

Building Strong Family Ties:

Part 3: How To Raise Children Without Raising Your Blood Pressure

There are also many confusing voices in society today offering many different ideas of how we should raise our children and being a good parent.

Where then do we go for help? Who is our model?

Matthew 5:48 [Living Bible] *“You are to be perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect.”*

God is the model parent.

Let me give you the simple secret to successful parenting, how you can be a great parent. Here’s the simple secret. **Treat your children the same way that God your Heavenly Father treats you.** That’s it!

If I am to be like my Heavenly Father:

I must understand my children

This is the *“bottom line”*. I must understand what makes my children *“tick”*.

Psalms 103:13-14 [NIV] *“As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.”*

What is the number one complaint our children have about us as their parents?

“They don’t understand me!”

Proverbs 24:3 [Good News Bible] *“Homes are built on the foundation of wisdom and understanding.”*

Every child is unique; there are no two children with the same personality, temperament or gifts.

Then we should not try to fit them all in the same mould. Everyone is different. You are one in ten billion: we are all unique and we need to understand that.

Proverbs 22:6 [NIV] *“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”*

What then does this verse mean?

The key word is “way”. This word means manner, temperament, personality, the course of life, mode of action. **Each child is personally fitted to go in a certain direction.**

Proverbs 22:6 [Amplified Bible] *“Train up a child in keeping with his individual gift or bent...”*

We need to recognise the potential in our children, the ability they have, and encourage them in the direction that they are naturally gifted to go with their talents and abilities.

We shouldn't, as parents, try to force our children in a mould that their natural abilities and interests don't fit.

What is the proof of our understanding our children?

Proverbs 14:29 [NIV] *“A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.”*

The proof you understand your children is if you treat them patiently.

I must accept my children

Really accept them as they are.

Psalm 145:8 [NIV] *“The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.”*

God accepts us just the way we are: warts, weaknesses and all. Then patiently works with us to help us fulfil our designed potential.

Psalm 127:3 [Good News Bible] *“Children are a gift from the Lord, they are a real blessing.”*

God chose the children we were going to have, and gave them as a gift to be in our family.

Romans 15:7 [Good News Bible] *“Accept one another ... as Christ [God] has accepted you.”*

Accept our children as a specially prepared and thought through gift from God, and not try to make them like ourselves.

Trying to mould our children to our personality will eventually say to our children, *‘if I am going to be accepted by my parents then I cannot be myself’*. This is tragic and heartbreaking for that child.

I must discipline my children

Children are saying *‘why did you have to come to this point?’*

Hebrews 12:6 [NIV] *“The Lord disciplines those whom he loves...”*

It is a sign of God's love when we are disciplined by God.

If I don't discipline my children it proves two things:

a) **That I don't really love them.**

Proverbs 13:24 [Living Bible] *“If you refuse to discipline your son, it proves you don't love him.”*

If we allow our children to get away with almost everything it proves we don't love them.

b) **That we are assisting with their destruction.**

Proverbs 19:18 [Good News Bible] *“Discipline your children while they are young enough to learn. If you don't you are helping them to destroy themselves.”*

That is a really strong statement. It is very important that we understand the difference between discipline and punishment.

God never punishes His children, He disciplines them.

All the punishment for every wrong we have ever done or will ever do has been taken by Jesus Christ on the cross.

This is why the Bible tells us that when we accept Jesus Christ as our saviour that we no longer stand condemned, needful or some punishment for our wrong doings [sins].

Romans 8:1 [Good News Bible] *“There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 8:1 [Living Bible] *“So there is now no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 8:1 [Amplified Bible] *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation, no adjudging guilty or wrong, for those who are in Christ Jesus who live not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Holy Spirit.”*

John 3:18 [Amplified Bible] *“He who believes in Him [Jesus Christ], who clings to, trusts in, relies on Him, is not judged. He who trusts in Him never comes up for judgement; for Him there is no rejection, no condemnation; he incurs no damnation.”*

What is the difference between punishment and discipline?

Punishment.

