

**Explanatory Notes:****RAISING CHILDREN WITH THE WISDOM OF CHRIST****Series title:** Raising Children with the Wisdom of Christ**Topic:** Raising Children**Table of Contents:**

Message 1: Love and Understand Your Child	page 1
Message 2: Discipline that Heals, Not Harms	page 5
Message 3: What Every Parent Needs	page 9
Message Outline, Psalm 145	page 11

---

**Message #1: LOVE AND UNDERSTAND YOUR CHILD****Bible Verses:** Various. See below and margin.

Being a mother or a father is a large responsibility. It can be an overwhelming and intimidating challenge! God has given us the responsibility for the care and nurture of another person. This person depends on us for everything when he or she is born. And our responsibility lasts a lifetime.

And even though the responsibility of raising a child is a great one, many people have very little training or preparation for it. Babies do not come with an instruction booklet that tells us how to be good parents! A big task, little preparation. Isn't that strange?

The Bible doesn't give us many detailed instructions about raising children. But the Bible tells us that God is the Father of everyone who believes in Jesus.\* So we can see what a good parent looks like by seeing how God acts as a parent.\*\* When we look at God's fatherly care for his children, three important truths come to our attention.

\*John 1:12, Romans 8:14-17,  
1 John 3:1.

\*\*At the end of this series is an outline for another message on God's example as a Father.

**1. God listens to his children. We who are parents should listen carefully to our children.**

Often we do not give our children the attention they need. We are tired. We are busy. We are angry. Our children want to talk to us but we say things like, “Can’t you see I’m busy?” or “Not now. Ask me later.” We treat their needs and questions as unimportant.

This is not how God treats his children. The Bible tells us we may always approach God in prayer. Like a loving father, he listens to our prayers. Here is what the Bible says:

*Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.*

1 Peter 5:7, NLT

*I love the LORD because he hears*

*and answers my prayers.  
Because he bends down and listens,  
I will pray as long as I have breath!*

Psalm 116:1-2, NLT

God takes time to listen to us, his children. He is not too busy to stop and pay attention to our words. If we want to love our children as God loves them, we need to give them our time and attention.

**2. God understands his children. We who are parents should try to understand our children.**

An important part of paying attention to our children is understanding each of them. The Bible says that God, our heavenly Father, knows each of us very well. He knows what we are like, and he knows our needs. Here is what the Bible says about God’s understanding of us:

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body  
and knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!  
Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well know  
it.  
You watched me as I was being formed in utter*

*seclusion,  
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.  
You saw me before I was born.  
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.  
Every moment was laid out before a single day had  
passed.*

Psalm 139:13-16, NLT

God made each of our children unique (one-of-a-kind). The way we raise each child will be different because each of them have different **temperaments\*\*** and personalities:

- One child may be very active; another may be peaceful.
- One may be easily distracted; another can pay attention longer.
- One may have loud, expressive responses; another may be quiet.
- One may have difficulty adapting to new situations; another may adapt quickly.
- One may be persistent and stubborn; another may become discouraged easily.
- One may be positive and cheerful; another may be negative and quick to complain.

We can't change the different temperaments of our children. But we can understand how God made each of them different. The better we understand them, the better we will be able to predict their behavior and guide them to to control their temperaments and use them for good.

Mothers and fathers, how well do you know each of your children? Don't treat your children as if they were alike. Don't try to force one child to become more like another child. Appreciate the special way God made each of your children. Help each of them to become the person God intends them to be. Love them for who they are. In this way, you will be more like God, who understands and loves each of us.

### **3. God loves his children and meets their needs. We should love our children in this way.**

Here are some words of the Lord Jesus about God the Father:

**\*\*What do the words 'temperament,' 'personality,' and 'character' mean? How are they related?**

**1. Personality is the kind of person we are.** For example, I am a quiet, patient person. I'm not good at sports (athletics). I like to make jokes. I get sad quickly. These truths are all part of who I am. They are part of my personality.

**2. Temperament is the part of the personality and nature that we are born with.** I was born with certain tendencies or inclinations that I can control, but I can't change. I have always been able to concentrate without being easily distracted. I have always been hesitant to try new activities. I am not impulsive or eager. These are parts of the temperament with which I was born.

