

Lesson 17: Teaching: Instruction & Authority

INSTRUCTION

A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. Prov. 13:1

1. What is instruction?

An obviously essential ingredient in successful parenting is **instruction**, that is, the process by which you teach such things as tying shoes and moral standards. Put effort into your responsibility; don't assume that in time your child will automatically learn everything he needs to know. TEACH him how to swing a bat, TEACH her table manners and TEACH him goodness.

When raising godly kids, use the Word of God and don't try to teach children without it, which will only lead them to rebelliousness.

2. How serious is God about parents teaching their children? Why?

Deut. 4:9-10

Deut. 6:5-9

Deut. 11:18-19

Psalm 78:1-4

3. Thought Question: How early should instruction begin? 1 Timothy 3:14-15

While the word instruction stands on its own, it is a verb used in the family of words the scripture calls discipline, as in the case in Hebrews 12: 6 *because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.* It is appropriate instruction and discipline that are at the heart of effective godly parenting. The scripture equates true love for our children with a willingness to instruct and discipline. Note the correlation with God's love for us in Proverbs 3:12 *because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*

Discipline is a form of Instruction

The **seed of your instruction**, no matter how wise and well-intentioned, won't have long-lasting results unless your child is first taught to **respect the sower**. Discipline provides the preparation you need to make your teaching effective.

Just as a good farmer prepares the soil in order to produce a good harvest, prudent parents will discipline their children so their instruction will be effective. Planting Bible principles in the heart of a child is the most reliable insurance against rebellion toward authority.



How do we make Instruction effective?

Clear and consistent threat of punishment produces respect for authority from the one who administers it. This, in turn, permits focusing on the primary objective: Instruction.

Read Proverbs 29:15-19.



4. What imparts wisdom (v. 15)? How does this work?
5. What is the result of no instruction (v. 18)?
6. What is the result of having laws / rules (v. 18)? Why?
7. Why are laws necessary (v. 19)?
8. How does Mom and Dad benefit from proper instruction which includes discipline (v. 17)?
9. What is implied if there is no discipline? Is that implication realized frequently?

No loving parent enjoys having to punish a child, but **few realize how important it is to be firm and consistent early in the process so it won't be required very often later.** When a child learns that punishment for infractions is certain, the frequency of infractions (and punishments) drops dramatically.

Because children are children and memories are short, there will always be slip-ups, but you can be assured that effective discipline does not require continual, never-ending conflict during the childhood years, if you, as parents, discipline yourselves to be firm and consistent.

Rules without relationship lead to rebellion.

One way or another, you will teach your child about religion. There is no way to be neutral about God (Matt. 12:30). If you serve God faithfully, then your child will see and hear you living and teaching God's word. But if you never do or say anything about God, then you will teach the child that God is unimportant.

AUTHORITY

My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother.

Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck.

When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.. Proverbs 6:20-23

Among the factors which have changed in our culture is how we view authority. We have become so charmed by the principle of equality that obey and submit have been virtually eliminated from our vocabulary. Individual rights are worshipped. Even children are encouraged to make their own choices, with neither rules nor experience to guide them. We are conscious of the impact this new perspective has had on employment, education and marriage. We should be aware of the potential impact on us as we raise our children, too.

Parental Authority Teaches Children Proper Attitudes Toward All Authority.

Adults must regularly relate to all kinds of authority. Authority organizes people so they cooperate and work together. This is true in government, work, and the home. To become well-adjusted adults, children must learn how to relate to authority: how to submit to others who have authority, and how to exercise authority when they themselves have it.

If parents seek to prepare their children to be well-adjusted adults, we must teach them proper understanding and submission to authority. How can we accomplish this? **The best way is by developing a proper authority relationship between our children and ourselves.** This teaches children how to properly submit to authority, and they see by their parents' example how to properly use authority.

The main reason so many children today grow up rebellious and maladjusted is simply that they have not been properly required to submit to authority. They manipulate their parents, and the parents don't know what to do about it. They get away with rebelling against their parents, so they proceed to rebel against the whole "establishment": parents, government, employers, church, and God. Instead of teaching them submission, we have taught them rebellion by allowing it to apparently succeed.

The truth is that parents are the primary authorities that children must relate to for their first twenty or so years, and especially for their first five-seven years. If parents do not teach their children to get along with parental authority - if they allow their children to manipulate them and get their own way against their parents' better judgment - most likely those children will always have difficulty relating to authority and will live a miserable life.

Discussion Points

1. True or False: If we expect our children to obey us, they will.
2. What is the distinction between 'expecting' and 'wishing'?
3. Should the differences (expecting & wishing) be evident in the way parents communicate with their children? Explain.

Influential books in the 60s and 70s discuss the notion of a 'democratic' family, which may sound nice, but is and always will be fiction. Here's an absolute, undeniable fact – After all the talking and discussion between parents and children, **someone always has the final say. Who should that be?**

4. Is it possible to be too authoritative and alienate a child from his parents? Explain.

Children generally know their parents are wiser than they are. They know they need guidance at times. They may act confident, but behind the false front they are often insecure. Parental guidance assures the child that he is doing what is best. As a result, children actually have greater respect for adults who enforce fair rules than they have for permissive parents.

APPLICATION

When giving instructions to a child you should be:

- a) **Commanding** – Be direct. Make statements rather than asking questions: “Please sit down,” as opposed to “Are you ready to get out your homework?” Speak directly to the child and preface the statement with authoritative statements like “I want you to” or “it’s time for you to”. The more uncertain the terms, the more uncertain the outcome! What problems may arise from the following?
Why don’t you.... It would be nice if you.... Don’t you think you should....
- b) **Be close**. Give instructions when you are near the child, rather than calling out from across the room.
- c) **Use clear and specific commands**. Instead of “Go ahead,” say, “Please go start your reading assignment.”
- d) **Be concise**. Give age-appropriate instructions. Speak to your child at a level he will understand. If your child is younger, keep things simple and use words you know he knows: “Please pick up the ball.” With older children, who are so often keenly aware of not being “babies anymore” it’s important to be clear without being patronizing.
- e) **Give instructions one at a time**. Especially for kids who have attention challenges, try to avoid giving a series of instructions: “Please put on your sneakers, get your lunch off the kitchen counter, and meet me in the front hall.
- f) **Keep explanations simple**. Giving a rationale can increase the likelihood children will listen to a command, but not if the commands gets lost in it. For instance: “Go get your coat on because it’s raining and I don’t want you to catch a cold.” Instead, try: “It’s raining and I don’t want you to catch a cold. Go get your coat on.”
- g) **Give kids time to process**. After you give an instruction, wait a few seconds, without repeating what you said. Children then learn to listen to calm instructions given once rather than learning that they don’t need to listen because the instructions will be repeated. Watching and waiting also helps keep adults from doing what we’ve requested of our kids for them.