

**INSIGHTS
INTO
DISCIPLINE**

GOD'S STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- When a child was born into a Jewish family, the parents looked upon the child as a holy responsibility. They focused their attention and directed all their energy on teaching the child how to live. The Hebrew language gives insight into the various stages a child goes through in his development toward maturity.

Scripture offers the deepest insight into successful family life. God's dealings with His people Israel provide the basis and model of the parental relationship. Basic are the responsibility of the father and the dignity of the mother (see Deuteronomy 6: 6-8; Proverbs 31:10-31). The parents' motivation was the good of their child; the child's motivation was his desire for a successful future.

AGE	NAMES OF CHILD*	SIGNIFICANT EMPHASIS
0-2 years	JELED JALDE JONEK OLEL GAMUL	NEW BORN PLEASING SELF BY PLAYING WITH HANDS SUCKLING A BABE ASKING BREAD WEANED ONE
2-5 years	TAPH	CLINGING TO ITS MOTHER Began memory work at age 2 or 3. Instructed by parent - small isolated passages. Learned to pray private and united prayers.

* Sketches of Jewish Social Life by Alfred Edersheim;
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan

AGE	NAMES OF CHILD	SIGNIFICANT EMPHASIS	
5-10 years	ELEM	<p>FIRM AND STRONG Commenced Bible reading. Learned the laws of God to engrave them in his mind. Received small parchments for his verses. Studied the Book of Leviticus to learn the ordinances of God. Repeated prayers out loud. Listened to men sing accompanied by instruments. Heard his Father tell and discuss what God had done for Israel.</p>	
10-13 years	NAAR	<p>YOUTH - SHAKING HIMSELF FREE Forbidden to learn for learning's sake. Studies the Mishnah. Learned criminal and civil law; laws of purification (sex education); laws of agriculture and skills of father's trade; sacrifices (forgiveness of sins).</p>	
13-15 years	BACHUR	<p>RIPENED ONE - YOUNG WARRIOR Barmizvah - at 13 = "son of the commandment". Fully responsible and accountable for all his actions. Studied in depth the law, commandments, judgments, testimonies, statutes, and precepts of Scripture.</p>	
15-18 years	<p>STUDY OF THE TALMUD Insight into history and background. Biographies of saints from Scripture and history.</p>		
18-20 years	MARRIAGE		
20	ACTIVE VOCATION	60	COMMENCEMENT OF AGEDNESS
30	FULL VIGOR	70	GRAY AGE
40	MATURITY OF REASON	80	ADVANCED OLD AGE
50	FOR COUNSEL	90	BOWED DOWN

INSTRUCTION, THE MAJOR EMPHASIS OF SCRIPTURE IN

TRANSFERRING TRUTH TO THE CHILD

• "A wise teacher
makes learning
a joy."
Proverbs 15:2

- There are two basic means of instructing a child. The first is by example and the second is by teaching specific information. To be an example assumes a parent has applied basic principles to his life. To instruct assumes the parent has specific content to communicate to the child.

- RAISING CHILDREN BY REACTION

When a parent does not know how to live a successful life, he has no life to demonstrate and little information to share. He usually attempts to guide his child by reacting to what the child does wrong. Since a child's natural inclination is to violate basic principles of life, it soon appears to the child that his parents are too strict or inconsistent. Instead of warmth and security in the home, he finds fear and disillusionment.

- WITHOUT INSTRUCTION - INSECURITY

Without basic principles to guide him as he grows, a child develops no stable frame of reference for making sound decisions. The parent who reacts whenever the child makes a mistake, communicates rejection of the child as a person. Consequently, a teen often says, "I don't do anything right! I can never please my parents, no matter how hard I try, so what's the use." The child grows up rebelling against rules and authority. Even when he comes to a point of desperate need and wants help, he has no truth from which to draw; this increases his despair.

STEPS FOR INTERNALIZING TRUTH

- "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Psalm 19:11

Psalms 19:7-10 gives significant insight into the underlying levels of instruction. The importance of these steps is emphasized by verse 11 above.

SIX ASPECTS OF INSTRUCTION	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC	RESULT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED
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LEVEL 1

- LAW OF LORD
(Basic principles)

- PERFECT
(Complete)

- CONVERTING THE SOUL
(Changing mind, emotions and will.)

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The law of the Lord represents the basic principles of life, the only FOUNDATION upon which the successful life may be built. Scripture indicates that the law is complete. Before a parent can effectively instruct his child, he must know these principles himself.

