

-Seminar-

YOUR MARRIAGE & FAMILY MATTERS

Dave & Carol Sue Merkh



Jan. 12 & 13, 2024

[fellowship]

Schedule

Friday, January 12

6:45 pm	Arrive and Check in
7 pm	Your Family Matters (Part 1)
7:55 – 8:10	Break
8:10	Your Family Matters (Part 2)
9:00 pm	Dismiss/pick up kids

Saturday, January 13

8:45 am	Arrive and Check in
9 am	Your Children (and Grandchildren) Matter (Part 1)
9:55-10:10	Break
10:10	Your Children (and Grandchildren) Matter (Part 2)
11:00-11:10	Break
11:10	Your Children (and Grandchildren) Matter (Part 3) Action Points
12:00 pm	Dismiss/pick up kids

Your Family Matters: Part 1

Introduction:

Psalm 11.3

Psalm 127.1

The sad reality:

Why the Family is Important

1. The family is God's chosen means for reflecting and reproducing the image of a Triune God (Gn 1.26-28).

a. Reflecting God's image as a couple (Gn 1.26,27)

- unity in diversity
- mutual commitment
- indissoluble covenant
- intimacy
- mutuality
- marital roles
- joint rulership

Illustration: Marriage and the moon...

Application: "Sofa Time"

b. Reproducing God's image in the children (Gn 1.28)

The first command in biblical order is a Great Commission!

2. The family is the primary biblical metaphor for Christ and the Church (Eph 5.22-33; Rev 19.1-8; 21.1-4; 22.17)

In what ways is the Church a family?

- God is our FATHER
- Jesus is the BRIDEGROOM and the Church is the BRIDE
- Spiritual leaders are like PARENTS
- Other believers are our BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Application: Anything that threatens the unity of the couple is an aberration of God's image!

- Parents and in-laws
- 3rd party competitors
- Role reversal
- Unresolved anger and bitterness (Eph 4.26)
- Child-centered parenting

Biblical marriage is HOLY GROUND! Each for the other and both for God!

Why The Family Matters: Part 2

Introduction:

The family: Land of fire and ice!

There are no perfect families! (Lm 3.21-23)

The need for balance! (Two extremes)

Why does the family matter? (cont.)

3. The home is the place where true spiritual revival is seen.

The home: Where we are who we are! (Eph 5.18-6.9 and Col 3.16-4.1)

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to remake families in the image of God!

If the Spirit controls us, the results will inevitably be seen in our homes!

Ephesians 5.18-6.9 Spirit-filling	Colossians 3.16-4.1 Word-Indwelling
Mutual edification	Mutual edification
Worship	Worship
Gratitude	Gratitude
Mutual submission	Mutual submission
LIFE AT HOME -wives -husbands -children -parents -servants -masters	LIFE AT HOME -wives -husbands -children -parents -servants -masters

The Gospel changes everything!

Application: The Family Team

4. The family is a primary focus of spiritual warfare (Eph 5.18-6.20)

The family has been under attack since Genesis 3.

The serpent injected the venom of sin into the veins of the human race...

Satan tries to disfigure God's image as reflected in mankind and the family.

Some key passages:

- Eph 6.12, 13
- 1 Tm 4.1-3
- Titus 1.10,11; (cf 2 Tm 3.1-7)

Application: Marital Conflict and the Blame Game

5. The home is God's chosen means for discipling the next generation.

Our goal is to reach our children's heart! (Pv 23.26; Job 1.5; Eph 6.4)

Your Children and Grandchildren Matter: Part 1

Introduction:

