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Helping Kids Live Within Limits

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Helping Kids Live Within Limits

I want to remind you that raising children is a 20-year process. Twenty years. So those of you with preschool children need to remember that you have a ways to go! So relax, take it easy; there isn't any one day that makes a whole lot of difference, not in the perspective of 20 years.

In Isaiah 53:6 we read, *"All we like sheep have gone astray."* One could think of this verse as the theme for family life. If parents go "astray," the children will usually follow. It's important to recognize the responsibility you have in raising your children.

One of the responsibilities we have as parents is to set limits. Setting limits involves both parents choosing carefully what is best for their children. Once you set those limits, make sure they hold. It's important that your children realize that you have set boundaries for them, made them plain, and they can depend on you to carry them out. That gives them security.

First you must SET AND COMMUNICATE THE LIMITS to your children. Once you have done that, you can expect your children to test those limits. Be prepared, you will need some tools to enforce them.

The first tool is to HELP your children to live within the boundaries you have set up for them. For example, when your small child is in an ugly mood and creating a raucous in the T.V. room where she knows there is to be no horseplay, you deal with it simply by lifting her out and setting her down in the kitchen. That child just needed help in behaving herself. You've enforced the limit, and not allowed her in the T.V. room until she learns to behave herself.

Another tool is to provide SUPERVISION. Say you set a time for your children to be home when they go out at night. Make sure one of you is always there when they arrive. It takes supervision to keep track of your children.

An additional tool you may need to occasionally use is PRESSURE. You say to your child "It's time to go to church."

He or she responds, "I won't go."

Rather than threaten, spank, or holler at them, just link your arm firmly in theirs and march them to church. If they sneak out, go get them and sit right beside them.

Parenthood isn't difficult. All it needs is agreement, deep convictions, your good example, and a loving spirit.

Take a step . . .

As you consider the process of having "boundaries" for your children, which aspect of the process do you need to focus on?

Setting and Communicating the Limits

Helping

Supervising

Using Pressure

Ask God to help you lovingly set the boundaries your children need. You may want to pray the following prayer:

Dear Lord, You can see my situation more clearly than anyone else and you know my children even better than I do. You have the power to intervene and help me to be the parent to my children that they need me to be. I need your wisdom, direction, strength, and love to empower me to parent my children in a way that will help them to grow into mature adults. Thank you Jesus, Amen.