



Helping you guide
your child's heart
to the heart of God



010: Discipline: One size does NOT fit all

INTRO AUDIO:

I'm sure you've heard the term and you've probably experienced the result of the phrase. One size fits all. The only thing I have ever experienced where one size really does fit all is with those professional flexible band, major league baseball type ball caps. But in most circumstances, one size does not. And that's true of parenting as well. This is God fearing children and to parents who raise them. Hey friends, welcome back to God, fearing kids and the parents who raise them. I'm Carey Green

MINDI:

And I'm Mindi. And this is another episode on discipline. And we want to encourage you as a parent to ask the Lord to help you to clear your mind and your conclusions and your opinions on what discipline should be like or what you've heard about it from the church, from books, from even your parents

CAREY:

School counselors.

MINDI:

Yes. And what your experience was, what your experience was not. We want to have the biblical mindset of what discipline is. So try to clear your mind and let's start on filling it up with God's opinion on what discipline should be.

CAREY:

Amen. Yeah. And I think it might be good just to start with a quick prayer to that effect. Lord God, we know that there are many experiences and voices and authorities, so to speak who have been speaking on these issues for many years and have muddied the water. We ask you to clear it by the power of your holy spirit, for those who are listening, teach them from your word, what is true in Jesus name? Amen.

MINDI:

Amen. So this episode is discipline. One size does not fit all.

CAREY:

And there's quite a few things we mean by that. So we're just going to go through some quick sections here to kind of describe for you what we mean. First of all, discipline needs to fit the child. So there's a number of ways this could be used. One has to do with age. You're not going to discipline a three year old or a four year old, like you would a 14 year old. It's going to be very different. And we as parents need to have the wisdom to understand that

MINDI:

The difference could also be because their personality they're wiring or even their fleshly sinful patterns.

CAREY:

Hmm. So expand on that for a moment.

MINDI:

If your child has a tendency to be a worrier, that's not necessarily a personality trait, it's a sinful pattern that they have. So you would discipline differently to your child who might have an anger problem.

CAREY:

Hmm Hmm. Okay. So you're not just disciplining based on how the child is wired. You're discipline also on what they're prone to when it comes to sin or temptation or things like that. Yeah. All right. There's also the issue of the child's responsiveness. I remember we had some kids who a stern word would just turn them around immediately in certain circumstances while others, it took ongoing discipline of spankings, even about the very same issues. And so you need to be able to kind of gauge where your kid is. And I think we have to be careful here too, because we may err just in our personality by being too hard, some of us or too soft, some of us, and we have to be very discerning with holy spirit guide us. What is needed for this child? Do I need to be more firm or do I need to be more lenient? It really has to do with God's leading with that child.

MINDI:

Yes. That is so very important. The next thing we want to bring up is discipline that fits the circumstance. For example, is this their first time to do the offense or is this an ongoing habit?

CAREY:

Yeah. And so if it's an ongoing habit, you've probably disciplined them for this before. And so the discipline may need to be more firm this time or the next time or the next time until the discipline actually is effective and the child begins weighing that behavior from their life. But if it's first time, offense, you're not going to come down with that severity of a punishment right off the top or you shouldn't anyway. So we need to be careful about that. We also need to keep in mind the severity of the behavior that we're correcting. So maybe give us an example of what might be something to consider in this,

MINDI:

Your child forgetting to brush their teeth.

CAREY:

Okay. And you've instructed them to do so. And they just keep forgetting,

MINDI:

Right. Or your little boy getting the shovel and hitting his brother on the head. Yeah. And really causing some damage

CAREY:

<laugh> yeah. Yeah. So those are very different kinds of offenses and they also have greater consequences. And so for the offenses that carry with them, a greater consequence, there should be a more severe punishment. All right. And in all of these things, there's something we wanted to bring kind of as a, a warning light on the dashboard to make you aware of that fairness between your kids is not the issue. That's not something you should even have in your head. As you're thinking about these things. And we have a few examples here to explain this to you,

MINDI:

You might hear that your children are arguing in the other room. And when you go and start asking questions, what's going on, you realize it really is the fault of one. Not both. I think sometimes parents might not want to single out one child negatively over the other. You need to be aware of that. If the one child is at fault, they need to be disciplined appropriately and they need to be able to apologize to their sibling. If they're the one that has caused all of this, instead of getting upset with both children and saying, y'all just go to your, your room. That's not helping anyone. It's building resentment in the one child. Maybe the other child is kind of feeling smug because their brother or sister got in trouble too. When they know it was their fault. There's just a lot that can go wrong. So fairness is not what you're aiming at. God's heart and God's will in each situation is what you're aiming at.

