

# *Biblical Parenting*

**Series Objective:** The object of the series is to cover the basic mechanisms of building a moral capacity in children in knowing right from wrong concerning the principles of the Bible.

**6 Lessons**



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**2010**



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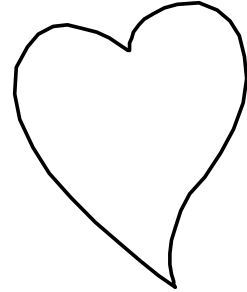
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## Lesson One

**"Simple Truths to Get Things Started"**

## A) The heart of man is morally corrupt and self-gratifying.

When left to govern their own lives by their own standards, people will greedily seek to live a narcissistic life of self-gratification and neglect concerning the lives of others. Man is absolutely evil, morally corrupt and righteously bankrupt when it comes to their heart.



- Ps 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts;
- Matt 12:34-35 "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 "The good man out of {his} good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of {his} evil treasure brings forth what is evil.
- Matt 15:19 "For out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.
- Jer 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"

All paths of the most vile villains, serial killers, dictators and controlling figures of history have this one thing in common, the deep, nurtured desire to be gratified. This greedy passion is what allows souls to destroy and disrupt others to get what they want. This is also the same human desire that parents must seek to reach and teach self discipline in lieu of. When a child is able to successfully and consistently make decisions that cut against the grain of human nature and not seek to be self-gratifying, then the heart morally trained.

## B) The Extremes in Parenting

The two ends and the center of the spectrum in parenting are the following respectively:

## 1) Micro-managers



The micro-manager does exactly what the name says, micro-manages the behavior of others. This is done out of the reasoning that the child is incapable of learning a lesson for the moment or the fear that the natural consequence would be too much for the child to bear. A parent will try to head-off misbehavior through attempts to govern every move of the child. This type of sheltering or lack of confidence in the system is negative because it only encourages bad behavior. Often the micro-managers become overly frustrated because they try to control the behavior of the child and end up losing control over themselves.

A "micro-manager" father in the supermarket was pushing a cart which contained, among other things, a screaming baby. As the man proceeded along the aisles, he kept repeating softly, "Keep calm, George. Don't get excited, George. Don't get excited, George. Don't yell, George." A lady

watching with admiration said to the man, "You are certainly to be commended for your patience in trying to quiet little George." "Lady," he declared, "I'm George."

2) Permissive parenting

The permissive parent is the other extreme of allowing natural consequences to be the only consequence, if any, for their behavior. "Let kids be kids!" would be their calling card. Life for the child ends up being a system of inconsistencies and moral relativism, leaving the young souls with the responsibility to find a moral compass. This type of thinking is environment and not behavior driven, leaving parents to be rated based on their ability to tolerate wrong behavior.



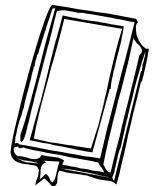
We must not be permissive parents. Socrates once wrote: "Could I climb to the highest places in Athens, I would lift up my voice and proclaim; Fellow citizens, why do you turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth, and take so little care of the children to whom you must someday relinquish it all?"

3) Biblically balanced

Biblically-balance parenting contains the time-tested standards of the Bible, including love, discipline and consistency. The ethics of the Bible are good for the function of society because they are not based in moral relativism. The morals of the Bible break down the economic, educational, racial and social barriers that plague the society (Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.) These standards point out both sin and acceptable behavior for everyone.

C) We must explain the "How" and "Why" of moral training Story:

A mother is pushing a grocery store cart with her young child in seat. As they go down the isles, the child is grabbing everything he can get little hands on. The mother repetitively puts it all newly discovered items back on the shelf the items. Over and over again, this little child grabs something attractive off the shelf, has it taken away and it verbally grunted a firm "No." "Why can't I have this mommy?" is met with the ever so popular response "Because I said so." The child viewed this as a matter of opinion and optional in obedience, therefore was it any surprise when the lad challenged again by continuing to grab something off the shelf? Finally the mother had had enough and slapped his toddler hands and barking out "No"! The little boy stopped his "assistant-shopping" habit following that event, but because the "Why" was subjective and seemingly based on the feelings of the moment, he was back doing it again the following week.



The problem: Many times we as parents are focusing on the correction of discipline and not the instruction of discipline. We become micromanagers of bad behavior rather than builders of a moral compass in the child, developing in them the ability to discern good and evil (Heb 5:14). Children end up being "Obedient Robots", unable to think for themselves. They are more concerned with the OUTSIDE KEEPING of rules rather than the INSIDE REASONS to do so.

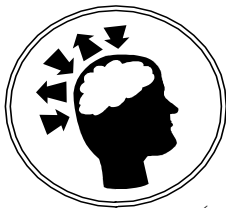
Solution: Teach the Biblical principle behind the moral lesson. This is a common pattern found in the Bible. It is not enough to know the rules, but to know the reason behind it. Once these

principles are written on the hearts and minds of individuals, then an individual will be able to reason logical and ethical solutions. This is the concept that is described in Jeremiah 31.