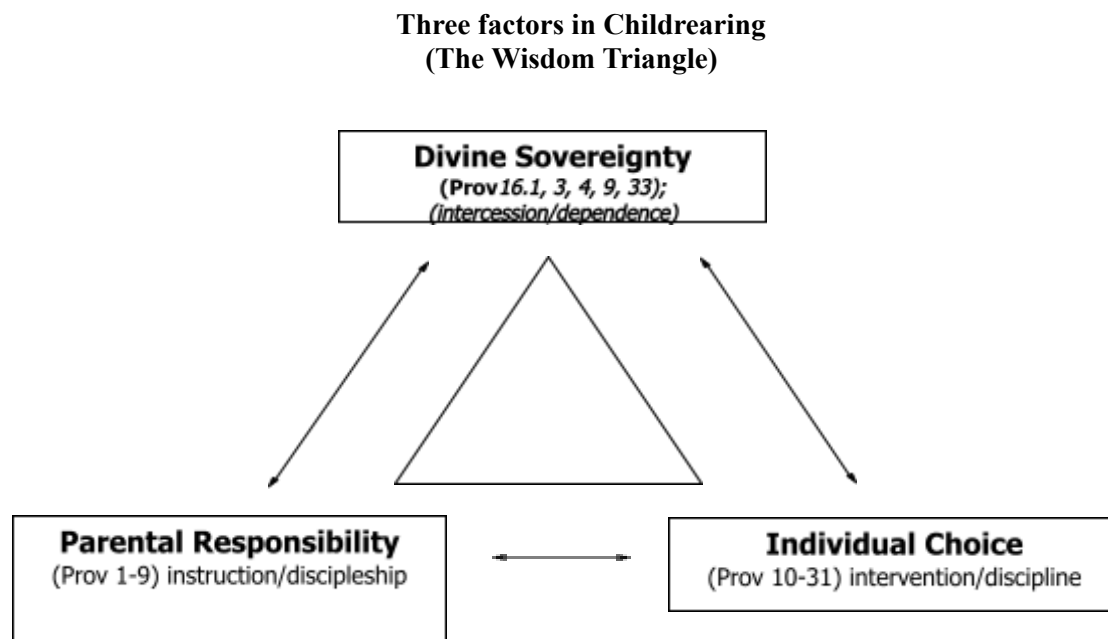
Parents and children are out of control and often... lost when it comes to childrearing.

The focus is on the child's HEART (Prov 4.23; 23.26)

The goal is NOT:

- to control everything the child does, speaks and thinks (your child is not a robot)
- to condition your child's behavior (your child is not a hamster)
- to inflate the self-image and self-esteem of the child (your child is not an "empty tank")
- to avoid conflict (your child is not a monster)
- to treat your child as though he or she were the center of all wisdom (your child is not your teacher)

Human wisdom is in constant conflict with divine wisdom... whose voice will we hear? (Prov 4.18,19; Jms 3.13-17)



An Illustration: Sampson (Judges 13)

1. INTERCESSION (dependence)

Job 1.1-5

Four Suggestions for Parental Intercession:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Your Children and Grandchildren Matter: Part 2

Introduction:

- Unbalanced perspectives on childrearing...
- Renewing our perspective: Psalm 127.3-5

2. INSTRUCTION (discipleship)

INTENTIONAL and PROACTIVE parenting... like teaching a child to ride a bike.

A. Children are born in sin and must be won to Jesus

Prov 22.15

Ps 51.5

Ps 58.3-5

B. God calls parents to redeem His image in their children.

Eph 6.4

Exporting what we import!

C. The goal is to reach the child's HEART

Prov 20.5

Hb 4.12,13

How do we reach the heart? (Prov 23.26, 4.23)

1. Maintain the high standard of holiness which God requires (Mt 5.48)

Biblical obedience is:

- a) IMMEDIATE (Nm 14.6-9, 39-45)
- b) COMPLETE (1 Sm 15.9-11, 22; Nm 20.11-13)
- c) INTERNAL (Prov 4.23; Is 29.13,15; Mt 15.7-9; Acts 7.39)

2. Point to the child's inability to achieve this standard (just like the parents).

3. Point to Christ as the only One capable of meeting the standard, and explain what He has done for us (2 Cor 5.21)

The Danger: Spiritual Amnesia

Vaccinating our children against spiritual amnesia: Deuteronomy 6.4-9

1. Formal Instruction

Suggestions for family instruction

2. Informal Instruction

Ideas for informal instruction:

3. Symbolic Instruction

Ps 145.4-7

Ideas for symbolic instruction: Memorials of God's faithfulness

Biblical examples:

Contemporary examples:

Practical examples:

**“God’s faithfulness in the PAST
is our motivation in the PRESENT
to press on toward the FUTURE!”**

Your Children and Grandchildren Matter: Part 3

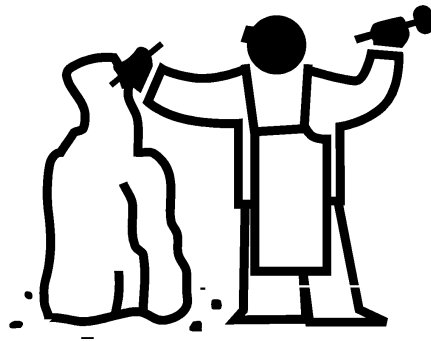
Introduction

-The importance of limits...

3. INTERVENTION (Discipline)

Ephesians 6.4

A. Biblical discipline has as its goal to sculpt the image of Christ in our child (Hb 12.10,11)



B. The Danger: Spiritual Leprosy

Qualification(s):

See: "Manifest on Child Discipline"

C. The Texts

Prov 13.24

Prov 19.18, 19

Prov 22.15

Prov 23.13,14

Prov 29.15

A biblical compass for discipline

1. Discipline is a proof of love (Prov. 3:11,12; cf. Heb. 12:5-11)
2. Discipline saves from premature death (Prov. 19:18; 23:13,14)
3. Discipline helps avoid sin (Prov. 19:19)
4. Discipline exposes the heart and leads to Christ (Prov. 22:15)
5. Discipline gives wisdom (Prov. 29:15)
6. Discipline gives joy and rest (Prov. 29:17)

The Funnel of Parental Authority



The World's Standard: The Open Funnel

Prov. 29:17



God's Standard: The Closed Funnel

Conclusion

“(It seems like...) We Did Everything Wrong... What now?”

Common Doubts

- Why didn't anyone share this with me BEFORE?
- Is it too late?
- (It feels like) We did everything wrong... What now?

Lamentations 3:19-21

The Big Idea

God's mercy transforms imperfect families
into instruments of His grace
in order to bless others.

1. **All have sinned and come short of God's glory (Rm 3:23; 1 Jn 1:8)**

-Sinners sin... and sin HURTS!

2. **God's grace is able to overcome our sin – and the sin of others against us (Rm 5.20; Gn 50.20)**

-God can restore what the locusts devoured! (Joel 2.12,13,15,18, 25)

-God can use difficult experiences from our past to console others in the present (2 Cor 1.3-6)

3. **Where we have failed, we must humble ourselves before God, ask forgiveness of others (where possible) and march forward (Prov 28.13).**

-James 4.6,7

Action Points

As a result of this seminar, the following are two PRINCIPLES (concepts) which were important to me:

1)

2)

As a result of this seminar and by God's grace, I intend to implement the following practices in my FAMILY:

1)

2)

Our Contacts and Resources

Books: Amazon Kindle: (Spanish, English, Portuguese)

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Merkh&rh=n%3A154606011&ref=nb_sb_noss

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Manifesto on Child Discipline

Dave and Carol Sue Merkh

Faced with great controversy involving issues regarding the discipline of children, we clarify our understanding of the subject in light of the Word of God.

The Current Situation

We recognize, regret and repudiate the sad reality of domestic violence, mistreatment of children and adolescents, sexual abuse, abandonment and neglect.

*We understand that human government has a God-given responsibility to protect its citizens, including children; we understand the need for laws inhibiting violence, abuse etc.

*At the same time, we see an unfortunate and widespread rejection of healthy discipline practices, including corporal ones, on the part of society in general and the church in particular.

*We understand that part of this rejection is due to mistaken concepts about biblical discipline and the dissemination of humanistic concepts contrary to the Scriptures.

*We affirm the need for a balanced, wise, and practical biblical perspective on child discipline.