CAREY:

Yeah. And I think it's important just to reiterate what can happen when you're shooting for fairness rather than the right punishment for the right offense. If you are doling out punishment, either across the board to everybody or lopsided where one kid's getting in trouble all the time, when clearly there could be more going on in this situation, you, as a parent are facilitating bitterness between those children toward each other and between the children toward you. You want to use God's wisdom and God's discipline in every situation to make sure that you're assessing what's really going on and bringing proper discipline where it's needed, not where it's not needed.

MINDI:

And a side note to all of this is you also want to reward your children appropriately. Don't feel like you have to be fair and you're rewarding. You want to praise your child when it's due. You want to reward them when it's due. And if the other child's not doing that, you can talk to them about it. You can help them in that to have right golly behavior so that they will be encouraged and rewarded in the future.

CAREY:

So we're talking about not passing out the same reward to everybody because one person did well because you don't want the others to be hurt or feel left out.

MINDI:

Right? Another example where I think it's easy to try to be fair. I think a lot of public school teachers, even teachers in general, they've been pressured to just grade fairly. And they grade on a curve far, too much. They make the curve way too big so that all children are feeling good about their academic behavior. And we need to help our children, whether we're homeschooling them or whether they're going to public school, we need to help them to do all their work as unto the Lord and that they are doing their best. They're following the teacher's instructions. They're following your instructions. And they are graded appropriately. If they don't do good, give them that C give them that D and help them to do good and give them a chance to get better at it. Don't give them a B, just so they'll pass or that

they'll feel better. Even if your child's teacher is giving the same kind of a grade to all kids, just so that they'll pass and feel accepted. You can talk about that with your child and help them to see now, actually, you really didn't do a good job. I want you to do it over for me.

CAREY:

Yeah, exactly. I saw a television show the other day where the grown kids were saying to the dad, you were always more hard on us than the other kids on the baseball team when you coached our baseball. And I saw two things here that parenting wise could have been different or should have been different. Well, actually one was good. One was not good. The good thing was, he explained to them, I know you, not the other kids I knew you could do better. And so I was harder on you for that reason, kind of the same thing, as you're saying, do everything unto the Lord. If our children need to have the bar raised, we should raise it and not try and keep that balance of grades and attention. And all of that. The thing that wasn't good in that example is that that dad should have been talking about that with his kids ever since they were little. So they weren't grown kids being angry, that he was harder on them. They would've understood more and it would've benefited them better. So, anyway, moving ahead, just to wrap that one up fairness between your kids is not the issue. We're wanting to treat them as God would have us treat them. Now let's talk for a moment Mindi, about some practical means of discipline. I mean, just what are the practical things we might use as disciplinary tools that would help our kids?

MINDI:

First thing we think of is spanking, and we will talk more in detail about that on the next episode.

CAREY:

Yeah. Spanking's a very biblical thing. When we get to that episode, Mindi's admonition from the first of this episode applies as well. You need to just kind of wipe away everything you've been taught. Everything. You've felt, everything you've learned and listen to what the Bible says when we get to that issue. So spanking more to come restrictions are another thing I've thought about times where we withheld something from our kids that was very valuable to them because of an ongoing pattern of negligence or disobedience or something that we were really trying to get to their heart and help them see this has got to change. And so removing that thing, they really cared about served kind of like fasting where the absence of it made them mindful, again, of the thing they're trying to improve. And it was a helpful tool.

MINDI:

Yes. And another thing is giving your children extra work to do extra jobs. That's a good way of discipline if it's fitting to their fence.

CAREY:

And what would you say to a parent who says, well, that's going to teach my kids to hate work. I don't want them to hate work.

MINDI:

It's not going to teach them to hate work. If you talk to them about it and you help them to see how it's connected and you even tell them, I don't want you to hate work, because work is a good thing, but I'm giving you this extra job to do because of what just happened. You just need to explain it. Don't be afraid about that. They're not going to think that way. If you help them to know how to think rightly

CAREY:

About it. Once again, as you've always said, communication is key. Exactly. You want to always work these things out with your kid. Okay? And another principle that kind of undergirds all of these, whatever form of discipline you use is that quick discipline is much preferred to delay discipline or kind of doled out over time, discipline you, you want to deal with it decisively and deal with it appropriately. A proverb here that really applies to this is Proverbs 13, 24,

MINDI:

Whoever spares, the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. Diligent would mean earnest and being on top of it, you want to help them right away. Don't let them sit in that bad attitude or that disobedient action for very long, because you want to correct it in their mind as soon as possible. That's very valuable.