**3. Character is the sum of the moral habits we develop throughout our lives.** These habits include virtues (good behaviors and attitudes) and vices (bad behaviors and attitudes). I have made an effort to work hard and do a good job when I am working. But over the years I have also acquired the bad habit of doing easy tasks first, and avoiding more difficult

*Your eye is a lamp for your body. A pure eye lets sunshine into your soul. But an evil eye shuts out the light and plunges you into darkness. If the light you think you have is really darkness, how deep that darkness will be!*

Matthew 6:32-33, NLT

We saw how each of our children has a different temperament. It is also true that each of them has different needs. One child may need more freedom. Another child may need more discipline and control.

God knows each of our needs. He promises in his love and wisdom to meet our needs. In the same way, we should try to understand and meet the needs of our children.

Counselors have found that there are **five principal ways parents show love to their children**. These are:

1. Physical touches (hugs, kisses, pats on the back)
2. Words of affirmation (telling our children that they are special and that we love them)
3. Time and attention (spending time with our child, and giving him or her our undivided attention)
4. Gifts (what we give our child)
5. Acts of kindness (special favors we do for our children)

[This information is taken from *The Five Love Languages of Children* by Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell. *Some cultures may have special rules and attitudes about parents touching children and children touching parents. Adjust your message to reflect the manners of your culture.*]

All children need each of these five kinds of love from their parents. But each child needs one of these kinds of love more than he needs the others. One child may need more kind words, while another may need more time and attention.

Do you know what expressions of love each of your children desires most? If you don't know, watch your children for awhile. Listen to them. See how they respond

tasks because I do not want to do them yet. These are good and bad parts of my character.

**4. Our personality is the combination of the temperament with which we were born and the character we create from our temperaments.** Who we are includes the traits we have since birth and the way we use those traits to form good or bad habits.

**5. We cannot change our temperaments, but we can change our character.** If we are by nature quiet people, we cannot simply choose to become loud, active people. We will always have the temperaments we were born with. All we can do is control our temperaments by developing good habits.

But we can choose whether our character will be good or bad. We can develop good habits or we can form bad ones. We can decide whether we will be persons with noble, admirable characters or evil, unpleasant characters.

What is important to God is not what temperament we have but how well we control it and use it for good.

Producers: How does your language distinguish between the traits we are born with and the persons we become by our choices and habits?

What illustrations can you use to illustrate the difference?

---

to the love you give them. Then you will know what they need most. Then give them the love they need. In this way you can imitate your Father in heaven, who loves you, knows your every need, and promises to meet your needs.

One more thing: **God's love is unconditional.** That means his love for us doesn't depend on how well we please him. He always loves us, even when he is angry with us. If we want to love our children with the kind of love God has for us, we won't withhold our love from them when they misbehave. We will love them at all times. Yes, we will discipline our children and scold them when they are disobedient. But we will let them know that we love them very much. We will control our anger and disappointment. We will be firm yet loving at the same time.

[Prayer]

---

## **Message #2: DISCIPLINE THAT HEALS, NOT HARMS**

### **Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21, various Proverbs**

One of the hardest parts of being a parent is disciplining and training our children. Many parents make common mistakes regarding discipline:

- **Some parents are overly permissive—they do not discipline their children as much as they should.** They fear that discipline will hurt their children and make them unhappy. They want their children to always like them. They think that if they are too strict, their children will dislike them. Their children soon learn that if they whine or complain, they can manipulate their parents and then do whatever they wish. Children who are treated this way do not learn the very important value of self-control.
- Other parents discipline their children severely. Some parents scream at their children, insult them and tell them they are worthless.\*\* Some parents kick their children or beat them with belts, sticks or their fists. Their children grow up feeling unloved and worthless.

**\*\*Below are some of the harmful things parents say to children.** These words make children feel small and insignificant. Children often avoid difficult activities if their parents convince them they can't do anything well. They feel sad and angry if we make them

Many of them are angry and bitter. Such children often rebel and reject their parents. They shock their parents with bad behavior.