Principal Biblical Texts

Below, we present some of the main biblical texts that guide us in the issue of disciplining children. Although the great emphasis of the Word of God falls on the DISCIPLESHIP of children, the following texts show the importance of DISCIPLINE in the educational process at home.

*My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
or be weary of his reproof,
¹² for the LORD reproves him whom he loves,
as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov 3.11,12)*

*Whoever spares the rod hates his son,
but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. (Prov 13.24)*

*Discipline your son, for there is hope;
do not set your heart on putting him to death.
(Prov 19.18)*

*A man of great wrath will pay the penalty, [lit. = "fine"]
for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again. (Prov 19.19)*

*Blows that wound cleanse away evil;
strokes make clean the innermost parts. (Prov 20.30)*

*Do not withhold discipline from a child;
if you strike him with a rod, he will not die.
¹⁴ If you strike him with the rod,
you will save his soul from Sheol. (Prov 23.13,14)*

*Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,
but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. (Prov 22.15)*

*The rod and reproof give wisdom,
but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.
¹⁶ When the wicked increase, transgression increases,
but the righteous will look upon their downfall.
¹⁷ Discipline your son, and he will give you rest;
he will give delight to your heart. (Prov 29.15, 17)*

*Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily,
the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. (Eccl 8.11)*

*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,
but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph 6.4)*

*And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?
“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor be weary when reproved by him.
6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives.”*

7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hb 12.5-11)

Creed

In light of the biblical texts above and in the face of a society hostile to the idea of discipline in most of its forms, we affirm what we believe in the light of the Scriptures about discipline in the context of the home.

We believe...

*That the discipline of sin is one of the main tools that God uses to expose the sinful nature of human beings and lead them to salvation in Christ Jesus (Prov 22.15; Prov 20.30).

*That discipline is necessary due to the sinful nature of EVERY child; the child is not born as a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) that only needs positive training; the child needs wisdom that comes, in part, from proactive and corrective parental education (Prov 22.15; Ps 51.5; Ps 58.3-5).

*That biblical discipline has the main effect of granting wisdom to the child – that is, of pointing out and directing the child “in the way he should go” (Prov 22.6) of giving him the maturity of a long-range perspective, aiming for well-being and success from the divine perspective (Prov 29.15).

*That God ordained parents as the main instruments of discipline in their children's lives (Prov 13.24; Eph 6.4).

*That a world that “lies in the Evil One” (1 John 5:19) suffers from satanic attacks to deceive parents and deprive them of the tool of discipline which exposes the child’s heart and leads him or her to Christ (2 Tim 3:1-5).

*That the lack of discipline leads to impunity and, eventually, the destruction of society (Eccl 8.11).

*That discipline always aims at restoration and never revenge or punishment (Prov 29.15,17; Mt 18.15-20).

*That the administration of corporal discipline, like other forms of discipline, is restricted to those who will use it in an appropriate way, without hurting, injuring or harming the person being disciplined but rather benefiting them (Prov 23.13,14).

*That pain, an inherent and essential part of the concept of “discipline”, must be administered by responsible parents in a way consistent with biblical standards and can be a great blessing in the life of the disciplined person (Prov 29.15).

*That biblical discipline must be coherent, punctual (immediately after the offense), restorative and diligent (Prov 13.24).

*That biblical discipline must be IN PRIVATE; its purpose is not to shame the child, much less to expose him in a public way.

*That a lack of discipline on the part of parents can be a sign of laziness, indifference, ignorance or self-centeredness (Prov 3.11,12; 13.24).

*That the lack of discipline can culminate in the premature death of the child and even his spiritual death (Prov 19.18; 23.13,14).

*That the decadence that prevails in today's world, together with the widespread disobedience to biblical standards of childrearing, means that many parents will have erroneous concepts regarding the practice of discipline and especially in the exercise of corporal discipline; therefore, careful training and mentoring is necessary not only regarding forms of biblical discipline but also on principles of family discipleship.

*That corporal discipline must be exercised as a priority while the child has not yet developed the capacity for abstract reasoning to be able to associate their actions with consequences, in other words, during the first years of life.