Jer 31:31-34 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

The Old Covenant Law was there to teach and convict others to know that they were not perfect. It was the "tutor" (Gal 3:24) that led the Jews to the Savior Jesus Christ. All the rules of the Law were there to convict of sin and point out the necessity to rely on the faith of Abraham, which is through Jesus Christ. Jeremiah is pointing out that no longer will there be a set of rules governing the system, but principles of faith written on the hearts and minds of the followers of God. In this New Covenant, you are not born into like the Jews, then educated, but born again because of education. Because of this, it is impossible to be in the New Covenant apart from the principles of faith being written on their hearts. We know that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). Paul expresses a like thought in Romans 8.

Rom 8:6-8 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able {to do so} 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.



Where there is education, people will begin to make new decisions. To ask someone to make a new decision without new information removes any of the motivation to change in the first place. In 2 Cor 7:10, Paul states *For the sorrow that is according to {the will of} God produces a repentance without regret, {leading} to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.* The word that is used for repentance is *metanoia* (*met-an'-oy-ah*); and means to think differently. Substituting this definition into the verse, we understand Paul to be saying that our sorrowful understanding of sin should cause us to think differently, resulting in us to change our mind concerning salvation. When we fail to think again, the result is worldly sorrow, which only produces spiritual death. This is the same concerning discipline without reason. God says in *Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* We must not only know the "how" of discipline, but the "why" of it as well.

#### D) "Self Discipline" is "Discipline of Self"

We all as parents would love it if all our children were well disciplined. It is not only a desire, but a commandment of the Lord *Eph 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* The word for discipline is *paideia* (*pahee-di'-ah*); and means tutorage, education or training; by implication,

disciplinary correction. To be disciplined means to be educated in a set of values by a teacher. This is where we get another word *disciple*, meaning student. Where there is a disciple, there must be a teacher and a set of teachings. Jesus refers to this thought in *Matt 10:24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. Anyone can say they are a disciple of anyone else, but if the teachings are not being followed, then it is not truth. John 8:31-32 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, {then} you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

An even better situation would be if our children (and adults) were self-disciplined. When examining the words "Self-discipline", one can easily see the meaning as "Discipline of self". To be self-disciplined means that one has correctly learned a lesson and can now discipline themselves in that area. They are able to discern the good and evil of a situation and to take the correct action based on the lessons of the past. This is the aim of all discipline, to know how to discipline self.

#### Closing Comments:

Prevention is better than correction, suggests an English study of criminal behavior, and the key may be better training for parents. The Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development tracked 411 London males from ages 8 to 32. It found that a man was most likely to be convicted of criminal behavior if he'd experienced the following between the ages of 8 and 11:

- a broken home
- low family income
- poor housing
- antisocial parents and siblings
- poor parental supervision
- harsh, erratic child-rearing behavior
- delinquent friends
- problems in school

The study suggests that better training for the parents of young boys, as well as improved preschools, might go a long way toward reducing future crime rates.

*YouthWorker Update*, Signs of the Times, November, 1992, p. 6.



Discussion Questions from Lesson One

- 1) Does the Bible teach that man is innately good at heart? If not then what is the danger in making that assumption?
  
- 2) Do you practice micro-managing or permissive techniques in your parenting? What is the long-term damage of this behavior?
  
- 3) What is the difference between the correction of discipline and the instruction of discipline? How can confusing the two cause difficulties in parenting?
  
- 4) According to Jeremiah 31:31-34, how does the Old Covenant of the Jews and the New Covenant of the Christian differ in the area of education? How does this apply to parenting?
  
- 5) What does the word *disciple* mean? Using this definition, what does this imply concerning the parent/child relationship? Explain the transition of discipline.

## Lesson Two

## "Understanding the differences between Law, Principle and Freedom"

What is more important, to act morally or to think morally? I hope the answer to the question was not one or the other, but "Yes"! To act morally without thinking morally is simply to possess an outward image, which can be changed with the environment. There are those that think morally, but never put it into action. James tells us in 1:22 *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves*. It is not enough to possess the knowledge, but also a walk to go with it.

In parenting, it is impossible to teach the will of God if there is not distinction made concerning what type of word is being spoken. That is the aim of this lesson, communicating the difference between law, principle and freedom, something that is necessary to build strength in both the thinking and the action of the child and parent.

### 1) Law:

A law is a specific rule spelled out in the Bible that relates to the Christian today. Take for example some of the following.

Col 3:18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

1 Pet 3:7 You husbands likewise, live with {your wives} in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman...

II Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.



When something is a law, it is something that is very specific and must be followed as spelled out in the scripture. It is called a law because of the clarity of it. When we commanded to love one another, to be compassionate, to be giving, to be truthful, not participate in idolatry, not to curse God, not to be lazy and not to drink blood in pagan animal sacrifices, these are laws. They are specific, clear and able to stand on their own.

### 2) Principle:

A principle is a standard that is not directly spelled out in the scripture, but is clearly seen when pouring over the text. Take for example the issue of abortion. There really is not a scripture that directly comes out and condemns abortion, but we do find the principle with the scriptures.