The first job of a parent is to help the child learn the right responses. Realizing that the child's natural responses are exactly the opposite of God's basic principles, he must seek to replace these natural inclinations with God's principles.

- "Give instruction to a wise man and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man and he will increase in learning." Proverbs 9:9

LEVEL 2

- TESTIMONY OF THE LORD
(Living illustrations)

- IS SURE
(Positive, firm and stable)

- MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE
(Showing how the principles work in daily life)

When the parent applies God's principles to his life, the child can see by example that what the parent teaches is also a natural part of his life.

LIVING ILLUSTRATION

The testimonies show how these principles actually work out in life. Here is an opportunity to give living illustrations from the lives of others who have or have not followed through with right responses. A study of the biographies of effective Christians is very valuable in helping the child become wise.

- *"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise."
Proverbs 15:31*

LEVEL 3

- STATUTES OF THE LORD
(Practical guides for action.)

- ARE RIGHT
(They work!)

- REJOICING THE HEART
(Internalizing the principles through personal application.)

When a parent is able to give the child practical direction for solving a problem, his inward response will be joy over the achievement he experiences. It becomes natural for the child to adopt willingly the discipline and rules by which he has succeeded.

PRACTICAL GUIDES FOR ACTION

The book of Proverbs is one of the most practical books of Scripture to study for guidelines and direction for everyday situations.

Once the basic principles have been learned and the value of using them in everyday living has been established, the desire for additional guides and rules will be natural. However, if a parent fails to demonstrate the first two levels, his advice at this third level will be rejected merely as rules that quench the spirit, rather than accepted as the door to inner joy.

- *"All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth and right to them that find knowledge."*

Proverbs 8: 8,9

LEVEL 4

• COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD
(Source of right emotional focus)

• IS PURE
(Clear)

• ENLIGHTENING THE EYES
(Giving insight into basic human nature)

INSIGHT INTO HUMAN NATURE

The commandments of God instruct concerning areas of prohibition which God does not want man to violate. Each time a commandment is violated, inward guilt is produced. When a person obeys a commandment of God, his conscience becomes more sensitive. The result is additional insight into life which is incomprehensible to the person without a relationship to God. He really knows how life works!

Stories and biographies, with morals which illustrate the principles, are the key. The child may identify the principles being applied or violated. The more insight he gains to see the consequences of violating God's principles in other lives, the greater stability and motivation he will have to stand alone on the side of right.

If a parent tries to implement instruction at this level but by-passes the previous levels, the child visualizes God as impersonal and unjust.

• "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding." Proverbs 15:32

LEVEL 5

• FEAR OF THE LORD
(Awesome respect)

• IS CLEAN
(Morally pure)

• ENDURING FOREVER
(Giving stability to the present and certainty to the future)

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Respect for the parent and God are an automatic by-product if the preceding levels are a natural part of the parent's life. Any person may realize God's presence in each detail of his life when he becomes personally responsible and accountable to God for all his actions. The purer his heart and the clearer his conscience, the more he can visualize God and bear an effective witness.

• "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge." Proverbs 14:26

LEVEL 6

- THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD
(Discernment between right and wrong)

- ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER
(Fully dependable)

- MORE TO BE DESIRED THAN GOLD
(Wisdom is our life goal)

WISE DECISIONS

The insight to make the right decisions in difficult situations is a promise of the Lord to those who follow His ways. Proverbs 2:1-11

- ". . . He keepeth the paths of judgment and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path." Proverbs 2:8,9

The real test of instruction comes when equity is needed in a person's life. Equity is the ability to make the right decision in a situation in which one has had no precedence. In a sense, each new experience he faces requires equity. All previous experiences and background provide the basis for his decision. The principles of Scripture, the living illustrations, guidelines, cautions and sense of the nature and character of God will enable him to make the right decision. Developing equity should be a parent's ultimate goal for his child during the short time he is growing up, before he must determine his life's course himself.

- "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

COMMUNICATING TO THE SPIRIT IN**WARNING THE CHILD**

- ☐ When the instruction given to a child is not followed, the second step in discipline is to properly warn the child. The basic purpose of warning is to clarify and re-emphasize the instruction.

- AVOID UNJUST PUNISHMENT.

