

Conversation Starters

- What was your family life like growing up?
- How did authority and discipline take place?

Discuss

One of the most important aspects of family life is the establishment of and respect for authority. The Bible often speaks of establishing it and using discipline as a means to do so. Discipline is important because, at its best, discipline is about shaping character which then leads to desired behavior. It helps correct a life course to giving honor and respect for authority in the home and everywhere else.

"Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. 'Honor your father and mother.' This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, 'things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.' Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord." (Ephesians 6:1-4, NLT)

- What has been your experience with authority and discipline?
- Have you thought about discipline for how it shapes character, rather than behavior alone?
- What kind of character do you want your children to have?

Discipline is important when there is willful disobedience; not at moments of childish irresponsibility. Willful disobedience reveals a disregard and dishonor towards authority, not just in the home, but everywhere else in life. So this is the time to correct, and it is done out of love for the child, not anger or frustration. Loving a child enough to discipline will lead to respect for authority and stronger relationships within the family, and will carry on outside of the family as well.

"A refusal to correct is a refusal to love; love your children by disciplining them." (Proverbs 13:24, Msg)

"Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul." (Proverbs 29:17, NIV)

- Can you distinguish the difference between willful disobedience and childish irresponsibility?
- How can you remind yourself about disciplining out of love rather than anger?
- What affect can you see discipline having both in and outside of the home?

Discipline can take many forms, and the Bible does mention the importance of physical discipline. It does not always need to be physical, and certainly never harsh or abusive, but it needs to be an option for occasional use. And it's important to do when they are young because that is when children are most impressionable. Discipline must be given then, and must also be coupled with a teaching moment for character development; to help a child understand what was done, why it was wrong and why it matters. Discipline without instruction does not end up serving its purpose.

"Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them." (Proverbs 13:24, NLT)

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6, NIV)

- Do you have a plan for how to discipline?
- Do you have instructions to go with a plan for discipline?
- Do you have a firm understanding of why you discipline?

Next Steps

One of the most important things we can do when it comes to authority and how we pass along the respect of it in our children is to enforce and model it ourselves. We need to take the lead, and particularly the male needs to own it. How are you enforcing and modeling respect for authority to those you are subordinate to?

Intentional Parenting (Rocky River)

When: Every Thursday, from 01/31/2019 to 03/07/2019, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Register: <https://www.mecklenburg.org/event/1206684-2019-02-07-intentional-parenting-rocky-river/>

"Doing Family" Discussion Group (Lake Norman)

When: Every Thursday, from 02/07/2019 to 02/28/2019, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Location: Lake Norman Campus, 170 Joe Knox Avenue, Mooresville, NC US 28117

Register: <https://www.mecklenburg.org/event/1284387-2019-02-07-doing-family-discussion-group-lake-norman/>

Further Reflection

See Romans 13:1-2,7; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:1,4-5; Prov. 13:24; 29:17; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15.

Pray

God, thank you for your instructions on how to raise up a respect for authority in the lives of our children and in our own lives. Help us to grow in our respect for those in authority around us and grow in our understanding and application of passing that on to the generation behind us.