

The Most Important Place on Earth

Lesson 9

Last week laughter. This week discipline.

Discipline is not a dirty word

What is the most important ingredient in a Christian home?

- a. good works
- b. church attendance
- c. laughter
- d. discipline

(There's no right answer, silly, they're all important!)

Discipline

The verb

- A person disciplines herself
- Or he is disciplined by a coach or a parent

The noun

- One day a person can have the sheer pleasure of having discipline

I have a lawyer friend. A few weeks ago he was telling me about his family and how he would describe to his children how he would purposely deprive himself of something and express to them, "I'm just going to show some discipline about this". It became sort of a family joke but also a life lesson for all involved.

I think of it as being mentally tough. Pushing through difficulty, going the extra mile, not giving in to temptation, etc.

Another thought

Successful people do the things unsuccessful people are unwilling to do.

In other words, they are self disciplined.

Discipline creates obedience

Joyful obedience to God's word in the Christian home is the goal. It should be one of our personal goals and a goal as we raise our children.

Look at Hebrews 12:5-6

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor be weary when reprov'd by him.

⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives."

Here's an interesting quote from the book

“When you and I discipline our children, we're not *interrupting* our commitment to love them. We're actually *demonstrating* it.”

Story of:

Dad out of town

sneaking out at night at age 17

only to return home and sneak back to his room

Mother was sitting on the bed

Mom simply got up and left the room

Father returned next day

Dad “talked to him” not emotional, but jaw set and direct eye contact

“blatant disobedience” and “disrespect for your mother” were what he remembers

Grounded for two weeks and actually spanked

Invited to stand

Dad took by the shoulders, hugged him and said, “I love you, son”

The impact of that night has stayed with him forever

Proverbs 15:5

“A fool despises his father's instruction, but he who receives correction is prudent”

Rules for Discipline

Direct

Painful

Great discussion of spanking

Not hitting, not beating.....spanking

Private discussion as to why, spanking, hug and assurance of love

Swift (but not necessarily immediate)

Active Participation (get up and get their attention)

Other thoughts:

- “Adding embarrassment to the equation can be lethal both to you and your child”
- “No screaming and yelling. No bullying or foolish threats, just a simple thorough explanation of the rules and your expectation that your children follow them.”
- “Getting personally involved in the discipline of your children is a lot of hard work”
- We're not our children's buddy. Our (non-adult) children are not looking for another household friend. We're not their chum, we're their parent.

Doing Leads to Having

Doing discipline leads to the sheer pleasure of having discipline

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

The Discipline of Work

Responsibility

Chores

Their own homework

The Discipline of saying “when” (Moderation)

Food, TV, drink, spending money, language, how fast we drive, etc.

Modesty

How we allow our children to dress

Story told by NBA great Kevin Garnett about how he had been in the league for over 5 years and complained to one of his mentors he was tired of being called “the kid”. His mentor looked him in the eye and said, “Then quit dressing like one! Pull up your pants, buy a suit, look people in the eye when they speak to you and when you speak to them. Use full sentences when you talk to people. Act like a man and you’ll be treated like one.” All I can say to this is.....”wow”!

When I coach, I always make my teams tuck in their shirts. Why? “You look good you play good.”

Shame isn’t what it used to be, but we can bring it back, at least in our own Christian homes.

It’s hard to always do the right thing. Even the Apostle Paul struggled with it:

Romans 7:14-17

¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Like a magnet near a pile of metal shavings, our sinful natures tug and pull and draw us away from what we know is pure and right and good. But Paul reminds us that **knowing God leads to self-control.**

Romans 7:24-25

²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Jesus Christ calls us to the discipline of obedience...nothing short of perfection. He cannot tolerate anything less. No sorry excuses will count. And then, when we find ourselves completely overwhelmed by these impossible demands, Jesus Christ Himself provides the answer.

His holiness lays down the unreachable standard. Then His grace pardons our sin and gives us a chance to go for it again.

Peter also understood the challenge of the importance of self discipline

2Peter 1:3-6 (NLT)

³ By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. ⁴ And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

⁵ In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness,

Three parting thoughts

1. Homework

One night this week at dinner with the family discuss the concept of self discipline. Then, introduce the "no" game. Have all family members report back something that happened in their life that they had to say no to. Then, applaud each for their victory, however small.

Examples

Gossiping

not spending money

TV

staying up late

staying in bed instead of exercising

etc.

2. "Stacking Cups" A quick illustration of the difficulty and challenge and effort it takes to build a life; versus the "seconds" it takes to tear it apart.

3. And finally, sometimes it gets tough being "good" all the time. Here's a little reminder to put on your fridge, or in your wallet, or on your desk as a reminder of your personal goal of a self discipline pleasing to God

Galatians 6:9 (ESV)

⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.