

Raising Children With Love And Discipline

Rich Nathan
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Family Mess 2 Series
1 Samuel 1, 2

In preparation for this series that I'm doing on Family Mess, I've been doing some reading on the history of parenting advice. As you might expect, some of the advice given to parents by the experts is downright crazy! For example, the philosopher, John Locke, whose theories on government were huge influences on our American Founding Fathers, wrote this on his treatise on education:

I will also advise that [the child's] feet be washed every day in cold water, and to have his shoes so thin, that they might leak and let in water. It is recommendable for its cleanliness; but that which I aim at, is health; and therefore I limit it not to precisely any time of the day.

For John Locke, cold wet feet are character building for your child. It is also a great way to cause your child to become hyperactive since they'll have to run around all day to stay warm.

Or how about this advice from Emmett Holt, who wrote a parenting manual titled The Care and Feeding of Children back in 1894. Here is what the brilliant Emmett Holt said to parents:

Babies under six months old should never be played with; and the less of it at any time the better for the infant.

If you want to guarantee that your child will suffer from some sort of attachment disorder, don't play with them.

Or how about this bit of wisdom from John Watson, in his hugely influential book titled Psychological Care of Infant and Child published back in 1928. Here is what John Watson said:

Never hug and kiss your child, never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Shake hands with them in the morning. Give them a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinary good job of a difficult task.

What I would say to Dr. Watson is: If you want your child to be healthy, do the absolute opposite of what Watson recommends – hug and kiss your child a lot!

As I read through the history of child-raising advice, it is really obvious that the pendulum swings wildly from decade to decade, from over indulgence to over strictness, in the past hundred years. Quoting again from John Watson, who was a behaviorist writing in the 1920's. He taught parents that children needed to be raised with the strictest feeding and sleeping schedules and specific times for toilet training. Then in the 1940's, parents were pushed to the other extreme: don't involve yourself with your child at all. Parents were told to not show their children much love or affection and especially to not praise your child often because they will turn out to be spoiled.

The pendulum began swinging back to a much more indulgent style of parenting in the 1950. And the indulgent approach to child raising really has picked up steam in the 21st century. Drs. William and Martha Sears came up with what they called "the attachment parenting" theory. They said to parents, especially mothers that you need to drop everything in order to be thoroughly involved in your child's life. Their book The Attachment Parenting Book urged parents to use attachment practices like co-sleeping and baby-wearing.

There was a movie that came out a few years ago teasing parents who thoroughly embraced attachment theory. This one woman, LN, said in shock: "They bought us a stroller as a gift!" Her friend said: "What's wrong with a stroller?" LN screams: "I love my babies! Why would I ever want to push them away from me?"

This couple exchanged their wedding vows. Here is what was said between Burt and Verona:

Burt: Do you promise to let your daughter be fat or skinny, or any weight at all? Because we want her to be happy, no matter what. Being obsessed with weight is just too cliché for our daughter.

Verona responds: Yes, I do. Do you promise, when she talks, that you will listen? Like, really listen, especially when she's scared? And that her fights will be your fights?

Bert: I do. And do you promise that if I die in some embarrassing and boring death that you are going to tell our daughter that her father was killed by Russian soldiers in an intense hand-to-hand combat in an attempt to save the lives of 850 Chechnyan orphans?

Verona: I do. I do.

There is a new phenomenon now that shows the extreme of attachment parenting called "helicopter parenting." Helicopter parents are parents who pay constant

attention to their children's experiences and problems. They are the classic over-involved parents.

The Atlantic Magazine published an article from a teacher who said:

Thirteen years ago when I was a new teacher I gave a student a 0 on a paper because it had obviously been plagiarized.

The student's mother came in and screamed at the teacher:

Why would you give my daughter a 0? She didn't do anything wrong!

But she did. I was able to find whole paragraphs that were stolen right off of websites on the Internet. She plagiarized.

But the mother's response was:

She didn't do anything wrong, I was the one who copied it. I wrote the paper! Why would you penalize her?

One pastor told me that his wife is a teacher in a local school. She had a student, who after months of class, averaged exactly 20 on his tests. So his wife told the student that it would be better for him if he dropped the class because there was no way mathematically that even if he got a 100 on the final, would he pass the course. The student said: Would you wipe out the record that I ever took the class. The teacher said: No. You are past the 8-week grading period; it is going to appear as an incomplete on your record.