Ps 22:10 Upon Thee I was cast from birth; Thou hast been my God from my mother's womb.

Ps 139:13 For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb.

Jer 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

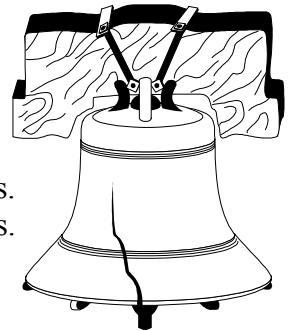
Luke 1:41 And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Matt 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."

We can conclude from the above scriptures that God certainly thought quite a bit about “womb people” or the unborn. They are not tissue blobs, but human beings with souls. Though we do not find scripture that directly comes out at condemns abortion, the principle is there. The Christian should hold value for the life of the unborn because in principle, God recognizes unborn children as human life. A principles-based approach requires more thinking, for it is not as cut and dry, but it a standard to live by.

### 3) Freedom:

The items in the Bible not directly covered in either law or principle are covered under the category of freedom. This is the gray area that some well-intentioned souls sometime condemn others for taking liberties in, but it most definitely exists. There are more gray areas or freedoms in Christ than there are principles and laws. Using the example of purchasing a new car, let us walk through a process to better understand freedom.



#### Not Law:

Cars are not even mentioned in the Bible so we know there is not one single law-based rule concerning the topic. Now imagine if someone were to actually argue against buying a car because the Bible does not mention automobiles. As ridiculous as that sounds, they would by their own admission be recognizing the statement is not a law-based principle, for there are not any verses that discuss it. This thought is actually the logic of some in the Amish faith. Any logical person could recognize the invalidity of that argument because cars were not invented at the time of the writing of the Biblical texts. It does not take a Solomon to dismiss the argument and press on.

#### Not Principle:

Perhaps a person might dissuade someone from buying a new car by making the principle-based argument being a wise steward of their money. But what if it was not an expensive car and is easily within the budget? Perhaps someone might make another principle-based argument against buying a new car because it is a sports car and others might say that only rebels drive vehicles like that and we must “*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*” *II Thess 5:22*. But what if it wasn’t that type of car, but a modest mode of transportation? At the turn of the last century, there were many individuals in churches that taught that cars were not to be driven because of the “breakneck” speed of the vehicles. Some of them even said “If God wanted us to have cars; He would have made them for us.” As you know, that is not sound logic. The principles in this case are applicable only if their intentions violated the ethics. Just for the sake of explanation, we will assume that the individual had no intention of violating the principles of being a rebel or wasting money, but simply liked the

car. With that being the case, not having a specific law or principle in violation, the person is free to choose whatever car he or she likes.

In Christianity, there are many things that are neither law nor principle, but freedom. *Gal 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.* When someone self-imposes a freedom, it is called a tradition. When someone tries to impose their traditions, (self-imposed freedoms) upon another, this is called legalism. The simple definition of legalism is the taking of one person's tradition and imposing it on another as a law or a principle. There are entire communities of souls riding around in horse and buggies who have done this very thing in the name of Christ.

### Parents must use the law, principle and freedom rule.

Just like in religion, friendships and other relationships, the "Law, Principle and Freedom" rule should apply to parenting. The first thing a parent attempt when it comes to a child's instruction is to ask, "Does this have to do with law, principle or freedom?" If it is law, then teach the scripture. If it is principle, teach the concept. If it is freedom, then teach the choice. It is in this technique that a reasoning mechanism is taught and the word of God is implanted in the heart of the parent and child. *James 1:21 "...in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."* That is the goal of God, to implant His word in our hearts.

- Ps 40:8 I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart."
- Ps 119:34 Give me understanding, that I may observe Thy law, and keep it with all {my} heart.
- Prov 3:3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.
- Prov 6:21 Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck.
- Prov 23:7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.
- Prov 23:12 Apply your heart to discipline, and your ears to words of knowledge.
- Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms {and} hymns {and} spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Let us examine the life of David to better understand this concept. David recorded in *Ps 119:11* states *Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.*

#### a) The "word" was God's.

Time and time again we try to use our own words or the words of others rather than the word of God. It is God's word that we can trust, not man. *Matt 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.* Our word will come and go, but the words of Jesus Christ are eternal and unchanging. We need to make sure that the word of God is the word that we are planting in the hearts of our children and ourselves. This is where the law, principles and freedom are found. We have to be so careful not substitute our freedoms in the place of God's word.



b) The “where” is in David’s heart.



We are not seeking to treat the outward child, but the heart of the child. Prov 22:15 tells us that *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.* It is not enough to sow the word externally where pride and sin will erode it over time, but at the heart of the individual. *James 1:21 ...in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.*

c) The “how” is treasured.