CAREY:

And in all of these things, when it comes to the practical means of discipline, what an overwriting principle would be is you want to select the form of discipline that is going to move that child toward sorrow or repentance over that sin. And that may sound like a funny thing to say. We're trying to make our kids sorrowful. We're trying to make them sad about things. Well, yes you are. You want them to be sad about their simple behavior and about the grieving of God's heart with their behavior. You want them to get that? So you want to choose the type of discipline that will most effectively move them in that direction. Second Corinthians chapter seven, verse 10 talks about this. It says for godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. Whereas worldly grief produces death. So grief is the point and we want to make sure we're pushing them toward godly grief, a kind of grief that's sorrowful over sin that wants to please the heart of God And that desires to do the right thing.

MINDI:

And that will help them to get into the habit of being sorrowful and repentant to the Lord and get into the habit of knowing God's heart for them, that he didn't like what they did, but he forgives them and he loves them many ways and he will continue to love them and help them. So you don't always want to spank for everything. You don't always want to restrict your child from things in every situation. You don't want to always give them extra jobs. So God's discernment will lead you in how to best discipline.

CAREY:

Yeah. And we might put in a little caveat too. The three things we've mentioned, probably aren't the only ways you're going to discipline your children, right? You have to be creative sometimes, especially as they get older, but God will lead you in that. Now there's some forms of discipline that are kind of popular in our day that we haven't mentioned yet. And we're actually going to mention them now on a no list. This is like picture the big red circle with the slash through it. You want don't want to do these many. You want to take the first one?

MINDI:

The first one is no time out. And this has been a big deal to me because so many parents do it. And what I mean by that is many times the parent will just say, go to your room. You're having time out. You stay in there until dinner or staying there until I come and get you that kind

CAREY:

Some sort of isolation, right?

MINDI:

So, so go to timeout, little toddlers, it's timeout, you know, go in the corner, whatever that is a very dangerous thing because there's no teaching, no training. It is just a, it's a harsh discipline. The child is not taught how to think about what just happened. They have no idea what God thinks. They have no idea, really what you think, except for that. You're mad at them and that what they did was wrong, but they don't really know to go from there. So they're not growing in maturity and wisdom in a timeout.

CAREY:

And you may have just sent a fuming five year old into his room where he's going to sit and continue to FUM,

MINDI:

Right?

CAREY:

And that could build up bitterness toward you as the parent bitterness toward the other kid. If there was another kid involved, I mean, Satan has ample room in a situation like that to get into that fuming little heart and provoke it to anger.

MINDI:

Exactly. And just think of what the enemy is doing. He'll go to that room with him and he'll feed thoughts and emotions to your child. So time out is not good. There's times when it can be good. If you want to call it a timeout where you've already talked to them, you've explained it all. And you're going to say, I'm not going to let you watch TV or play anymore. I want you to go sit over there on the couch for a little bit, because I want you to talk to Jesus about what we just talked about. I want you to sit and watch your siblings play. And I want you to know the reason why you're not playing is because you were being very selfish. I mean, if you explain it in that sense and you use the timeout for that, that can be very productive, but have it be short. And then after the time out's done talk to them, what did you think about, did you talk to Jesus? Did you know Jesus forgave? You, I mean that kind of a thing that could be productive.

CAREY:

You're teaching them in a case like that. How to go and do business with God. Yeah. <laugh> how to go interact with the king of the universe. Who's gracious and is eager to forgive them. If they will just humble themselves and repent. That's a beautiful picture.

MINDI:

Yes. And so a good verse for time out is Proverbs 29, 15, the rod and reproof give wisdom. But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

CAREY:

Wow. How much more poignant could it be? A child left to himself brings shame to his mother. So the two different scenarios of timeout you described, the first one is leaving the child to themselves. Then

had no instruction, no help from mom, no help from dad. The second one they've been instructed, they've been taught and they're going by themselves alone by themselves. Actually not they're going with Jesus to work out the repentance. All right. A couple of other ones we have on our list here is no counting. You know, when mom calls the toddler to come to her and I'm in account to three and they, you know, it's just not effective. First off, the kid knows they don't have to really come until you get to like four and a half because a person who counts typically is not willing to discipline in the first place. They're just hoping the kid will come so they don't have to discipline. But the kid really learns. I don't have to come. And so they don't so no counting. Don't do counting.

