

Shepherding A Child's Heart

Session 9 - Embracing Biblical Methods: Communication

Review:

1. Why do the methods that we use in parenting matter?
2. Why are some of the methods that we discussed last week attractive?
 - a. Bribery
 - b. Offering prizes
 - c. Yelling/Screaming
 - d. Emotionalism
 - e. Shaming (what will others think of you?)
 - f. Contracts
 - g. Time outs & grounding

Main Idea:

Our goals and our methods should be complementary rather than our methods working against our goals. Rich communication and discipline are held out to us in Proverbs as methods which work toward our goal of shepherding the hearts of children and helping them understand how to live under God's authority. We are going to spend a couple of weeks on communication before we then spend a couple of weeks on physical discipline.

Video (notes below)

1. Goals and methods should be complimentary

2. Life that is worth living should be lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ

3. Proverbs 23: instruction on rich, full communication and appropriate use of physical discipline

- a. See Proverbs 23:13-19, 22, 26
 - i. Physical discipline of children along with rich, sensitive communication
 - ii. We tend to separate these – the harsh disciplinarian vs the tender sensitive parent
 - iii. Proverbs 23 puts them together
- b. This passage describes rich communication that prohibits cold, tyrannical discipline
- c. Provides a context for honest, open communication in which the child:
 - i. Can feel known and understood
 - ii. Can even grow in the understanding of himself

4. Communication: dialogue, not monologue

- a. Communication is not just the ability to express ourselves
- b. Learn to talk *with* your children and not just talk *to* them

c. The finest art of communication

- i. Is *not* your ability to express your ideas
- ii. It *is* the ability to *understand your child*
- iii. Skilled communication enables you to help your children articulate their thoughts

d. We need to be people who are able to draw others out

- i. Learn to ask good qualitative questions that can't be answered by "yes" or "no."
- ii. We need to listen to what is being said
- iii. Also listen for what is not being said
- iv. Let your child know that you delight in them

e. Certain questions can be used to gain certain types of information

- i. "What?" questions reveal information
- ii. "How?" questions reveal process
- iii. "What did you want to accomplish?" questions reveal motivation
- iv. "Help me understand" questions also reveal motivation
- v. "How often?" or "where?" questions reveal patterns
- vi. Understand the value of multiple-choice questions

f. Parents need restraint to ask good questions, using pleasant words to promote instruction

5. When something has gone wrong

a. Focus on understanding your child

b. Your goal is to engage your child

- i. You want more than "what"
- ii. You want to understand "why" – focus on what is going on inside your child

c. The example of the new sneakers

- i. Focus on the explanation that shows what the child was thinking
- ii. Helps you see the hopes and struggles of your child's heart

6. Your good desire can be summarized in several ways

a. Your child's behavior reflects his heart

b. What is the abundance of the heart?

- c. Internal issues of the heart are more important than behavior
- d. You want to be able to look at the world through your child's eyes
 - i. This is a tremendous encouragement to your children
- e. You want to bring the encouragement of the gospel to your children
 - i. The incarnation of Christ is a wonderful model for us
 - ii. He lived in our world and he understands our struggles
 - iii. Christ is able to sympathize with our weaknesses
 - iv. Great encouragement in Hebrews 4

7. Two functions as parent

- a. Stand above your child as his authority
- b. Stand alongside your child as one who has experienced these same struggles

8. Various types of communication

- a. Our communication needs to be multi-faceted and richly textured
- b. 1 Thessalonians 5:14
 - i. Different types of communication for different circumstances
 - ii. We can wound our children with a rebuke, when instruction is what is necessary
- c. Types of communication (from Proverbs)
 - i. Encouragement
 - ii. Correction
 - iii. Rebuke
 - iv. Entreaty
 - v. Instruction
 - vi. Warning
 - vii. Teaching
 - viii. Prayer
- d. Your communication will take many forms
 - i. Subtle, rich nuances for each form
 - ii. This is necessary for them to understand God's ways and God's truth

Q&A

Reflection:

1. Why is rich communication vital in shepherding a child's heart in a Godward direction?
2. In light of the prior question, why do we lose sight of the value of rich communication?
3. What does rich communication communicate to those with whom we interact, whether children or others?
4. What does Tedd Tripp mean when he says the finest art of communication is *not* the ability to express your ideas, it *is* the ability to *understand your child*?
5. How is the incarnation a great model for parents in communication?
6. Can you identify types of communication in which you can grow? Do you tend to always strike the same notes in your communication or is there a variety that fits the occasion?