*That all forms of discipline involve some type of deprivation or pain that is for the good of the person being disciplined.

*That corporal discipline should be administered by parents, immediately after the offense (and before they themselves become irritated, irate or out of control), through a neutral, flexible and thin instrument called a “rod” in Scripture, applied to the child's bottom (and not on other areas where bodily injury could occur) to alert the child to the danger they are in because of their sin.

*That other forms of disciplinary measures have biblical support, especially after the development of the child's ability to associate sin with its consequences (abstract reasoning); these methods include:

- warning (see Gn 4.6, 7);
- verbal admonition (Eph 6.4);
- fines and natural consequences (Prov 19.19);
- the loss of privileges (see Gn 3.22-24);
- work (Gn 3.17-19)
- restitution (Lc 19.8, cp Lv 6.2-5; Nm 5.5-7; Ex 22.9).

Summary of Principles of Discipline in Proverbs

We can summarize the biblical principles of discipline as follows:

- *Discipline is an expression of love.
- *Discipline must be administered with diligence and consistently.
- *Discipline aims at restoration and correction, not punishment.
- *Discipline follows instruction.
- *Discipline must be administered with the rod in the first years of life and with other methods later.
- *Discipline is necessary because of the child's sinful nature.
- *Correct corporal discipline will not harm the child.
- *Discipline can lead a child to faith.
- *Discipline leads to a peaceful and successful life for the child and parents.

The Discipline Process

The Bible does not outline the specific steps that biblical discipline must follow. But we want to suggest elements that can and should be part, if not in every case of discipline, at least in many occasions in which correction becomes necessary.

1. Teach limits with clear orders and prohibitions, in a normal tone of voice and without threats. ("Threat" means a promised consequence that the parents do not intend to fulfill.) Warning the child about consequences that he can expect if he continues in disobedience does not constitute a threat. See Gn 2.16,17).
2. Wait for a verbal response from the child ("Yes, Mom" or "Yes, Dad") after giving an order. Demand biblical obedience, that is, immediate, entire (complete) and internal.
3. After the offense, calmly verify whether there was indeed disobedience and clarify the nature of the offense with the child, in private. Work on the root cause of sin and not just the behavior (e.g. selfishness, greed, hatred etc.). This is a good opportunity to point to the Person and work of Jesus Christ as a solution to the problem of sin in us.
4. Explain the consequences of sin. As far as possible, these consequences should be directly linked to the offense, so that the child associates the "crime" with the punishment. When this is not possible, parents must provide clear explanations of the reason for the discipline.
5. Administer discipline appropriately, without shouting, anger or excess.
6. Verify that the child accepts discipline without grumbling, kicking or resisting. Allow her to cry, but express her remorse or sadness in a non-scandalous way.
7. Expect a request for forgiveness (not "sorry"; parents will have to teach the difference between saying "I'm sorry" and "Will you forgive me?") Forgiveness is asked for purposeful and sinful offenses; "I'm sorry" is for accidents.) They must also teach the importance of repentance and rebuilding relationships. True repentance will be accompanied by restitution for the damage caused by disobedience. Insist that your child make fair restitution for the damage to time, property, and reputation he may have caused.
8. Express your love for your child in appropriate ways (a hug, time together etc.).
9. Pray with your child.

10. Forget the offense and restore your fellowship.

Suggestions

Here are additional practical suggestions for parents when disciplining their children:

- * Clearly teach limits.
- * Distinguish between irresponsibility (childishness) and rebellion (sin).
- * Discipline rebellion.
- * Teach when there is irresponsibility.
- * Demonstrate love and grace.
- * Do not allow him to resist the rod, cry scandalously etc.
- * Do not allow him to respond negatively when being disciplined.
- * Discipline attitudes and not just actions.
- * Be open to the explanations she gives, as long as they are done respectfully.
- * See that he knows how to accept correction or always must have the last word.
- * Learn to ask for forgiveness yourself, and accept correction when necessary.