Often a parent will make the mistake of immediately punishing a child who has not heeded his instruction. Many people can recall situations in which they were unjustly punished by a father or mother who acted on impulse before all the facts were known. To warn a child after instruction has been given will prevent these injustices.

• *"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it (draws conclusions before knowing the facts), it is folly and shame to him."
Proverbs 18:13*

A parent who abruptly corrects a child is assuming that he always effectively communicates his instruction to his child. It is not unusual to discover upon later investigation, that the instructions were not clear or the child was not convinced the parent meant it, because of previous inconsistencies.

- DON'T MAKE IT HARD TO OBEY.

For example, a parent may tell his child, "Don't let me catch you doing that again!" He means to communicate to the child that he is to stop doing what he was doing. But to the child it means, "Don't get caught!" The call to a meal may go unheeded if Dad, when he is doing something he feels is important, does not come immediately. If he watches the last inning of the ball game on television before coming to the table, it is easy to see why a child may be baffled by the parent's instruction. Scripture clearly warns against this type of impulsive dealing with our children:

• *"Fathers, don't over-correct your children or make it difficult for them to obey the commandment..."
Ephesians 6:4a(Phillips)*

● USE THE WARNING AS A MEANS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.

The parent who realizes that his goal is to communicate love to his child will not use the warning as a threat. One of the most valuable steps in the discipline process is to learn to see life from the child's point of view. The wise parent will not just give a warning. He uses the opportunity to correct himself and ask the child's forgiveness when he has failed to communicate the right instructions to the child.

● WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is not saying what I mean and understand, but STATING FACTS in such a way that the other person understands what I mean! This takes work!

● *"The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." Proverbs 16:23*

BASIC INSIGHTS

TO HELP THE CHILD OBEY THROUGH WARNING:

The intent of warning is not a prelude to punishment. It is the final step of instruction to determine whether the parent's instruction was clear of the child's disobedience was willful.

1. DOES THE CHILD UNDERSTAND THE THREE LEVELS OF DISCIPLINE?

Even at the age of 2 or 3 a child can understand that (1) you will tell him what to do; (2) if he doesn't obey, you will discuss his behavior with him; (3) if he continues to disobey you will punish him. If the child is older and these guidelines have not been followed, it will be important to acknowledge your past failure to be consistent and fair, and to explain the new policy of instruction, warning and correction.

2. IF DISOBEDIENCE IS REPEATED AFTER PUNISHMENT . . .

Do not go back to the instruction or warning level. Evaluation of the punishment may be needed but further punishment is necessary.

3. CONSISTENCY WILL MOTIVATE THE CHILD TO OBEY RATHER THAN DISOBEY WHEN WARNED.

When the child understands that you mean what you say and you will deal with disobedience as stated, it is amazing how the child is motivated to change his attitudes and behavior!

4. APPEALING TO HIS CONSCIENCE WILL HELP YOU EVALUATE WHETHER HIS DISOBEDIENCE WAS WILLFUL OR DUE TO A LACK OF COMMUNICATION ON THE PARENT'S PART.

The child who has been corrected in the past for misbehavior, will associate mental and physical pain with willful disobedience. This approval for right behavior consistent with the principles of God's Word, as well as the disapproval for the violation of them, has reinforced the child's conscience.

When you appeal to the child's conscience by asking, "What did you do?" "Did you disobey me?" or "Were you right in what you did?" his responses will enable you to discern if he was intentionally disobedient.

If you are convinced he was not aware of wrong-doing or disobedience, then you can conclude one or more of the following:

- **MY INSTRUCTION WAS NOT CLEAR.** This will require further instruction and clarification.
- **HE WAS BEING CHILDISH RATHER THAN REBELLIOUS.** It could be a result of childish forgetfulness.
- **I WAS EXPECTING MORE MATURITY FROM HIM THAN I SHOULD FOR HIS AGE.**
- **HE WAS REACTING TO ME PERSONALLY.** I have been inconsistent to him. He is reflecting my bad attitudes back to me. I may have violated his sense of fairness. Therefore, I need to ask his forgiveness and then repeat the instruction.

GUIDELINES FOR CORRECTION

• Scripture clearly emphasizes the importance of correcting a child when he has been disobedient. The following insights amplify the steps involved in properly correcting a child.

• "Discipline your son and he will give you happiness and peace of mind."
Proverbs 29:17

1. CORRECTION IS THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY BUT GOD IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY.