What is the secret to successful discipline? The Bible helps us find a balance between the extremes. Here is the Bible's instruction concerning the discipline of children:

*And now a word to you fathers. Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.*

Ephesians 6:4, NLT

**1. On the one hand, the Bible tells us to discipline our children firmly.** It says we should "bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord." We should not be overly permissive. The Bible says it is cruel to deprive our children of discipline. Listen to these sayings from the Bible's book of Proverbs:

*If you love your children,  
you will correct them;  
if you don't love them,  
you won't correct them.*

Proverbs 13:24, CEV

*Correct your children  
before it's too late;  
if you don't punish them,  
you are destroying them.*

Proverbs 19:18, CEV

*Don't fail to correct  
your children.  
You won't kill them  
by being firm,  
and it may even  
save their lives.*

Proverbs 23:13-14, CEV

think we don't love them. The following material is an adaptation of Charles E. Schaefer's "Words That Hurt," accessed online at: <http://familyfn.go.com/raisingkids/child/skills/feature/dony108scwords/dony108scwords.html>

#### **1. Name-calling:**

- You are stupid / foolish.
- You are a bad boy.
- You are clumsy.

**Solution:** It is better to focus on the behavior, not on the person. For example, instead of "You are clumsy," say, "Please pick up what you dropped."

#### **2. Rejection:**

- I wish you were never born.
- I don't love you.

#### **Solution:**

These are words we say in anger, but we don't mean them. Let your children know you love them. Show them and tell them every day!

#### **3. Negative comments:**

- You will never be successful. (English phrase: "You'll never amount to anything.")
- You will probably end up in jail.

**Problem:** Children tend to live up to what we believe and say about them.

**Solution:** Praise them for their talents and positive qualities. Show them what good people they can become if they try. Do not give up hope in the power of God to change them.

#### **4. Blaming a child for the actions of others (scape-**

God is our model of a Father who disciplines his children with both love and firmness:

*“The Lord corrects the people he loves and disciplines those he calls his own.”*

*Be patient when you are being corrected! This is how God treats his children. Don't all parents correct their children? God corrects all of his children, and if he doesn't correct you, then you don't really belong to him. Our earthly fathers correct us, and we still respect them. Isn't it even better to be given true life by letting our spiritual Father correct us?*

*Our human fathers correct us for a short time, and they do it as they think best. But God corrects us for our own good, because he wants us to be holy, as he is. It is never fun to be corrected. In fact, at the time it is always painful. But if we learn to obey by being corrected, we will do right and live at peace.*

Hebrews 12:6-11, CEV

So the Bible tells us to discipline our children, and it tells all of us to accept the discipline we receive from our parents and God.

**2. But the Bible also tells us not to provoke our children to anger by the way we treat them.** Just because we are the parents of our children does not mean we may treat them any way we wish. When we treat our children in an unkind or unfair manner, we often drive them to anger, exasperation and resentment. They are right to be angry at us if we are too harsh and mistreat them. The Bible says we must bring them up in the discipline and instruction that the Lord approves. This kind of discipline forbids things like:

- physical or verbal abuse
- excessively severe discipline
- unreasonable demands
- unfairness
- constant nagging and condemnation
- humiliating a child in front of others
- lack of sensitivity to a child's needs

**goating):**

- You make me angry!
- You made your mother lose her temper!

**Solution:** Each person must accept responsibility for their own actions and feelings. No one can “make” anyone do anything. We choose to be angry, and we should apologize for our anger.

**5. Comparing children with others:**

- You should be more like your brother.
- When I was your age, I did better.

**Solution:** Don't make your children compete with each other or be resentful of each other. Only make comparisons with your child's former behavior, and emphasize the positive: “You did much better this time.”

**6. Perfectionism:**

- You could do much better.
- You should have got the highest grade / score.

**Solution:** Congratulate your child for what he or she accomplished and the progress he or she has made.

**7. Cursing:**

- Go to hell!
- Damn you!

**Solution:** These are the worst things you could say to anyone. Instead, learn to explain why you are angry and what you want your children to do.

**8. Severe threats:**

- If you do that again I'll kill you. / I will not love you. / I

The Bible verses we read said that *we discipline our children because we love them*. This means that when we discipline our children, we should have an attitude of love, not of anger. Our desire is not to punish them. Our desire is to help them grow up into mature, responsible adults.

It is very easy for us to lose control of our anger when we discipline our children. When they do something of which we do not approve, we become angry. We yell at them to make them stop. Or we shout at them in frustration in order to get them to do what we want them to do. How can we control our anger and still discipline our children in a timely manner? Here is a **six-step process** that works for many parents:

1. Notice when you are becoming angry.
2. Count to ten and take deep breaths to relax.
3. Bend down or kneel, and talk to your children on their level. This gives you more time to calm down, and your closeness tells your children that what you are going to say is very important.
4. Tell your child what you feel: "I'm angry." "I'm disappointed with you."
5. Tell your child why you feel this way: "You kids are making too much noise." "You are fighting."
6. Finally, explain what you want and give your children a time limit: "I want you to do your chores by the time the meal is ready."