The word for “treasured” means *to hide or to bury in the ground something valuable.* It is the utmost protection and guardianship we could hold for anyone or anything. This was the same care that Moses’ mother had for him in the midst of the great Egyptian persecution. *Exod 2:2 And the woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months.* It is also the same the Rahab did with the spies in *Josh 2:4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.* To treasure the word of God in the heart means to guard it like gold and precious rubies.



d) The “why” is so that he will not be sinning against the Lord.

The reason for David calling for this is to keep him from sinning against the Lord. Take away that reason and the true motivation to treasure God’s precious commands in the heart are void. There must be a planting of the word in the heart, for with the heart comes the entire individual.

It was the implanting of the word in the heart of David that made it valuable and applicable so that he would not sin. David’s conscience had a strong dose of the word of God which will be used to guide him. Do you remember what happened to David when he sinned with Bathsheba? Remember what happen to David when he cut the robe of Saul in 1Sam 24, the very man who wanted him dead? Do you remember what happened to David when trusted in the number of man rather than the power of God in 2 Sam 24? The following passages should illustrate this point.

- Ps 32:3-4 When I kept silent {about my sin} my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away {as} with the fever heat of summer. Selah.
- 1 Sam 24:5-6 And it came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's {robe} 6 So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed."
- 2 Sam 24:10 Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Thy servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

The word was written on David’s heart in such a way that it internally convicted him of guilt. This is the purpose of having the word sown in the heart of the child, so that they will use it later when

decisions must be made. If we fail to understand the difference between law, principle and freedom, then application cannot be made.

Closing:

According to a study, young men with high self-esteem shared some common childhood influences. There were three major characteristics of their families. (1) The high-esteem group was clearly more loved and appreciated at home than the low-esteem group. (2) The high-esteem group came from homes where parents had been significantly more strict in their approach to discipline. By contrast, the parents of the low-esteem group had created insecurity and dependence through their permissiveness. Their children were more likely to feel that the rules were not enforced because no one cared enough to get involved. (3) The homes of the high-esteem group were also characterized by democracy and openness. Once the boundaries were established, there was freedom for individual personalities to grow and develop. Thus, the overall atmosphere was marked by acceptance and emotional safety. (Dr. James Dobson, *Focus of the Family Bulletin*, July 1994.)

Discussion Questions from Lesson Two

1) Concerning the Bible, what is the difference between a Law, a Principle and a Freedom?

2) Discuss some of the Laws, Principles and Freedoms using the following topics:

Food:

Clothing:

Money:

3) How important is it to know the Bible in trying to apply the Law, Principle and Freedom to our understanding?

4) According to Psalm 119:11, for what reason should the word of God be hidden in the heart of a person? If that person refuses to treasure the word in their heart, what could be the ramifications?

5) How does the human conscience work hand and hand with the word of God? Other than the word of God, what else can be implanted in the heart that is contrary to the Christian conscience?

## Lesson Three

**"The Moral Conscience"**

God has put in all human bodies a soul. He has also put within our beings a conscience that works in tandem with knowledge. The word CONSCIENCE in the Greek means “a knowing with” or to “bear witness to oneself”. The conscience is the part of our being that allows us to look more deeply at our standing before ourselves, our fellow man and our God. The following is true of our conscience:

Our conscience functions best when we seek to be blameless before it.

- Acts 24:16 "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience {both} before God and before men.
- 1 Tim 3:9 {but} holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.
- 1 Pet 3:16 ...and keep a good conscience...
- Heb 13:18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.
- 1 Pet 2:19 For this {finds} favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

No matter where we go in this life, our conscience is sure to follow, for it is part of us. It would behoove us to live a life that would allow us to have a clear conscience. When we do not the following will occur:

We can defile and sear our conscience.

- Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.
- 1 Tim 4:2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

The word that Paul uses for the “defiled” conscience in Titus means a conscience that is contaminated, and in this case it is with sin. The word that he uses in 1 Timothy for the “seared” conscience is *kauteriazō*, the word from which we derive in the English as cauterize. When skin is cauterized, it is burned to an extent that the nerve endings are rendered insensitive. When we do not properly use the conscience that God has put in us, we will end up contaminated and insensitive to sin, unable to effectively sense that which is right and wrong when needed. Once that occurs, the troubles will ensue.

Story: Silencing the Troubled Conscience

A man consulted a psychiatrist, “I’ve been misbehaving, Doc, and my conscience is troubling me,” he complained “and I have been unable to stop living in a way that is so destructive to me.” “And you want me to help you with a plan that will strengthen your willpower?” asked the doctor. “Well, no,” said the fellow. “I was thinking of something that would weaken my conscience.” With that thought, the psychiatrist prescribed something to help him deal with his guilty conscience rather than allowing the conscience to correct the behavior.

In becoming a Christian, our conscience is eternally awakened.

- Heb 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
- 1 Pet 3:21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

The conscience that God has put in us has two parts, the primary and the moral. The primary conscience is what God puts in us from the beginning. No matter what culture one is born into, that person has an innate sense of right and wrong, a sense of shame, fear of rejection and basic rules of nature. These are all the lessons that God has made available and are programmed within the primary conscience. Some references to this are the following.



