

"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth." Psalm 127:4
Session 8 – Embracing Biblical Methods: Appeal to Conscience, Life of Communication

I. Appeal to Conscience

1. The conscience is our ally in making our correction and discipline effective in our children

2. What is the conscience?

- a. The capacity that reasons about good and evil, that distinguishes between right and wrong
- b. The conscience is always at work (Romans 2)
- c. Your most powerful appeals to your kids will be appeals that smite the conscience

3. Jesus' interaction with Pharisees in Matthew 21 is a graphic example

- a. Parable of the two sons—Jesus asks a question that appeals to the conscience
- b. Parable of the vineyard—Pharisees indicted themselves by their answer to Jesus
- c. Christ appeals to their conscience, dealing with root issues, not just surface issues
- d. Christ is answering their original question (verse 23) that challenges his authority
- e. Although the Pharisees didn't repent, their own responses indicted them
- f. This is what we want to do with our children

4. Appeal to our children's conscience

- a. Deal with issues of Godward orientation
- b. Take correction beyond simply dealing with behavior to looking at issues of the heart
- c. Address the heart by exposing sin
- d. God has given your children a conscience to help them understand right from wrong
- e. Example of the boy and the offering plate—his conscience was smitten by the gospel
- f. Help your child to see himself as a sinner, in need of the mercy of God**
- g. Help your child to see his need for grace**
- h. The focal point is to expose the inability to obey**
 - i. Discipline exposes child's inability to love from the heart
 - ii. The goal: lead your child to the Cross to find grace, transformation, and help

5. Don't lower God's standard

- a. Lowering the standard allows children to keep that standard without grace
- b. Hypocrisy and self-righteousness come when we give our kids keepable standards

II. Life of Communication

1. Communication is not just an event, it's a lifestyle

- a. Communication *disciplines* and *disciples***
- b. Often parents are too busy to talk unless something is wrong
- c. Communication must be ongoing, all the time

2. Goal of communication: shepherd the heart

- a. Help children understand themselves
- b. Help them understand how God works
- c. Help them understand how sin works

3. Counting the cost of making communication happen

- a. Honest, true communication is expensive, it takes time
- b. Children require time and flexibility from their parents
- c. Kids don't pour out their hearts on schedule/on demand
- d. A wise parent learns to talk when their kids are in the mood to talk

- e. It is challenging to be a good listener to your kids
- f. When your children are ready to talk, you have to be ready to engage them
- g. We must be prepared to be honest with our kids
- 4. Blessings of good communication within the parent-child relationship**
 - a. Note the chart about authority and influence
 - b. Influence reflects the willingness of a child to place himself under the parent's authority because of trust
- 5. Benefits of Influence**
 - a. Your child will trust you when
 - i. He knows you love him
 - ii. He knows you understand him
 - iii. He knows you have invested yourself in him
 - iv. He knows you seek to see things through his eyes
 - v. He knows you help him flourish as himself
 - b. This kind of communication is tremendous preparation for relationships
 - c. Sensitive communication leads to a full-orbed understanding of life
- 6. Only biblical communication will expose the important areas of life**
 - a. All of life must be viewed from the perspective of God's redemption and restoration of mankind
 - b. Christ will be relevant all the time in every situation
- 7. Parenting is the main job that God has called you to do**
 - a. There is no way to measure the costs against the benefits
 - b. This biblical communication is what God has mandated us to do as parents

Take Home Principle: There will be times when you do not know what to do. That is your reminder to pray. God delights in the prayers of helpless parents.

Project: Read chapters 10 & 12 in "Shepherding a Child's Heart". Try to have a date night to discuss the following questions:

1. Is the gospel central in our parenting?
2. How can we do a better job of leading our children to the cross as we train them?
3. How can we better combine "Discipling" and "Discipline" with our children?
4. What needs to improve in our communication with our children?
5. How are we doing in terms of making parenting the priority God's wants it to be?
6. How can we better pray for our children and for ourselves as parents?

Resources: familylifetoday.com

"A Way with Words" with Christen Ditchfield

"Turnaround at Home" with Jack and Lisa Hibbs

"The Love Dare for Parents" with Stephen and Alex Kendrick