It is important for a child to realize that the parent is not the final authority in his life. This will be obvious to the child whose parent has applied the basic principles of instruction. If the child feels that the parent is the final authority and he is able to deceive the parent, he will anticipate escape from punishment.

It is essential for the child to internalize this concept and realize that God who sees and knows all is the One to whom he is ultimately responsible.

• Psalms 139:1-10

2. BEFORE CORRECTING THE CHILD, EVALUATE YOUR MOTIVE FOR CORRECTION CONSIDERING THE THREE BASIC OBJECTIVES WHICH GOD WANTS TO DEVELOP IN THE CHILD.

OBJECTIVES	UNDERLYING AND ULTIMATE BENEFIT
<p>1 <u>OBEDIENCE</u></p> <p>Is the child being disobedient to instruction from the parent? Is he being childish or rebellious? Colossians 3:20</p>	<p><u>FREEDOM</u></p> <p>→ A freedom develops in the child as he learns how to respond to authority.</p> <p>Break the child's will without breaking his spirit. This is a basic step in preparing the child to submit to God's authority as he gets older.</p>

<p>2</p> <p><u>RESPECT</u></p> <p>Is his behavior violating the rights of others? Does his attitude communicate an ingratitude or disregard for the worth of others? Exodus 20:12</p>	<p>➔</p> <p><u>SKILL IN RELATING TO PEOPLE</u></p> <p>His ability to get along with others and his success in future interpersonal relationships is directly related to his respect for others.</p>
<p>3</p> <p><u>RESPONSIBILITY</u></p> <p>Are the tasks and projects being followed through? Have I motivated the child to do the job by initially working with him (and making it enjoyable) and enabling him to sense achievement for having accomplished the task? Lamentations 3:27</p>	<p>➔</p> <p><u>SECURITY</u></p> <p>Irresponsibility produces insecurity. The child's future stability is dependent upon the development of basic skills and achievement related to practical every-day living. The parent will be able to visualize this achievement.</p>

3. DON'T EMBARRASS OR CORRECT THE CHILD IN FRONT OF OTHERS.

A child will become more concerned about what others are thinking than about his disobedience, if others are around.

"Public" correction will cause the child to become resentful and disillusioned. This will build "walls" between child and parent. He will feel the need to justify his behavior to those saw him being punished or blame the parents for their faults. This principle is emphasized in Matthew 18:15.

". . . if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother."

4. ESTABLISH HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OFFENSE.

This can be done by asking a direct question such as, "What should you have done?" or "What did you do?" If he can't tell you, it may be a clue that you didn't instruct and warn him properly.

It is important to ask in a non-accusatory manner. This will enable the child to sense a fairness in your attitude. There will be times when the child is not wrong.

If you ask, "Why did you do it?" he will tend to blame others or his circumstances.

If you ask, "Did you do it?" he will be prone to deny it. A child is ingenious at trying to avoid responsibility for his actions.

It is necessary to keep asking "What did you do?" if he avoids the question, until he answers it.

The problem of lying usually begins when the parent has allowed the child to avoid responsibility for misconduct.

5. VISUALIZE THE ULTIMATE BENEFITS OF CORRECTION.

When a child identifies his disobedience and pleadingly asks, "Are you going to spank me?" a parent is tempted not to follow through with the actual correction.

• *"If you refuse to discipline your son, it proves you don't love him; for if you love him you will be prompt to punish him." Proverbs 13:24
(Living Bible)*

If the parent loves the child, his primary concern is the development of the basic qualities and principles which are essential for his success. Correction must be communicated to the child as an essential means to develop these qualities.

For example:

When a child grabs a toy from another child and demands in anger, "Give it to me. It's mine!" the parent can conclude that the anger indicates unyielded personal rights as well as selfishness in being unwilling to share with other children. It is important that the child be made to give back the toy. He may refuse and not heed the parent's instruction. At that point it is important for the parent to re-state the instruction as a warning. If the child refuses, correction is necessary. The parent can visualize that through this correction the quality of meekness is being instilled in the child.

• AT WHAT AGE DO YOU BEGIN CORRECTION?

Correction begins when the child begins to resist the will of the parent. Generally, this is when the child begins to crawl around or reach for things that would be harmful to him or are valuable (such as lamps, cords, TV tuning knobs, china, etc.)

Pause before the pain.

