

"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth." Psalm 127:4

Session 10

Shepherding Children Ages 0-5

I. The training objectives for the first five years of life

1. The first five years are marked by development and radical change

- a. Physical
- b. Social
- c. Intellectual
- d. Spiritual
- e. This can be overwhelming

2. Overarching goal for the first five years: help your children be people under authority

3. The Circle of Blessing (Ephesians 6:1-3)

- a. Obey — Long life — Honor — Go well
- b. We must make a gourmet presentation of this truth to our kids
 - i. Negative presentation invites rebellion
 - ii. Make a presentation that is attractive
- c. Key definitions for terms in the circle of blessing
 - i. **Obey:** Submission to God's authority that causes a child to do what he is told by his parents immediately, without excuse, without complaint and without question
 - ii. **Honor:** Submission to God's authority that causes a child to speak to his parents with respect for their role as God's agent of nurture, direction and discipline
 - iii. **Go well:** The natural and spiritual blessings of obedience
 - 1) The spiritual blessing is being where God wants you to be
 - 2) There are also practical, natural blessings
 - iv. **Long life:** The blessings of prosperity and protection, richness and fullness of life that God provides for a child who lives under His structure of authority
- d. Note how the diagram is extended to illustrate what happens when the child moves outside of the circle of blessing
 - i. Discipline and correction—a rescue mission designed to restore the child to the circle of blessing
 - ii. Discipline and correction is not what I do to my children, but *for* my children

II. Physical discipline in the early years

1. Illustration of little girl with her doll

2. What is a child's most basic problem?

- a. Not a lack of information
- b. The child's problem is that he is a sinner

3. Appropriate use of the rod of correction

- a. A parent, in faith toward God and faithfulness towards his or her children, undertaking the responsibility of careful, timely, measured, and controlled use of physical discipline to underscore the importance of obeying God
- b. This rescues the child from continuing in his foolishness and coming to destruction
- c. The description broken down:
 - i. A parental exercise—all of the passages about physical discipline describe the parent as the one who is responsible for physical discipline
 - ii. An act of faith—parents must do this trusting God
 - iii. An act of faithfulness—recognizing that there is hope in discipline
 - iv. A responsibility—the parent determining to obey God
 - v. Physical discipline
 - 1) It is never a time for venting wrath
 - 2) It is a rescue mission to restore your child to the circle of blessing

4. Some distortions of physical discipline

- a. It is not a right to sinful anger
- b. Anger in physical discipline is always wicked and wrong
- c. It is not a right to hit our children capriciously
 - i. Parents are not to use physical force whenever they want
 - ii. This is a violation of Ephesians 6:4
- d. It is not venting frustration
- e. It is not something you do when you don't know what else to do
- f. It is not retribution
 - i. It is not a child paying for his sins
 - ii. Instead, physical discipline has the positive goal of restoration
- g. It is not associated with vindictive anger
- h. Your child should be restored and happy after physical discipline

Take Home Principle: The overarching goal for the first five years is to help your children be people under authority. (See Hebrews 12:11)

Homework: Read chapters 14 & 15 in "Shepherding a Child's Heart". Try to have a date night to discuss the following questions:

- 1. How "gourmet" is the presentation of obedience that we are making to our children (see I. 3b of outline)? What needs to improve?
- 2. What do you think about Tripp's definition of physical discipline (II. 2c on the outline)? How are we doing with the use of physical discipline with our children?
- 3. How we encourage and help each other use physical discipline better?

Resources: familylifetoday.com

"Q&A with Barbara Rainey" by Barbara Rainey

"Loving the little years" with Rachel Jankovic

"Understanding your child's bent" by Tim and Darcy Kimmel

"Birth to five" by Brenda Nixon