

All Children Need Discipline

Children need most of all to be loved and to know it (Pr 13:24). Discipline should begin when the child is in the cradle. Even an infant knows whether or not he can manipulate his parents. This is actually a spiritual matter at any age, even in infancy, which must be dealt with even in babyhood (not corporally). So if the child can manipulate the parent, then the evil one is manipulating the child and the parents. If the child can, he will. The baby begins subconsciously but spiritually to discern that crying or holding his breath or being a feeding problem will make him the star attraction in the family (a Satanic principle). This calls for earnest prayer over the child or infant. So the baby will cry, hold his breath, or be a feeding problem, and the result will be to make his parents turn their love away from their child and become irritated at his behavior.

Since you, the parents, have been commissioned to parent, don't be afraid to be in authority. You are commanded by the Word to raise up the child given to your command. Children need to find out who the boss is — the stronger, wiser one in the family. When the situation demands it, stand up, take your stand, and say, *NO, you cannot go, you cannot have it...* Your child may protest bitterly, but deep down he will be pleased that you love him enough to risk his wrath. This is another spiritual *knowing*, naturally given to human beings and animals as well, so they will start to know who the boss is. A child begins to understand that you have greater strength and wisdom to protect him against his own folly.

A pampered child who has everything done for him, everything given to him, nothing required of him, and is shielded from suffering is a deprived child — deprived of the essential nature of the human being instilled in him by loving parents (Pr 13:24). It is like serving a diet without the essential nourishment, vitamins, and minerals. He will show signs of nutritional deficiency.

Parents who have no taboos¹ make no demands, require no politeness, no conformity, set no firm rules or limits, and are parents who hate their child. Their family home is an unhealthy place for children to be born into — a breeding ground for rebellion.

A child's human nature and character needs structure.² It starts with external controls such that a child will take them into himself to build his internal structure, which allows growth to proceed upward and forward to adulthood.

A parent who tries to please his child by giving in to his whims, and expects nothing from him, ends up with a child who pleases no one but himself, and who is earmarked for the second death (Pr 19:18; 23:13). In the end, the child will blame his parents when trouble starts in his character. His whole pattern of life will be that he always sees just how far he can go.

So when discipline is needed it must be administered promptly, because a sentence against disobedience or an evil deed, if not executed promptly, is setting his little heart to continue to do evil (Ecc 8:11).

Pr 20:20 — How many of our children are now in this deep darkness? It is as when a lamp is put out, for lack of proper love on the parents' part (Rev 2:4-5).

So we dedicate our children, presenting them to our Father who commissions us to raise them for His purpose and glory. But this takes constant prayer to protect them from the evil one (Mt 6:13). They are protected as much as we pray for them to be. But first they must be dedicated to His purpose. So lay your hand on your child and pray for his protection. This is part of Pr 22:6,15.

¹ Taboo — *n.* a social or religious custom placing prohibition or restriction on a particular thing or person; *adj.* prohibited or restricted by social custom; *v.* place under such prohibition or restraint.

² Structure — the arrangement of all of the parts of the whole (as the five aspects of their personality).