

social networks

Week 3 Member Guide

THE WIN

The group member will understand that parents are called to be the primary spiritual influence in the life of their children by creating teachable moments and providing practical tools in the home so that the children will become followers of Christ.

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Sunday's message was based on the text from Ephesians 6:1-4. We learned that:

- Parenting is more about relationship than rules
- Parenting is more about reward than punishment
- Parenting is more about training than performance

WARM UP

- *What is the contrast between how you were raised and how you now parent your children?*
- *What do you think is God's purpose for the family?*
- *Ask each person to share one success and one failure in parenting*

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & Proverbs 22:6

Deuteronomy and Proverbs place the responsibility of spiritual development and discipleship of children squarely on the shoulders of the parents. The passage is clear in defining how parents should go about teaching their children by constantly reminding and showing them devotion to God's word in the home and everywhere they go.

- How do these scriptures challenge you to evaluate your current parenting style?

Quote:

"Church has believed that parents probably won't assume responsibility for their own children's growth, so they have tried to become a parent substitute. This in turn has fostered parents to adopt a "drop-off" mentality. Maybe the greatest gift a church can give parents is the confidence and courage to do what God has wired them to do."

**Reggie Joiner founder and CEO of Orange*

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- What are some reasons parents are reluctant to talk to their children about spiritual and scriptural things?
 - Why do parents feel like it is the church's responsibility to disciple their children?
 - How can the church help parents to carry out their mission to train up their children?

The greatest gift a parent can give to their children is the gift of modeling love for God's word and encouraging them to hide God's word in their hearts. The first scripture a child needs to memorize is Ephesians 6:1-4.

Read Ephesians 6:1-4 & Proverbs 29:17

In Ephesians, Paul instructs fathers/parents to not provoke their children to anger and Proverbs tells us it's important for parents to discipline.

- What do you think Paul means by provoking anger in our children?
- How can a parent discipline their children without provoking anger?

Sociologist Reuben Hill conducted a secular study of thousands of teens and parents in Minnesota and he concluded that there are 4 parenting styles that produced 4 different responses among children. Here are the results.

1. **Permissive** = High love, low discipline
2. **Neglectful** = Low love, low discipline
3. **Authoritarian** = Low love, high discipline
4. **Authoritative** = High love, high discipline

*Reuben Hill Minnesota Report

Read Hebrews 12:5-11

- In light of the Reuben Hill study and Hebrews 12:5-11 which category does God's parenting style reflect?
- Which of these categories is your parenting style?
- Can you share an example of someone who is a Permissive parent? What was the result?
- Can you share an example of a parent who was an Authoritarian? What was the result?

The writer of Hebrews 12:5-6 is quoting directly from Proverbs 3:11-12 where it says *"My son, do not take the Lord's discipline lightly or faint when you are reprovved by Him, for the Lord disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He receives."* Notice the Old Testament word "Punish" is used in the context of the Old Testament law, but now, we as Christians live under grace and God loves us through His discipline.

- How does God's grace for us as parents change the way we discipline our children?

In the Focus on the Family article "Punishment Versus Discipline" Chip Ingram writes "The idea of punishment implies repaying someone with what he or she deserves. That's the antithesis of the gospel. Punishment produces a child laden with guilt and determined to get out from under it, and Christlikeness is never the result. An effective parent has to learn the difference between punishment and discipline."

	PUNISHMENT	DISCIPLINE
Purpose	To inflict penalty for an offense	To train for correction and maturity
Focus	Past misdeeds	Future correct acts
Attitude	Hostility and frustration on the part of the parent	Love and concern on the part of the parent
Resulting emotion in the child	Fear and guilt	Security

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- In your own words what is the difference between punishment and discipline?
- When it comes to disciplining your children how do you discern between loving verses being lax?
- As a parent do you struggle more with over or under disciplining?
- What specific circumstance are you currently facing with your children where you need more wisdom on how to discipline?

DIGGING DEEPER

Home work:

As a Family find a Video Bible Study on Parenting on Rightnow Media (<http://www.rushcreek.org/rightnow>) and work through it as a family. The study "it Starts at Home is a great study to begin.

Come to the next meeting prepared to share what you and your family experienced and learned as a result of your study.

Also

Here's another great resource for parenting:

Focus On The Family- <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/>

CLOSING THOUGHT

"We're fine if our children never climb a mountain as long as it guarantees they never get hurt. But what if your children were made for the mountains? ... The ultimate mission of the family is not to protect your children from all harm but to mobilize them for the mission of God. ... It is possible to hold on to our kids so tightly that we forget the ultimate goal of parenting is to let go."

**Reggie Joiner founder and CEO of Orange*