- Gen 3:6-7 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make {one} wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.
- Gen 3:10-11 And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"
- Gen 4:6-7 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 "If you do well, will not {your countenance} be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."
- Rom 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
- Rom 2:14-15 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
- 1 Cor 11:14-15 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.



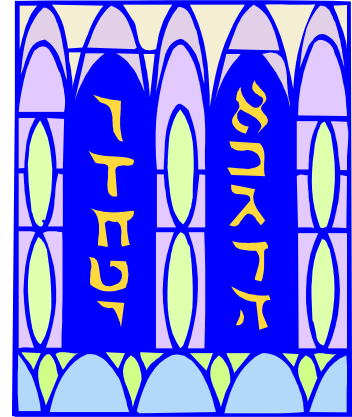
<p>the understanding of why something is right or wrong</p> <p>the understanding as to why guilt is felt</p> <p>the understanding of natural consequences</p>	<p>Items in the moral conscience are implanted by parents.</p> <p><b>Moral</b></p>
<p>a sense of right and wrong</p> <p>a sense of shame</p> <p>fear of rejection</p> <p>basic rules of nature</p>	<p><b>Primary</b></p> <p>Items in the primary conscience are implanted by God.</p>

**CONSCIENCE**

The other part of the conscience is that of the moral nature. From a very young age our moral conscience is being programmed by the people around us and our value system will reflect those who have had influence on our thoughts. God designed the parents to be the chief programmers of this part of the conscience. It is in this training that the child is to learn WHY something is right or wrong and to understand WHY guilt is felt, making a connection to the natural consequences that follow all those who step out from under the protection of the Creator. When the child grows up, his moral conscience will hopefully serve him well in dealing with the other input that will come his or her way. This is the design of the Lord for the moral conscience, to have the parents fill it with transcended, Biblical values, then have those values mature and carry onto the next generation. Some scripture references to this thought are as follows.

- Deut 6:6-9 "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; 7 and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
- Prov 1:8-9 Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching; 9 Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, and ornaments about your neck.
- Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.
- Eph 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.
- Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

The struggle for most parents is making sure the correct data is being loaded into the MORAL conscience and in the correct way. Often the resulting battle leads parents to implanting their own personal freedoms, which by now have become traditions, rather than God’s laws and principles. This may lead the parents to appear legalistic in the eyes of the children, causing inconsistencies and unhealthy coping mechanisms. The odds of a stable, moral conscience are diminished when traditions are implanted rather than law and principle. The vacuum created by the missing ABSOLUTE values leaves the child to search for more meaningful standards with sticking power. This is why it is so important to make sure the values are from God’s word.



The Two Sides of Morality

*Matt 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, " You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*

In the above passage, Jesus has taken all the commands of the Law and the prophets and boiled it down to two simple rules: Love God and love your neighbor. The first quote was from Deuteronomy 6:5, the very message that the Jews were to teach their children, passing it down through the generations. The second quote is from Leviticus 19:18, which happens to be in a section emphasizing respectful behavior towards our fellow man. It is in these two passages that Jesus quotes that we find the basic structure for developing the moral conscience in a child and really any individual. Let us have a deeper look and see if it can be expanded.

Loving God	Loving Neighbor
No other gods	No murder: sanctity of life
No idols	No adultery: sanctity of marriage
No name in vain	No stealing: sanctity of property
Keep sabbath holy	No lies: sanctity of truth
Honor mother and father	No coveting: sanctity of the heart

The Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 is in reality divided into two, loving the Lord God and loving your neighbor. The following observances should be made concerning this.

- The first five come with a reason, the second five do not.
- The first five are vertical and the second five are horizontal.
- The first five had a direct bearing on a Jew’s relationship with God. The second five had an indirect bearing on a Jew’s relationship with God via route through man, for any violation in this category is made through mankind.

It is in this structure that all morality is based. It is also in this system that we will find the basis of instruction for the moral conscience.

Note: Why would honoring the parents be in the “Loving the Lord” category?

This is because the parents are the first line of protection that God puts in the life of the child. They are to have the best interest of the child in mind, for in reality to the child, the parents are the first image of God. As the child matures, this cultivated image and respect is carried over into their hopeful relationship with God. Jesus illustrates this concept in Matthew 7.

Matt 7:9-11 "Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 "Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

This is the meaning behind the message that Paul is communicating in the following passages.

- Eph 6:1-3 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.
- Col 3:20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

The parents are to have the best interest in mind for the child, for this is what the Bible teaches. *1 Tim 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.* The fifth commandment is where it is because it is the training ground for eternal life and a relationship with God. God has put the parents in the child's life for the purpose of protection until maturity. When the child rejects the umbrella of protection that God has prepared, only bad things will follow.