The parents immediately went down to the principal. The principal refused to back up the teacher. He wiped the student's record clean. What did the parents teach their child? What did the principal teach the child? If you make enough fuss, you don't have to take responsibility.

So many parents are taking responsibility for what ought to be their child's responsibility. Listen, parents, if you say, "We got into Harvard" referring to your child's admission, or "we just made the honor roll," or "we just made the cheerleading squad," you may be over-involved in your child's life.

And, of course, there is now a growing backlash against the over-indulgent, over-involved, over-protective parent. So now there is a new theory in parenting that is the exact opposite of the attachment theory. It is called "Free-Range Kids." You've heard of "free-range chickens?" This is free-range kids. Let your kids go out and live their own lives, free from all of your control and hyper-involvement.

Back and forth – don't touch your child; wear your child on your stomach; don't hug your child; make sure your child doesn't have their own bed before the age of 10; fight all of your child's battles; don't fight any of them.

Last year there were over 3500 books on parenting advice published in the United States - much of it utterly conflicting and contradictory. Mothers, should you be a "tiger mom," a "soccer mom," a "stay-at-home mom," a "working mom"? Should you engage in slow parenting? Helicopter parenting? Free-range parenting? Attachment parenting? Nurturing parenting? Strict parenting? Ethical parenting? Indulgent parenting? Authoritative parenting? Authoritarian parenting? To say nothing about spanking or praising, or scolding or rewarding, or tough love or safety net love, or filling your child's emotional tank.

As a fellow parent, let me share some advice with you concerning raising your child. Google is not your friend. Some of the parenting blogs are guaranteed to ruin your child.

So many theories. I like what the 17th century poet, John Wilmot, famously said about raising children. John Wilmot said:

Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children and no theories.

So how do we figure out the way forward, if we are parents? What do our children need from us beyond food and clothing and shelter? I would ask the question what do other people that we might be supervising or caring for need from us? What does an employee need from their supervisor? What does an athlete need from their coach? What does a student need from their teacher? What does a church member need from a church leader? What's the way forward? What do human beings need in order to flourish?

Fortunately, we are not left to just piece it together out of our own gut feelings or common sense. And we don't have to google parenting advice or teaching advice, or pick up a dozen conflicting contradictory books on parenting, or just simply go to the most popular "mommy blog." Parents, put your computer down and pick up your Bible. Parents, pick up your computer down and pick up a phone and talk to a wiser older friend, who you respect and who has parented well. God, who created us and who created our children and our students and our employees and our nephews and nieces; God has communicated his wisdom to us about what our fellow human beings need to flourish in a book called the Bible. And in the Bible we find two things that are necessary for every human being to flourish: Love and Discipline. If either side of this is neglected, we will have a major problem.

All of us who are parents have different parenting styles. There is not a one-size-fits-all parenting style. All of us who are parents have different temperaments. We have

different strengths. We have different weaknesses. All of our children are different. There are lots of different ways to raise children who will flourish in the end. But if you neglect these two things – love and discipline, you are going to have problems.

I've called today's talk "Raising Children With Love and Discipline." Let's pray.

For Christians our model for parenting, just like our model for leadership, our model for pastoring, our model for teaching, our model for coaching is God. For Christians, when we are looking for the ideal model of how to do something, we think about how God does it.

The example of God

In the gospels, Jesus calls God "Father" more than 200 times, over 100 times in the gospel of John, alone. God is the ideal parent. Occasionally, in the Bible God uses the image of being a mother to describe his relationship with us. We must always remember, by the way, that God is not a male. He uses the model of a father and a king and a shepherd drawn from the ancient Near East to give us some insight regarding his nature, but that is not the same thing as saying that God is a male human being. We can't attribute male or female sexuality to God.

But we can say that God shows fatherly love and fatherly care and fatherly protection, and motherly nurturance, and motherly attention. God is our ideal of perfect parenting.

And what we know about our parent God from the Bible is that God is a both-and God. He is love and he is light.

1 John 4:8 (NIV)

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 1:5 (NIV)

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

Both-and; God is love and God is light. He is holy love and he is loving holiness. When we deny one side of God, when we so-emphasize his love that we deny his holiness, or we so-emphasize his holiness that we deny his love, we have a sub-Christian view of God. The Bible regularly communicates this both-and nature of God.

