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Modeling Behavior for Children

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Modeling Behavior for Children

How seriously do you take the Bible? If you read something about parent-child relations in the Bible that contradicts something you read in another book, which teaching do you accept as truth?

One of the principles we read about in the Bible is this, *“Honor your father and mother that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God hath given you (Exodus 20:12).”* You know, a lot of us adults make it pretty hard for kids to do that. We need to make it easy for our children to honor us.

So here is another principle from the Bible found in Philippians 4:9, *“Those things which you have both learned and received and heard and seen in me do.”* Doesn't that sound presumptuous or egotistical? But stop and think about that for a moment, we want to model for our children the behavior we want from them.

Now here's an additional principle from Proverbs 22:6, *“Train up a child in a way that he should go.”* I can't think of anything more comforting than a nice woman married to a nice man, and these two people are friends, and these two parents decide together what's best for their children—two people working together to make sure that their children get the best guidance possible. That's the opportunity and the challenge of parenthood—deciding what is best for your children.

When making decisions about your children's care, you need to be convinced that what you are doing is in the best interest of your child. And if in your judgment it is in the best interest of your child, and you're following biblical principles, you ought to follow through to see to it that it's done. Now parenthood is just that simple.

Now don't be alarmed if your children resist some of what you are convinced is best for them. They'll naturally try using all the ingenuity and creativity they can muster to get their way. However, what your children want so fervently isn't always what they need. So be firm, taking your stand in love. Don't set a limit that you're not prepared to enforce, because that will set a pattern of behavior for your children that will create havoc for them and for you. They'll try breaking the limit again and again, and if they manage each time to get away with it, they'll simply conclude that you don't mean what you say.

Also regarding resistance, don't be afraid to help your children. For example, if it is mealtime, and your small child refuses to come to the table, just pick him up, and gently, but firmly, plunk him into the chair at the table. You're helping your child. He won't like it, but he'll realize you mean what you say.

If you will take the time to be guided by these biblical principles, twenty years later your children will call you blessed, and you'll have shown yourself worthy of their honor.

Take a step . . .

Take a few minutes to answer these questions:

Do I let the Bible guide me in my parenting?

Do I model appropriate behavior for my children?

Have I conscientiously chosen guidelines and limitations for my children?

Do I "help" my children do what I ask of them?

Ask God to give you the wisdom and strength you need to be the strong and loving parent your children need.