### Putting it Together

In order for a moral value to be in the heart of anyone, there are two factors that must exist. 1) a moral or standard that is based in goodness and 2) value in the heart of the one who treasures it. When that occurs, actual moral values exist. When a conscience has a moral value in place, then conviction will soon follow. When there is conviction, the actions will occur. *Prov 23:7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is...."*

### The Expired License

When Sgt. Ray Baarz of the Midvale, Utah, police department opened his wallet the other day, he noticed his driver's license had expired. Embarrassed at having caught himself red-handed, he had no alternative. He calmly and deliberately pulled out his ticket book and wrote himself a citation. Then Baarz took the ticket to the city judge who fined him five dollars. "How could I give a ticket to anyone else for an expired license in the future if I didn't cite myself?" Baarz asked.

This man possessed moral values in his conscience and they convicted him. In the next lesson, we will be looking at using the information studied in developing a moral conscience in the heart of the child. This will be done under the standards of loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Discussion Questions from Lesson Three

- 1) As human beings, why do we desire to have a clear conscience? Before whom do we desire this perspective?
  
- 2) How can someone defile or sear their conscience?
  
- 3) What is the difference between the primary conscience and the moral conscience? Into which side of the conscience is understanding implanted?
  
- 4) The Ten Commandments are divided into how many primary sections? What are some of the differences of these sections? What is the relevance of this?
  
- 5) When traditions are substituted as instruction for the moral conscience, what can be the negative result?

## Lesson Four

# "Developing the Moral Conscience"

It is quite evident in the scriptures that "loving our neighbor" strategy is a key to being a responsible citizen, not only in the world, but also as a citizen of heaven. This law and principle from God's word is at the core of our freedoms in this country and really any successful society from the past.

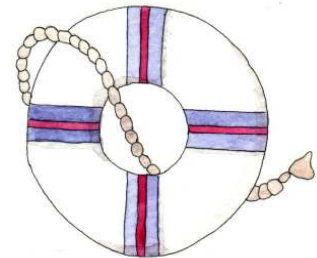
- Rom 13:9 For this, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- Gal 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the {statement} "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- James 2:8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

As mentioned in the previous lesson, the first five commandments are focusing on loving the Lord and the second five commandments are the basis of loving our neighbor (Mt 22:36-40).

### A. Thou shalt not kill: Sanctity of Life

We are told in *Proverbs 24:23* *These also are sayings of the wise. To show partiality in judgment is not good.* Partiality toward others is not a good theme to have in life. The message of the sanctity of life must be communicated to our civilization. We are all special in the eyes of God.

Too many times Christians primarily focus on the sanctity of life concerning the unborn. We are to value every person living on the planet. *Phil 2:3-4* *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; 4 do not {merely} look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.* The following are some of the areas spelled out in the Bible concerning the sanctity of life.



#### 1) Economics

God has not nor will He ever be partial to anyone's bank account or stock portfolio. All blessings come down from Him and He has no need of material goods. This is why we value the life of the poor and needy as much as the rich and famous.

- Ps 146:9 The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow; but He thwarts the way of the wicked.
- James 2:1-4 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with {an attitude of} personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a

good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

### 2) Age

God has allowed older people to become older people for a reason. They are the ones with the experience and wisdom. They should have seen more, known more and can be an anchor for the present generation.

- Lev 19:32 'You shall rise up before the gray-headed, and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.
- Job 12:12 "Wisdom is with aged men, {with} long life is understanding.
- Titus 2:3-5 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 {to be} sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.
- 1 Tim 5:1-2 Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but {rather} appeal to {him} as a father, {to} the younger men as brothers, 2 the older women as mothers, {and} the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

### 3) Race

There is not a person on the planet that God does not want saved from their sins. He loves the Ethiopian as much as the American, Indian, Chinese and English. Our Lord is and Equal Opportunity Father. He judges fairly and saved fairly, "for Just and Right is He!"

- Eph 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both {groups into} one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,
- Acts 2:39 "For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself."

### 4) Sex

Nobody did more the women's movement than Jesus Christ. We need to teach the uniqueness that God has invested in both sexes of the species. God is not partial to males over females or vice-versa; therefore we ought also teach the same.

- Gal 3:26-28 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- John 4:9-10 The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

If our young boys were taught of the sanctity of a woman's life, would this not be the first step in stopping pornography? Would the same for the young girls also stop the romance novel industry in their tracks?

5) Salvation Status

We need to be careful not to value the lives of those who are lost in sin. Those who are saved have a tendency to write off the souls of those who are not through our actions and words. We must teach the sanctity of the lives of those who have not entered covenant with Jesus.

- Gal 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
- 1 Pet 2:17 Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

6) Government Officials

In our free society, we have abused the sanctity of life for those in the government. God puts these precious souls in our path to practice submission and grow as Christians. As long as the laws that are passed do not interfere in God's will, then we must follow it. We are to render to Caesar for God allowed him to take office.

- 1 Tim 2:1-4 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties {and} prayers, petitions {and} thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- Rom 13:1-2 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. 2 Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

B. Thou shalt not commit adultery: Sanctity of Marriage

This is an area that seems to have come under assault in a big way as of late. The divorce rate in our country is high and the number of non-married souls living together is also on the rise. There is a movement in society to legalize same-sex marriages and there are many in marriages, including those in the church, that are not modeling the importance of holy matrimony. The marriage union is touted as the core unit of society, for it was the start of civilization.