We certainly see this in Jesus in John 1:17-18:

John 1:17–18 (NIV)

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Love and holiness; grace and truth; love and discipline – both-and all the time regarding the character and nature of God. Here is what we read in Proverbs 3:11-12:

Proverbs 3:11–12 (NIV)

My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline,
and do not resent his rebuke,
because the LORD disciplines those he loves,
as a father the son he delights in.

And Deuteronomy 4:35-40:

Deuteronomy 4:35–40 (NIV)

You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other. From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire. Because he loved your ancestors and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength, to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance, as it is today. Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.

So there are two ingredients necessary for children to flourish in a family. There are two ingredients necessary for athletes to flourish on a team. There are two ingredients necessary for students to flourish in a classroom. There are two ingredients necessary for church members to flourish in a church. Love and Discipline.

Good parenting will hit this both-and sweet spot. Without trying to prescribe to your parents the particular ways that you need to parent your child, given your temperament, your disposition, your child, the broad boundaries are love and discipline. If I was to compare it to a baseball field, I would say that these are the two foul lines. Love is the foul line that goes out to left field. And discipline is the foul line that goes out to right field. The field is huge. We don't all stand on the same spot. But we've got to play the game on the field between the foul lines of love and discipline, grace and truth. Parents need to be warm and parents need to set limits. Parents need to be affectionate and parents need to have clear consequences for bad behavior.

Some churches miss this both-and of love and discipline, of grace and truth, of the love and the holiness that we see in the character of God. When a church says that the only thing that we ever say about God is that God is love, the church will never discipline one of its members, or one of its leaders, for ongoing persistent rebellion against God, or God's law. The church begins to look exactly like the world. On the other hand, if the only thing that is ever held up is God's ideal, and there is no room in the church for the healing and embrace of those who fall short of God's ideal, then we ask where is the love of Christ in this place.

Let's talk first about the one side of God – the left field foul line.

The expression of love

In the text that we looked at last week we met a woman who was unable to have a child. Let's read this again.

1 Samuel 1:9–20 (NIV)

Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head." As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine." "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

Now, this is a story of God's love and tender mercy towards a woman named Hannah, who lived in the Ancient Near East, a woman who was desperate to have a child. What do we discover about God's love in this text? We discover, first of all, that:

Love allows pain and failure

God, in his love, not in his cruelty, in his love, allows Hannah to wait for a child, to cry, to experience the pain of failure. I can imagine Hannah every month in tears when she got her period because she knew that she wasn't pregnant – month after month, year after year. God in love allows Hannah to wait, to experience frustration, to feel a sense of failure. Love is not the absence of pain.

Bad parenting says I can never allow my child to experience pain. One mother wrote: I can't stand when my child is unhappy. Mom, Dad, if you are like that, if you say "I can't stand to ever see my child unhappy," you are in the wrong business. Listen, mom and dad, it is normal for a person to be bored. When your child complains and says, "I am bored," you can say, "that's because you are boring," but do not run to immediately stimulate your child. What are you teaching them? That life is an endless circus? That if you are bored at a task, you quit it? If my homework is boring, I don't need to do it? If a class is boring, I don't need to persevere? If my piano lesson is boring to me, then I don't need to take it? If a job is boring, then I complain and refuse to work and quit?

It is not loving for you to prevent your child from experiencing boredom. It is normal for people to be bored.

It is normal for people to be unhappy. If you always run to relieve feelings of unhappiness, instead of allowing your child to develop in themselves some self-nurturing behaviors, some ways of depending on God, what are you teaching your child? At the moment I'm unhappy in a class, something is dreadfully wrong? The moment I'm unhappy in a relationship, or in my marriage, I need to leave? The moment work doesn't make me happy, I quit.

It is normal to be unhappy in this fallen world and to still continue right foot, left foot, right foot, left foot through life.

It is normal for a person to wait. It is not loving to give into your child's demand that they get everything now. Life doesn't work that way. It is normal for a job to be hard. God, as a good parent of his children in this fallen world, does not prevent his children from experiencing pain and boredom and difficulty and hardship and waiting. He knows that this is the quality of life in this broken world. One day the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and there won't be any pain and there won't be any waiting. There won't be any tears. But God is a wise enough father to train us for life in this world.