MINDI:

That's not teaching wisdom. It's not teaching them the fear of the Lord. Another one is no bribes.

CAREY:

Give us an example of a bribe.

MINDI:

Don't say, if you clean your room, like I already instructed you to, then mommy will give you cookies.

CAREY:

Or if you're nice today, I'll get you ice cream.

MINDI:

Right? If you want to reward them with things like that, that is great. But make sure they obey you because you told them to do it.

CAREY:

Yeah. The reward should not be conditional on the obedience. The reward should be exactly that. I just love how kind you were to your brother today. Let's go get ice cream.

MINDI:

Yes. And you did such a good job cleaning up your room. I just am so proud of you. I'm going to make you an ice cream sundae. <laugh>

CAREY:

Boy, we're stuck on the treats today. Aren't we all right there. We got one more in our no list and that's no B rating or ridiculing your kid. Proverbs 15. One says a soft answer. Turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

MINDI:

Yes. That's a great verse because if we are harsh, in our words, towards our children, they're going to walk away, building up anger, resentment, and they're going to learn to be the same way.

CAREY:

Yeah. And we might want to define here. What's a harsh word. Doesn't mean your voice can't be elevated. Doesn't mean you can't have firmness in your tone. A harsh word is a cutting word is something that's doing damage to the person in what you're saying about them or toward them. And you want to be very, very careful with that. Dad's especially I can attest to this. You can crush your kid's spirit so quickly because you're bigger. You're louder. You're scarier. It really can just do great damage. So be very careful.

MINDI:

That's really good.

CAREY:

Another passage that applies to this issue of not berating or ridiculing is written to adults in the church, but it applies definitely on the way we treat our kids. It's Ephesians 4:29. It says, let no corrupting talk, come out of your mouth. So let's just stop right there. Berating and ridicule. That's corrupting talk. When you think of something corrupting, it's ruining it. It's making it less. It's like rust, just eating away at it. Think of those kinds of words as poison. And they're going to eat away at the soul of your child. So let no corrupting talk, come out of your mouths. And here's the opposite side, but only such as is good for building up. So you can say things with a strong tone and firm manner that are good for building up because you are rebuking wrong and highlighting good. And you're doing that with a, with a zeal and a emphasis that your kids many times need to hear. And then it says as fits the occasion. So again, fitting to the circumstance, fitting to the offense that it may give grace to those who hear, and grace is help. You want to give help to your children. That's what all of this is about.

MINDI:

So I was just thinking as Carey was reading these verses that we mess up with our words a lot. It's an easy way to sin.

CAREY:

Yeah.

MINDI:

So if you're feeling bad about things that you've said in the past to your children, it doesn't matter how far in the past, if the Lord is bringing it to your mind, go and apologize to them apologize and tell them what you said. They maybe didn't remember and tell them that wasn't right. I'm so sorry. I should have said this. I, I shouldn't say those things. I'm really asking God to help me, but every single time the Lord brings to your mind harsh words. You said a cresting talk that you spoke, confess it to the Lord and then confess it to the person and just get it cleared away. Cuz the enemy will not have a foothold, a stronghold anymore to cause damage. If you do that,

CAREY:

That kind of repentance to your kids develops a closeness between you. It develops a softness in your relationship where they know you are growing. You are striving to please the Lord and you're striving to love them. Well, what we promised our next episode is going to be about the infamous topic of spanking. And we're going to convince you from the Bible. That spanking is a good thing, not an abusive thing before we wrap up, let's pray, Lord, thank you so much for the reality that discipline is a good thing and that discipline is something you instruct us as parents to do. Lord give us minds and hearts to accept

that responsibility, give us the ability and the wisdom to implement discipline wisely. And for the good of our children, help us to guard our words, help us to guard our demeanor and our tone and to do what's appropriate in every situation. Lord, maybe we should just memorize Ephesians 4 29. We should just get that on our hearts to remind ourselves how to handle these kinds of situations. We ask you for your grace and we ask you for your help. Lord it's in Jesus name. We pray. Amen.

MINDI:

Thank you for listening. We'll look forward to next time.