### **Conclusion:**

So whether we are too permissive or too harsh with our children, the solution is to love our children with a genuine desire for their well-being.

- Parents who love their children discipline their children firmly.
- Parents who love their children control their anger and

don't want you to ever come back here again.

**Solution:** Only use reasonable warnings that you intend to carry out: "If you do that again, you will be punished."

---

### **When you need to say 'No' to your children's requests:**

1. Make sure both parents agree. Don't confuse your children by disagreeing.
  2. Be reasonable. Remember that your children are children! Give them advance warnings: Saying "We will eat in ten minutes. Finish the game you are playing" is more reasonable than saying, "Come at once!"
  3. Be firm. Don't say no, then change your mind. Your children will learn to manipulate you.
  4. Say no consistently. Don't say no today then yes tomorrow, unless you have good reasons to do so. If something is forbidden, it is forbidden. If something is acceptable, it is acceptable.
  5. Say no lovingly. Don't say no to make your child feel sad. Say no because he wants something that is harmful for him, and you love him too much to let him do it.
-

do not discipline them in cruel or harmful ways.

[Prayer]

### **Message #3: WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS**

Bible Verses: Proverbs 3:5-7, CEV

The most important virtue God looks for in his followers is faith or trust. Throughout the Word of God there are many calls to believe, to have faith, to trust, and to be confident. There are many stories in the Bible in which God tells people to trust him to deliver them from the dangers they face. In many of these stories the people fail to trust God. They look to themselves or to other people for help and strength instead of turning to God.

The book of Proverbs in the Bible is a collection of wise sayings. Proverbs has much to say about trusting God. One of the most well-known verses about trusting in God is Proverbs 3:5-7:

*With all your heart  
you must trust the LORD  
and not your own judgment.  
Always let him lead you,  
and he will clear the road  
for you to follow.*

Proverbs 3:5-7, CEV

In the past two messages we have been talking about parenting. Trust is especially important for mothers and fathers! We want our children to be healthy, happy and obedient. We want them to grow up to be people who faithfully worship and serve God. We hope that if we are good parents, our children will become good and successful people. But we can't be sure. There is so much about our children's lives that we can't control. We simply have to trust God and do our best.

**Good news:** God is in control of all things! We can trust him to take care of our children. This doesn't mean we can be careless parents. We still need to be the best parents we can be. But we can rely on God to make up for our weaknesses and failures. He is our children's Father even when we fail to be the best parents for our children. We can pray to him for our children, and we are sure he listens to our prayers.

Knowing that prayer is a key part of parenting relieves us of some unnecessary worries and pressures. Some parents try and try to be perfect parents. They feel tremendous pressure in their hearts to be perfect and make no mistakes. They become angry with themselves and depressed

when they fail as parents. Jesus comes with good news. He tells us, “You don’t need to be the best possible parent. You are not perfect. You are not limitless like me. Just do the best you can. Then pray to me. I will do the rest. I will help you raise your children in answer to your prayers. But you must give control of your children to me. Let me be your Lord. Let me be their Lord. I am in control, not you.”

It’s difficult to give up control, isn’t it? It’s hard to let go of our control and trust God to bless our children. We say we trust God, but our actions reveal that we don’t want to live by trust. We want certainty!

But letting go of authority is a big part of being a parent, isn’t it? Our responsibility is to help our children gradually to be able to live without our help. When they begin as babies they need us for everything. But as they grow, we teach them the skills they will need for daily life. Finally when they are adults they are ready to begin their own lives apart from us. We breathe a sigh of satisfaction that our work is done. We will always love our children. We will help them when they ask us for help. But they are no longer dependent on us. We entrust them to God’s care as they head out into new stages of their lives.

Why wait until your children are grown up to entrust them to the Lord? Why not put your trust in him now by praying to him for your children? Why not rest in the confidence that the Lord of the universe has you and your children in his hands?

- He will give you the power and insight you need to be good parents.
- He will forgive you when you make mistakes.
- He will supply what you lack.
- He will be a Father to your children when you are not there.
- He will guide your children and teach them lessons you could never teach them. God has infinite wisdom and knowledge.