Now, in this text Hannah asks God for a child over and over again. In fact, the word "ask" appears 9 different times in the Hebrew in 1 Samuel 1 and 2. Let me give you just three of the references:

1 Samuel 1:17 (NIV)

Eli answered, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.”

1 Samuel 1:20 (NIV)

So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, “Because I asked the LORD for him.”

1 Samuel 1:27 (NIV)

I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him.

Why does God have us ask him for things over and over again? Why do we read statements from Jesus like Matthew 7:7-8:

Matthew 7:7–8 (NIV)

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Why does God ask us to pray, repeatedly saying in scripture, “Ask me; come to me and ask?”

Maybe you struggle with the whole notion of praying and asking. One of the most frequently raised objections to pray is: What is the point of praying anyway? Why do we bother? If there really is a God and he does know everything, then he knows what I need before I ask. So what is the point of me spending time asking? Why don't I just get on with working and doing? If God wants to give me something along the way, I shouldn't have to ask him.

There are a dozen reasons why we are told to ask. But let me share with you quickly just three. They have to do with God's love.

Love invites relationship

Let me tick off these reasons for you.

#1 – God wants to develop a relationship with us.

Like a good father, God is not interested simply in giving gifts to us. It is not enough for God to be like one of those absent non-custodial fathers, who sends a check in the mail every month or so, and writes: “I'll see you when I see you.” Because he loves us, God wants a relationship with us. He invites us, “to come and build a secret history with me. I don't want to just give you things,” God says. “I love you; I want to give you myself. I want to give you my presence.”

Why should I pray? To develop your friendship with God, that's why.

Why should you pray? Because:

#2 – God wants us to connect blessings we receive with himself.

You know, there is much good in our lives and yet, if we are honest, we would say that we don't thank God nearly enough for all the many blessings in our life. Isn't that true of you? Would you say, "I just don't say 'thank you' enough to God for all the good things in my life." But I will tell you, you are more inclined to say thank you when you've been asking for something for a period of time and then you receive that blessing. If you've been asking and asking and asking God for a job, and then the door opens up for you to get a job, I will bet you that you will say thank you to God.

This is the reason why we are instructed to pray for our daily bread. It is not because all of us would starve, if we didn't ask God for bread. Many folks who don't ask God for bread, eat fine. It is that God wants us to connect the blessing of our provision with him so that we see him as the source and we give him thanks.

Why should you pray? Why does God say "Ask me?" Because:

#3 – God wants to change us in the asking.

You cannot go before God many times as you ask for something without being changed. One of the ways that God refines us and perfects us is in the furnace of unanswered prayer. What is it that you really value? What are you clinging to as the source of your happiness in this world? What are the idols in your life that need to be knocked down. What do you say "I must have otherwise I can never be joyful or thankful?"

Hannah was changed by her persistent asking of God. I want you to see this in 1 Samuel 1:11:

1 Samuel 1:11 (NIV)

And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life..."

Now, I don't believe that Hannah said this when she first started to pray for a child years before. I think verse 11 was the result of years of God's refining, changing and shaping of Hannah's heart. The vow that Hannah makes is really unique. I'm not aware of another vow like this in the entire Bible.

See, most of the vows that people take in the Old Testament go something like this: God, if you give me X, then I will give you Y. If you give me safety and protection from my enemies, then I will serve you all the days of my life. If you give me X, I will give you Y. If you preserve me in this battle, then I will offer to you a sacrifice.

Hannah's vow is utterly unique. It is: God, if you give me X, I will give you back X. God, if you give me son, I will give the son back to you. Look at this with me. V. 11:

1 Samuel 1:11 (NIV)

And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life..."

Now, let me say it again. I don't believe Hannah could have prayed that prayer years before this. This prayer is the result of God changing her over years of her praying. The child that God would give her is no longer an idol to Hannah. She is saying, "My whole identity is not wrapped any longer in keeping this son for myself." Through persistent asking, Hannah has been liberated to find her identity in God. God, I've changed my motivation. The reason I want a son now is not to get a new identity. The reason I want a son is so that I can give him back to you.

Let me ask you a question, brothers and sisters. Have you ever prayed about something long enough that you were changed in the praying? God, in love, has us wait in order to change us.

God invites us to ask so that he might change us and perfect us. God invites us to ask because

#4 – He wants to give us significance.

