



SUCCESSFUL PARENTING

by Hal Baumchen, PsyD, LP, LADC

NORTHSTAR INSPIRATION

*Emotional
Health Insights
from a Christian
Perspective*



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Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it. Proverbs 22:6

THE MISSION

When asked to state their purpose on earth or their most important task at hand, the response of many parents is to raise their children. Parenting is a special and demanding duty, filled with abundant joys and numerous challenges. It is a task filled with enormous responsibility, one that reflects our obligation to be wise managers of God's precious gifts to us. Scripture reminds us:

Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him. Psalm 127:3

TEACH OBEDIENCE

Parents are instructed throughout Scripture to train and teach their children about God and introduce them to their King.

The commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home... Deuteronomy 6:6-7

They are to provide instruction, guidance, security, discipline, encouragement, praise, love and care, and to meet a host of other needs for their children. And

children are commanded to listen and heed their instruction:

My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever... When you walk, they will guide you; when

you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life. Proverbs 6:20-23

THE LECTURER

Because we so eagerly want to teach our children without upsetting them, we often state a principle and then explain it in countless ways, trying to get our children to see our point of view and good reason. Instead of trying to produce agreement, we should teach obedience.

For example:

Jason: Mom, where is my baseball glove?

Mom: Where did you put it when you came home from Bobby's?

Jason: I don't know.

Mom: What are you supposed to do with it?

Jason: I don't know.

Mom: Yes, you do! If you'd put it in the same spot every time you finished playing, it would be there when you need it.

Jason: (Grunts and looks in a closet.)

Mom: Am I the only one who puts things away around here? I slave away for you kids, tell you a thousand times to be careful with your things, and this is the thanks I get. You need to be more responsible. We're not made out of money you know...(Mom continues)

With this logic, we expect our children to look over at us and say "Oh Mom, thanks for pointing that out; I never saw it that way before. You've changed my life!" However, this NEVER happens! We talk too much, point out rules our children already know, and explain with reasons they don't care about. Seldom do we train them or teach obedience.

Lecturing can frustrate your children, contradicting New Testament teachings:

Fathers do not exasperate your children instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4

Wise parents are cautious with their words:

A man of knowledge uses words with restraint and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Proverbs 17:27

We often want all the benefits of parenting without ever upsetting our children. This sets parents up for two major errors providing discipline:

1. Lecturing too much
2. Expressing too much emotion.

GODLY DISCIPLINE

Parents frequently use too many words and too much emotion when correcting behavior. When a police officer stops a driver for speeding, the officer does not scold or lecture endlessly; instead, a ticket is issued as punishment and as a corrective device. Parents often lack strategies to discipline their children. Some suggestions that may help are on the back page.



RUNAWAY ANGER

The second major mistake many parents make is getting frustrated and hurt, and expressing too much anger while they are trying to discipline their children. Parents often have unrealistic expectations of their children. They see children as cooperative and selfless young adults who will respond to words and good reason. Children are probably much more irrational, undisciplined, impulsive, and selfish than we want to believe. Idealistic desires by parents can lead to much frustration and anger as children constantly fall short of parental expectations.

Angry tones and hostile words and actions do not motivate, correct, or discipline children in a very useful or peaceful manner. Instead, correct expectations can reduce frustration.

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1:19-20

Anger does not serve us well in parenting. It can reveal our frustration, indicate loss of control, and lead to hostile, defensive, and rebellious reactions in our children.

A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel. Proverbs 15:18

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Reduce lecturing. Your children most likely know the rules.
2. Do not ask your children as frequently to explain their behavior, i.e. “Why did you push your sister?” This implies you can be talked out of corrective action if the answer is good enough, thus leading to arguments or lying.
3. Expect to make frequent corrections to your children’s behavior.
4. Do not correct out of anger.
5. Have a quick, easy discipline or correction in mind before the offense occurs. This can reduce lecturing and complaining about behavior. Use “time outs” for small children or eliminate small privileges.
6. Praise, encourage, and build up. Compliment Christ-like character, attitudes, and behavior frequently.
7. Allow your children to be unhappy about the discipline they have received. Do not expect them to agree with you.

Discipline your son and he will give you peace. He will bring delight to your soul. Proverbs 29:17



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hal Baumchen, PsyD, LP, LADC is the President and Clinical Director of NorthStar Regional. He is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist (LP) and a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) with over 30 years of counseling experience.

He received his Master’s Degree from Wheaton Graduate School, his Doctorate of Psychology (PsyD) from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology, and his Certificate in Co-Occurring Disorders from Adler Graduate School. He serves frequently as a seminar leader, and has taught workshops in the USA, Canada, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and India.

He is the author of *Journeys* and *Destinations*, two books on co-occurring disorders treatment, and the co-author of *Finding Hope Again: Overcoming Depression* with Dr. Neil T. Anderson.

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