- Heb 13:4 {Let} marriage {be held} in honor among all, and let the {marriage} bed {be} undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
- Eph 5:31-33 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and {let} the wife {see to it} that she respect her husband.

It is a shame to listen to children calling their parents or another married couple by their first names, as if they are a peer. When a child identifies a couple as “Mr. and Mrs.,” they are recognizing this core unit of society. One might think this is a stretch, but when continual opportunities of respect are ignored, so goes the morals of the people. Respect is something that is taught and practiced or ignored and abused. There is not an “in between category.” The sanctity of marriage needs to be taught to our children and future generations.

### C. Thou shalt not steal: Sanctity of Property

#### 1) Public

There are treasures in our civilization that are owned publicly, such as parks, roads, buildings, et. We still have the obligation to show respect these because they are there for everyone to benefit and enjoy.

- Ps 50:10 "For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.
- Ps 104:24 O LORD, how many are Thy works! In wisdom Thou hast made them all; the earth is full of Thy possessions.



#### 2) Private

Private property is that which we allow others into on a regular basis. It can be our car, our home and our even the church building. The sanctity of our own and someone else’s property must be taught to our children. God has given us and others the blessings, therefore we must respect that. Lack of this discipline has led many into a world of crime.

- Rom 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled {the} law.
- Eph 4:28 Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have {something} to share with him who has need.

#### 3) Personal

Personal property is different from private in that we typically do not allow others to violate it. It can range from our toothbrush, clothing, medicine and even our personal savings. We have an obligation to be a wise steward concerning the blessings that God has given to us. Countless individuals will suffer because of the crime committed against themselves because of poor planning, habits and greed.

- 1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.
- Rom 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him {be} the glory forever. Amen.

### D. Thou shalt not bear false witness: Sanctity of Truth

God wants us to be a truthful people, for He deals with only the truth. He sees all and knows all, therefore there is nothing hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes with whom we have to do (Heb 4:13). Because God is omniscient, a lie is quite evident to Him, for it is impossible for him to lie.



- Heb 6:18 “...it is impossible for God to lie...”



- Titus 1:2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,
- I Jn 1:5 And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

We are to sanctify the truth in our lives because we are following a truthful God, the One who created the universe. This is one of the requirements for those who are following God. *John 4:23-24 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* What is the truth? The truth is the very words of God and Christ which is found in the gospel.

- John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.
- Gal 2:5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

We must make a conscious effort to sanctify "Truth" in our lives. We are to live like children of light because we were saved for that purpose. *Col 3:9-10 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its {evil} practices, 10and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him..."*

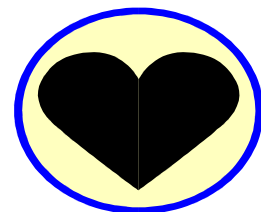
When we lie, mislead, fib, deceive and twist the facts, we are not sanctifying the truth. In an attempt to deceive others, we end up deceiving ourselves to the point that we believe that which is not true. The person that does not stress sanctification of the truth is in essence following the devil and not Christ. God ends up giving the practiced lying soul over to the devil because the conscience ends up being seared and unable to learn truth in the standard ways of natural consequences.

- John 8:44 "You are of {your} father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature;} for he is a liar, and the father of lies.
- Rom 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
- 1 Tim 4:2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

Stress the sanctity of truth in the hearts of children, for without it, they cannot have a relationship with God.

#### E. Thou shalt not covet: Sanctity of the Heart

God has put in us a heart that must worship. When I say heart, I am referring to the core thoughts and intentions toward God (Heb 4:12). We must worship someone or something because that is the way humans are made. God would like our worship to be to Him, for this is the reason



that He made us and saves us. On the other hand, He also gives us a choice in this life to make that decision. He wants our entire devotion to Him, a “one Master” relationship with no competition. The problem is that we allow ourselves to get in the way. The following is a good example of what happens when we do not set our heart aside for worshipping God.

- Luke 12:16-21 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive. 17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 "And he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years {to come;} take your ease, eat, drink {and} be merry.'" 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This {very} night your soul is required of you; and {now} who will own what you have prepared?' 21 "So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
- Luke 12:34 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

We must set our hearts aside for that which is pure and right. We accomplish this by setting ourselves aside from sin and staying away from that which corrupts the soul. Sanctifying our heart to God is to make the decision to put nothing in this world ahead of our relationship with God.

- Ps 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- Ps 119:2 How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all {their} heart.
- Eccl 10:2 A wise man's heart {directs him} toward the right, but the foolish man's heart {directs him} toward the left.
- Matt 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

There are the five principles in which to teach the reasons for loving our neighbor. They are the sanctity of life, of marriage, of property, of truth and of the heart. If we use them as the basis of building the morality in the lives of children, the fruit will be there. All our children’s relationships will be healthier, including their saving relationship with God.