God could easily do everything God wants to do in this world on his own. But he wants to give us the dignity and significance of partnering together with him in bringing his kingdom into this world. And so he gives us this great gift of prayer and he says, "I want to join with you; I could do it on my own; I could save everyone on my own; I could feed everyone on my own; I could bring peace to this world on my own; but, I want you to know the joy of being a partner – a junior partner, most certainly – with me as I work out my purposes in this world."

Friend, it doesn't matter who you are; it doesn't matter how smart you are; it doesn't matter what your health is like, you can have incredible significance in this world simply by praying, simply by regularly going before God and asking for his purposes. You can be a partner with God while you lie on a hospital bed, while you go through cancer treatments, while you are confined to a wheelchair, if you are elderly, if you are poor, even if you have no roof over your head, you can be a partner with God.

So God says, “Ask. Build a relationship with me.”

How does God manifest his love?

Love pays attention

Let’s look at v. 11 again.

1 Samuel 1:11 (NIV)

And she made a vow, saying, “LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life...

1 Samuel 1:19 (NIV)

Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her.

It is interesting how many times in the old Testament after somebody has gone through a devastating experience we read the phrase, “God remembered so and so.” After the whole world is destroyed around Noah and his family, we read in Genesis 8:1:

Genesis 8:1 (NIV)

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

After Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, it says in Genesis 19:29:

Genesis 19:29 (NIV)

So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

Many women in the Old Testament, who couldn’t conceive and then after years of praying were able to conceive, it says about them: God remembered them.

Genesis 30:22 (NIV)

Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive.

It says regarding Sarah, that God remembered Sarah and she conceived. And here in 1 Samuel 1, God remembered Hannah.

What does it mean to have God remember you? It’s not that God goes through a mental process in which something he forgot he now calls to mind. To have God

remember you is to have the Lord pay attention to you, to have the Lord notice you, to have the Lord listen to you, to have the Lord answer your prayers. For God to remember you means that God comes to your aid. When the psalmist over and over says: “Lord, remember us,” what he is saying is “Lord, pay attention to us.”

Love pays attention. Fathers and mothers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, coaches, teachers, small group leaders, what love looks like is paying attention. Fathers, mothers, turn the TV off, turn your computer off, and in love, pay attention to your child. If your child is acting up and going crazy, it may be that they’re just looking for some attention.

Following the example of God, we are called to love, to be involved, to listen, to encourage, to pay attention, to invite into relationship. But love does not mean that we protect or prevent our children or anyone else from all hardship, all failure, all challenges, and all boredom.

Well, what’s the other side of God? We’ve talked about God is love. But God is also light. God is holy. I said there is another foul line. We have the left field foul line of love and the right field foul line is discipline.

The expression of discipline

There must be limits, there must be boundaries, and there must be high expectations for any human being to flourish. Contrast God’s treatment of Hannah with God’s treatment of Eli and his sons. In 1 Samuel 2 we read about a man named Eli.

Eli was perhaps the most respected man in the nation in which he lived for 40 years. Eli was Israel’s religious leader. He was a high priest. He was also a judge, meaning that he had great legal authority. Judges at that time would go on a circuit and so he was responsible for deciding all kinds of civil and criminal matters. He was a wealthy man. Yet, we are going to find in the story of Eli that he and his sons lost everything because Eli would not discipline his boys.

We read in 1 Samuel 3:13:

1 Samuel 3:13 (NIV)

For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them.

Is it important to discipline our children? God says absolutely yes.

You say, “Why? Why is it so important to discipline our kids?”

Here is the first thing.

When parents don't discipline their children, their children don't respect God.

1 Samuel 2:12 (NIV)

Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD.

Parents, I want you to hear this real clearly. You represent the authority of God to your children. If your children consistently show you disrespect, then they will show consistent disrespect to the authority of God.

I know some moms who suffer from low self-esteem and some dads who, likewise, may suffer from low self-esteem who are continually struggling the question. "Why should I require respect from my children?" Because you want them to respect God. It is not just for your own sake or for your own self-esteem or so that you could feel like you are in control. It is because if you don't have your children respect your limits, they won't respect the limits of God. If they don't take you seriously, they won't take God seriously.

