

# Every Parents' Responsibility

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*by Naomi Cassata*



The best thing a parent can do for their kids is not solely showering them with good things. Inside them is a spirit waiting to be encouraged and guided in this life. God designed the family unit perfectly. Parenting is not easy and requires a lot of dedication. These little people, we call children, are the greatest blessings we will ever be given and should be treated as such.

### **MAKING EXCUSES**

When we make excuses for our children's behavior, we do them no justice. They learn that they are not responsible for their wrong choices and they in turn learn to point the blame on someone else even when they are fully responsible. Some parents take offense when informed of their child's misconduct. Instead of seeing it as an opportunity to steer their children in the right direction, they view it as a lash against their own parenting skills. When I was in school, I rode the school bus every day. One particular event stands out in my mind. There was a boy (maybe 12 or 13) who caused havoc for the bus driver. He even caused chaos for the teachers at school. The bus driver had enough and suspended the boy from riding the bus for a few days. When it was time for him to be picked up on his return to school, his father got on the bus with him and gave the bus driver an ear-full. Raising his voice in anger, he blamed the bus driver for his son's behavior and stated that she should have had him sitting in the front if he was that bad! I couldn't believe my ears. Even as a kid I knew this father was completely wrong in his accusation. Blaming adults in leadership devalues their authority. Children that continue to disrespect authority have not been duly disciplined at home. It is by and large an overflow of what is lacking at home. In a recent article on CNN Living, titled What teachers really want to tell parents, one teacher writes, "At times when I tell parents that their child has been a behavior problem, I can almost see the hairs rise on their backs. They are ready to fight and defend their child, and it is exhausting." When children see this displayed in their parents, who are they to fear and respect anymore? Respecting authority doesn't stop after high school. It continues into the workforce and beyond. If a child hasn't learned to respect others from their parents then they will never learn.

### CONSEQUENCES

Discipline is an essential part of parenting. Without it our kids are missing out and will not enter adulthood with a true understanding of consequence from behavior. It is needed to correct wayward behavior. Children must know that there are consequences for doing wrong. If they get away with wrong doing, they will continue to do it. As Christian parents we are responsible before God for being attentive to our children's behavior.

Proverbs 22:15 clearly states, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him." Whatever measure of correction is used, it is to serve one purpose: to drive wayward behavior from the child. Outward discipline will eventually work inward change. Discipline drives rebellion from a child's heart because that's where it all starts. The child learns that if I continue to disobey, this is what will happen. Eventually the heart catches on and the outward actions realign. If we don't deal with our children now, society will deal with them later.

Kids will test their limits. Even when you've explained to your twelve year old that you don't want him watching a crude show that all his friends watch. You've had a hard day at work and just want to relax, but as you check up on your son, he happens to be watching the very show you told him not to watch last week. Telling him to turn it off, with no consequences, will produce the same behavior a week later. He must understand, through your discipline, that you love him and only want the best for him; for that reason, you cannot let his rebellious action go unpunished.

When you zip down the highway 20 mph above the speed limit, a cop doesn't give you a casual gesture to slow down. He quickly puts a stop to your deed and hands over the consequence to your action. When you consecutively show up to work late, your boss doesn't turn a blind eye thinking I don't feel like dealing with this today; I'll just pretend I didn't notice. Instead, he replaces you with someone who is willing to show up on time.

Consequences must be consistent if they are going to do any good. Telling Johnny he can't play near the road every other time he is seen playing near the road, will cause him to continue playing by the road. Children only learn by consistent guidance. If their bad actions are permissible some of the time they become confused. They understand that mom and dad don't really mean what they say, and therefore it's really not important to obey them.

### LOVE REQUIRES IT

For whom the Lord loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights" (Proverbs 3:12, NASB)

Discipline is not for the faint of heart. It's never enjoyable for a parent to discipline his or her child, but love for them provokes it. Sounds like an oxymoron. Parents want the best for their children and sometimes that requires unpleasant circumstances. Their temporal unhappiness will one day reap bountiful obedience if we remain committed.

A parent that is too busy to tend to the misconduct of their child has mismanaged their priorities. It is for the long-term profit of the child that parents get involved. Just as our Heavenly Father disciplines us, we learn that it is for a greater purpose. One that may not be seen now, but one day will be revealed.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to them who

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love god, to those who are called according to His purpose.

[omie.nomie@gmail.com](mailto:omie.nomie@gmail.com)

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