6. COMMUNICATE SINCERE GRIEF FOR THE OFFENSE.

When the child has acknowledged the offense, a time of silence is effective in allowing the parent and child to reflect on what has been done. If he has been angry or upset, this pause will enable the parent to regain his composure and feel sincere grief for the disobedience. It also allows time to determine the most effective means of correction.

During this time the parent can inwardly pray that a broken will and genuine repentance will be the child's experience through this correction.

7. USE A NEUTRAL OBJECT FOR PHYSICAL CORRECTION.

Never give a child the idea that he is too old to be spanked. Scripture emphasizes the use of a rod rather than a hand to inflict the pain. The child will associate pain and punishment with the object used for correction. The hand that loves and cares should never be used to inflict pain.

● *"The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Proverbs 29:15*

Use Discipline until the will is broken.

8. THE LEAST AMOUNT OF CORRECTION NEEDED TO BREAK THE WILL.

Parents who fail to discipline their child instill the false idea that the child can have whatever he wants. Punishment causes a child to "come back to reality" and to develop a responsibility for his own behavior. Spanking a child is one way to cleanse a child's conscience.

● *"Punishment that hurts chases evil from the heart." Proverbs 20:30 (Living Bible)*
"Foolishness (rebellion) is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Proverbs 22:15

It is a sad situation if a child's will is not broken when he is punished. If it didn't hurt, the child may ignore the parent's correction. If the parent punishes in anger he communicates rejection of the child as an individual rather than correction for the offense. It is important that the spanking hurt!

The parent can discern when the child's will is broken by:

1. Being sensitive to the spirit of the child. When he stubbornly refuses to cry, or screams so loudly that others might think he is being beaten, he reveals an unbroken will. It will be necessary to spank the child until he cries, or until he cries softly.

2. Looking for an attitude of response and obedience to further instruction and guidance.

9. COMFORT THE CHILD AFTER CORRECTION.

When a parent has punished the child for his disobedience, it is important that the parent reassure the child of his love by being available to the child for conversation, affection, and attention.

A parent should not send a child away from his presence, since this can easily communicate rejection to the child. It is natural for a child to want attention, affection and reassurance.

The parent who administered the correction should be the first one to comfort the child!

10. ASSIST IN FURTHER RESTITUTION.

If others were offended in the situation, discuss the need to ask their forgiveness and make the necessary restitution. Correction involves not only the breaking of the will but getting the child to assume the responsibility for his actions. A child cannot get freedom from his guilt until he has cleared his conscience with all involved.

11. EVALUATE YOUR ATTITUDE AND YOUR CHILD'S RESPONSE TO THE CORRECTION.

A child is very sensitive to honesty, consistency and fairness. If the parent has wronged the child by a false accusation, anger, or rejection of him as a person rather than the wrong behavior, he should go to him at a later time when the emotions of the correction have subsided and ask his forgiveness.

● GENERAL **GUIDELINES:**

1. WHO SHOULD ADMINISTER CORRECTION?

When the father is home, he should normally administer the correction. If the disobedience is a violation of a family policy and the father was involved in establishing the guideline, he should handle the correction, even if he was not home at the time of the disobedience.

- The mother is delegated the responsibility of correction when the father is away from home. In addition, when the child's disobedience is directly related to instruction by the mother and the father is not related to the situation, the mother should normally administer the correction (even though the father is home.)

- The husband and wife should always support one another's correction. If there is disagreement, this should be discussed privately at a later time. This is important to prevent the child from playing one parent against the other.
- It is important that each parent help the child learn to respond rather than react to the other parent.

2. INTENTIONAL DISOBEDIENCE

Refute the false idea that intentional disobedience will go unpunished if the child apologizes. Many times a parent does not correct the child who has intentionally disobeyed because, when caught, the child apologizes. Apology becomes a means of manipulation and to avoid responsibility for disobedience. This practice is refuted in Hebrews 10:26 and II Samuel 24 where David willfully disobeyed God by numbering the children of Israel. Even though he repented, God punished him by three days of plague and the loss of 70,000 men.

3. A PERSON RELATES TO LIFE ON THE BASIS OF TWO MOTIVATIONS: WHAT WILL I GAIN? WHAT WILL I LOSE?

When the steps for correction fail to produce right responses from the child, there may be other basic needs than correction. The need for acceptance is more basic than the need for correction. If a child never receives his parent's full attention, except when he has misbehaved, he may subconsciously find acting up worth more than the risk of punishment. The solution is to demonstrate to the child that he is accepted by providing the personal interest and attention he needs.