- a) **Purpose** is to inflict penalty for what we have done;
- b) **Focus** is to look back at past;
- c) **Attitude** is to get back at – we punish out of anger;
- d) **Result** of punishment is fear, guilt and more returned anger.

Discipline.

- a) **Purpose** is to promote growth – I want to help you, make you better so you will enjoy life more;
- b) **Focus** is on the future;
- c) **Attitude** behind discipline is love – I want you to make it in this world;
- d) **Result** of discipline is security, because our children know that there are parameters within which they are safe.

How do we know what we are doing is discipline and not punishment?

Simple, look at the child’s reaction and ask yourself, *‘is the child afraid of me?’*

1 John 4:18 [Good News Bible] *“There is no fear in love, perfect love drives out all fear, because fear has to do with punishment.”*

How then do we discipline?

I want to give you three words that describe discipline in the Bible.

- a) **Discipline calmly.** In other words, not to relieve our frustration, it is all too easy to do it with that motive.

Proverbs 29:11 [NIV] *“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.”*

Ephesians 6:4 [Living Bible] *“And now a word to you parents. Don’t keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord Himself approves, with suggestions and Godly advice.”*

- b) **Discipline quickly.** The Bible tells us not to delay course correction.

Proverbs 13:24 [Living Bible] *“... for if you love him you will be prompt to punish him.”*

Ecclesiastes 8:11 [NIV] *“When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.”*

c) **Discipline sparingly** – Not all the time. It is more effective if we don't do it all of the time.
Colossians 3:21 [Living Bible] *“Fathers, don't scold your children so much that they become discouraged and quit trying.”*
A lot of discipline can be avoided if we plan ahead.
Always discipline children strongly for being rebellious, this helps them to mature.

Express love for our children

Three ways to express our love **that they understand:**

- a) **Through affection**, touching, hugs, kisses, pats on the back, rubbing the back.
Psalm 145:9 [Living Bible] *“He is good to everyone and His compassion is intertwined with everything He does.”*
- b) **Through affirmation** – the way that we talk to our children.
Psalm 145:14 [NIV] *“The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.”*
We shape our children by the way we talk to them. Do we talk down to them or talk to them as people?
- c) **Through attention.** This is probably the most effective way to show children that you love them. Make them feel special (which they are).
Psalm 145:18 [NIV] *“The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”*
There are too many absentee fathers today who are not there for their children – even when they live in the same house.
Nowadays parents find it much easier to give things to their children than time, but it is only time that brings out character.

Be consistent with our children

Psalm 145:17 [Living Bible] *“The Lord is fair in everything He does...”*

You may ask why haven't I mentioned teaching in this list? We are teaching 24 hours a day, by our example, so we need to be consistent.

Proverbs 20:7 [Living Bible] *“It is a wonderful heritage to have an honest father.”*

How do we display honesty?

- a) **By not implying perfection.**
Admit it when we do things wrong; be willing to admit it to our children by saying sometimes, “Sorry, I was wrong.”
- b) **By keeping our promises.**
Psalm 145:13 [Good News Bible] *“... the Lord is faithful to all His promises ...”*

The number one cause of bitterness in families is broken promises. Little minds cannot distinguish the difference between a “yes” and a “maybe”; “maybe” is translated into expectations; we are going to do it not next year but today.

Be very careful about the promises we make to our children. If we are not trustworthy what does it say to that little child about God as a Heavenly Father?

That child comes to church and hears about a Heavenly Father and says *“if God is like my natural father, then no thanks God!!”*

What was the last thing that God says in the Old Testament before

Jesus comes on the scene in the New Testament?

Remember, it is always the last comment that a teacher makes that is uppermost on his mind.

Malachi 4:6 [Living Bible] *“His [Jesus Christ] preaching will bring fathers and children together again, to be of one mind and heart, for they will know that if they do not repent [change direction] I will come and utterly destroy their land [their inheritance].”*

No community, no nation is stronger than the families that make them.

Remember:

Treat our children as our Heavenly Father treats us as His children.

- 1 Seek to **understand** our children.
- 2 **Accept** our children.
- 3 **Discipline** not punish our children.
- 4 **Express love** for our children in a way they can understand.
- 5 **Be consistent** with our children.