statements like "clean your room."

Dust? Straighten? Vacuum? Close drawers? Put things in their home?

May be helpful to ask them to repeat what you have said.

→ Wise rules are useful (1 Cor 9:24-27; Gal 6:7; Prov 13:13-15; 15:19)

- Cause and effect emphasizes the results of our choices (1 Cor 9:24-27; Gal 6:7) Ask your child, "Which way will you choose?"

- Cause and effect illustrates the benefits of leaving foolish living and pursuing wise living (Prov 15:5, 10:8)

- Cause and effect can lead to repentance

- Cause and effect can demonstrate a contrast of reward and consequence (Deut 27, 28)

→ Wise rules include rewards

- Wise rules include consequences
  - Must be enforced
  - Must be based on the child's age and maturity
  - Must be based on the nature of the offense
  - Must be done in love and with self-control
  - Should be stated ahead of time (as much as possible)

### 3. Summary

- As you discipline your child:
  - Stress that you give rewards or penalties because of the child's choice.
  - Stress the fact that it is God who is concerned with his behavior, not just you.
  - Re-teach that behavior originates in the heart.
  - Counsel the child that consequences are not just for the purpose of changing his behavior. Ultimately, they are to impress on him his inability to meet God's standards, and that his only hope is for forgiveness, and that power to change is through Christ.
- Remember:
  - Encourage a lot: the child must know that his parents and God approve as well as dislike certain behavior and heart attitudes.
  - Pray a lot: you need God's help in this (Prov. 3:5,6).
  - Every problem is not major: the child's failure does not mean the end of the world.
  - Don't give up; you're in it for the "long haul." In fact, a child's failures (and his accompanying conviction of sin and guilt) are opportunities for teaching and counseling.
  - These events allow you to stress his hopeless condition, his need for salvation, and the strength that comes through Christ alone.
  - Expect to visit problems again. Sin and bad habits with children, as with us, may reappear.
  - Consequences don't eradicate our sin nature. Also, bad habits can occur again because parents let down their guard on that particular issue.
  - We start giving "warnings" and "reminders" instead of following through, being consistent, and continually praying for the child and for wisdom.
  - Trust the Lord. He is faithful. He even uses our mistakes for good. Don't worry; if you don't think you handled something right this time, you may get another chance!