Why do you think the first commandment regarding our relationship with each other in the Ten Commandments, the first commandment before even "don't murder", "don't steal", "don't lie" – before any of those commandments, the first commandment in our relationship with each other was: "Honor your father and your mother." Because respect for parents is a foundation for respecting God's limits in every other area of life.

Let's continue to look at this situation with Eli's sons. Verses 13-16.

1 Samuel 2:13–16 (NIV)

Now it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled and would plunge the fork into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. But even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the person who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw." If the person said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force."

When parents don't discipline their children, their children won't respect other people.

See, if there are no limits with mom or dad, if I can get away with murder at home, then I am taught that life is to be lived on my own terms. Since mom or dad never say "no" to me, followed by swift and clear consequences, then I will be completely

unaccustomed to hearing the word “no” from anyone else. Teacher, principal, coach, mom, dad, if you want your children to respect not only the authority of God, but the authority of a future boss or teacher, to respect the rights of other people, you must draw limits and discipline your kids.

When I was teaching at OSU some years ago, I gave an exam. After the exam, about three hours later, I was sitting in my office working. And a student came to my office and literally kicked the door open and said to me: “Nathan, I missed the test this morning. I would like to take the test now.”

I was so startled by the brazenness of this guy that I just looked at him and said, “I am sorry, what did you say?”

He said, “Yeah, I missed your test this morning. I had some car problems. I want to take the test now.”

I said, “Well, I am sorry. I am not going to give you the test now.”

Here was a young man whom I am certain was not used to being defied by his mother or father. He had such an exaggerated sense of self-importance that when I told him I wouldn’t give him the exam then, he used profanity and said, “Let’s stop _____ with each other. What are you going to do for me?”

I stood up from my desk and I said, “I’ll tell you what I am going to do for you. I am going to fail you on this test that you just missed and then I am going down in just a few minutes to the Dean’s office and throw you out of my class.”

This guy couldn’t believe what he heard. He stormed out of my office. Kicked a bunch of doors on the way down the hall and I am sure in future years became a holy nightmare for every teacher and every boss who crossed his path.

When parents don’t discipline their children, their kids don’t respect other people.

When parents don’t discipline their children, their children don’t know that they are loved.

Proverbs 13:24 (NIV)

Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

Likewise, Hebrews 12 says:

Hebrews 12:5–6 (NIV)

And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”

One of the ways that the Lord communicates that he loves us is that he disciplines us. The writer of Hebrews goes on and says:

Hebrews 12:8 (NIV)

If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.

You see, brothers and sisters, love and discipline ultimately aren’t two different things, but two sides of the same coin. It is not like God moves from pole to pole – sometimes he loves, sometimes he disciplines. When he disciplines, he loves us and his love is not just a sentimental mushy kind of love. His love is always a holy love. God’s grace in our life is always full of truth; his truth in our lives is always full of grace.

In other words, not only do we love our children by disciplining them, but in fact one of the ways that our children know that they are loved is that mom and dad care enough to set boundaries. I know some of you really struggle with drawing lines and exercising discipline because you feel like it is unkind. That you are not being generous. And that discipline is unloving. But the Bible says the exact reverse. Not only do you love someone by exercising discipline, but also they feel loved. That doesn’t mean they enjoy the discipline. It just means that they know you care.

A young woman told me that when she was in High School, her mother discovered drugs in her purse. Mom came to her and help up a bag and said, “What’s in here?” The daughter said, “What do you think it is?” Mom said, “Well, it looks like pills.” She put them on the table and walked out of the room and never said another word to the young woman about what she discovered in her purse. The young woman said that from that moment, I determined that my mother couldn’t care less about me.

Mom, dad, small group leader, pastor, coach, teacher, if you don’t allow folks around you to experience consequences for bad behavior, if there are no lines, if there are no limits, if you don’t allow folks to experience failure, you are not being loving.

Love and discipline, every human being needs these two things to flourish.

Conclusion

Raising Children With Love And Discipline

Rich Nathan

April 13-14, 2013

Family Mess 2 Series

1 Samuel 1, 2

- I. The example of God

- II. The expression of love
 - A. Love allows pain and failure
 - B. Love invites relationship
 - C. Love pays attention

- III. The expression of discipline
 - A. When parents don't discipline their children, their children don't respect God
 - B. When parents don't discipline their children, their children won't respect other people
 - C. When parents don't discipline their children, their children don't know they are loved