Jesus said,

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

*Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*  
Matthew 7:7-11, NIV

God is good. He gives good gifts to his children. He will answer your prayers and give you and your family just what you need. Trust in him, and he will clear the way for you to follow.

When we trust in the Lord and turn to him in regular prayer, there is one other special benefit: our children will learn from our example to trust in God.

- They will see us praying.
- They will watch us put our confidence and hope in him.
- They will see our delight and gratitude when God answers our prayers.
- They will begin to pray to him, too. They will begin to trust him for their needs.

Praise God for his excellent goodness! Praise him for the love he showers on his people! Lift up your prayers and requests to the One who watches over all of his creation with tenderness and compassion! Trust the Creator, who put the stars in their places, yet keeps watch over the smallest birds and numbers the hairs on your head. He will watch over you and your sons and daughters and everyone who has faith in him and his Son Jesus Christ.

[Prayer]

---

### **Outline For a Message on Psalm 145**

This outline was adapted from a sermon by the Rev. James Zinger. The text of Psalm 145 is printed below.

**Theme:** God is the perfect parent. If we want to be good parents, we will be more like our heavenly Father.

#### **1. We must show love to our children as God does:**

Verse 7: he has matchless mercy.

Verse 8: he is always loving.

Verse 9: he is good to everyone.

Verse 14: he gives a helping hand.

Verse 15: he provides us with food.

Verse 16: he satisfies the desires of all who live.

Verse 18: he is near.

Verse 19: he comes to save

Verse 20: he takes care of everyone (other translations say he watches over us).

#### **2. We must be consistent with our children:**

Many parents aren't consistent. Their actions do not correspond to their words. They threaten to punish, but they don't do so. Or their actions one day are different from their actions the day before. One day they are lenient, the next day they are strict. This is confusing to children. But God is consistent and reliable. We his children can trust him to be faithful to his promises.

Verse 17: Our Lord, EVERYTHING you do is kind and faithful...

Verse 13: Our Lord, you keep your word and do EVERYTHING you say.

### **3. We must be examples to our children:**

What we do should be praiseworthy, just as God's deeds are praiseworthy. By doing praiseworthy deeds we set an example for our children.

Verse 3: you deserve all praise.

Verse 4: Each generation will announce...your wonderful and powerful deeds.

Verse 6: Your fearsome deeds.

Verse 21: I will praise you, Lord.

## **Psalm 145, CEV:**

<sup>1</sup> I will praise you, my God and King,  
and always honor your name.

<sup>2</sup> I will praise you each day  
and always honor your name.

<sup>3</sup> You are wonderful, LORD,  
and you deserve all praise,  
because you are much greater  
than anyone can understand.

<sup>4</sup> Each generation will announce  
to the next your wonderful and powerful deeds.

<sup>5</sup> I will keep thinking about  
your marvelous glory and your mighty miracles.

<sup>6</sup> Everyone will talk about  
your fearsome deeds,  
and I will tell all nations how great you are.

<sup>7</sup> They will celebrate and sing  
about your matchless mercy  
and your power to save.

<sup>8</sup> You are merciful, LORD!  
You are kind and patient and always loving.

<sup>9</sup> You are good to everyone,  
and you take care of all your creation.

<sup>10</sup> All creation will thank you,  
and your loyal people will praise you.

<sup>11</sup> They will tell about  
your marvelous kingdom and your power.

<sup>12</sup> Then everyone will know about  
the mighty things you do and your glorious kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> Your kingdom will never end,  
and you will rule forever.

Our LORD, you keep your word  
and do everything you say.

<sup>14</sup> When someone stumbles or falls,  
you give a helping hand.

<sup>15</sup> Everyone depends on you,  
and when the time is right,  
you provide them with food.

<sup>16</sup> By your own hand you satisfy the desires of all who live.

<sup>17</sup> Our LORD, everything you do is kind and thoughtful,

<sup>18</sup> and you are near to everyone whose prayers are sincere.

<sup>19</sup> You satisfy the desires of all your worshipers,  
and you come to save them when they ask for help.

<sup>20</sup> You take care of everyone who loves you,  
but you destroy the wicked.

<sup>21</sup> I will praise you, LORD,  
and everyone will respect your holy name forever.

---