Discussion Questions from Lesson Four

- 1) Why is it important concerning instruction to know the second five of the Ten Commandments?
  
- 2) Describe in detail some of the varying aspects of the value of life. Who are we to value and why should we value them?
  
- 3) Why it is important to value the marriage relationship in society and to pass those values down to our children?
  
- 4) What are the different types of property that we covered in the lesson? Why is it important to know the differences between the three?
  
- 5) How important is it to impress truth onto the heart of a child? What is the basis of that truth?
  
- 6) What is the sanctity of the heart? What are some of the areas this covers concerning the values we deal with in parenting?

## Lesson Five

## "Making Applications" (part A)

In the previous lessons we were reminded from the Bible that there are laws, principles and freedoms concerning instruction. When instructing, both in parenting and in the making of disciples, there must be clear definitions made between the three. The Bible is primarily a principles-based book concerning instruction, focusing on the two primary principles: "Love the Lord your God" and "Love your neighbor" (Mt. 22:37-39). When instruction is given in these two primary categories, the result is a moral compass built in the heart of the individual that is both firm and flexible. A biblically principle-centered moral inventory placed in the core of a soul will serve that individual well throughout their life. The following are some examples of building a moral inventory in the heart of a child in light of the discussion thus far.

### Application #1:

Jimmy, a teenager, was coming out of the grocery store with his mother. They unloaded the groceries into the car and the mother asked Jimmy to take the cart back. Not wanting to walk all the way back to the store, Jimmy pushed the cart to the nearest empty space, then leaving it in its new home, space 33 of parking lane 7. What is the biblical approach to rectifying the situation? What method would allow Jimmy to build a moral inventory, something that would last longer than the moment at hand? How is the parent to rectify the situation?



Following the pattern of study, the mother must determine why she wants the cart back in the rack at the store rather than the parking lot. Her response to that inquiry would lead to three reasons for the request. 1) She does not want others who are driving in the parking lot to hit one of the carts, resulting in damage to someone's car and the store's shopping cart. 2) The parking spaces are for the customers and not the carts. If everyone left their carts in the parking lot, then there eventually would not be anywhere to park. 3) Someone would have to go out to the parking lot and collect the carts for the other shoppers who are arriving at the store.

With this in mind, the next process would be to determine whether the instruction falls under law, principle or freedom. Is there a specific verse that says that a child must return a shopping cart back to the store when the "grocery loading" mode is completed? Obviously there is not. Therefore, since there is not a verse in the Bible that directly deals with the situation at hand, then a search for a principle is in line.

Are there biblical principles that communicate values concerning shopping cart etiquette as spelled out by mom? Yes, for under the principle "Love Your Neighbor", we find that we are to love our neighbor through the proper respect



of public and private property. The child needs to be told the reason he is to take the proper path of behavior is because we are to demonstrate love for our fellow man by not abusing the property of others through neglect and laziness. They need to know that the placing of a shopping cart in the correct location communicates a message of honor to God the Father through the neighbor's property. It may have been a couple of extra minutes in returning the cart to the store, but the Father says "Well done!" Now the child has a specific command that is based in the holy principles of "Loving Thy Neighbor". The child is confronted with either being obedient to God or not, either facing the blessings or consequences of his actions. The child is confronted with the prospect of pursuing the blessings of glory God. *1 Cor 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do [even returning the cart back to the store when complete], do all to the glory of God.*

What would happen had the mother simply forced her will on the child rather than causing him to learn the underlying principle? What if the mother said the reason that the cart needs to go back to the store because "I told you so"? The result would be a lesson would last for the moment, but not for the lifetime. *Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.* We are to train, not micro-manage.

#### Application #2:

Michelle is a sixteen-year old that thinks the 11:00 PM weekend curfew that her parents enforce is stupid, for some of her friends stay out until midnight or even later. Young Michelle does not think it is fair and she rudely informs her parents of their poor judgment in time management, calling them "Clock Nazis" and "Time Legalists". How should the parents react according to the Bible in relation to instruction?



First, is there a Biblical law that directly deals with being disrespectful to parents? Yes there is, the honoring of the parents. *Eph 6:2-3 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.* God has put her parents in that position for the reason of protecting her. These parents are a blessing to instruct her until she reaches a more mature age and able to fully think for herself. They are good parents that want the best for her and would not intentionally do anything to hurt her. When she mouths off to the parents, she is choosing to remove herself from under the protective covering of the actual choice that God made for her; therefore she is guilty of a violating biblical law. She should immediately be reminded of the violation of the "first commandment with a promise", for she is not "Loving the Lord thy God". There is to be no further discussion until this issue is resolved, for if she is unwilling to honor her parent's instruction, there is no reason for the parents to offer it to her, for she would not listen anyway.

- Prov 1:8-9 Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching; 9 Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, and ornaments about your neck.
- Prov 20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.

Once that is done, there is a second issue that needs to be addressed, the issue of the curfew. Michelle thinks that it is not fair to keep it at 11:00 PM, for it is cramping her style. A crucial mistake would be for the parents not to address their decision to keep it at that specific time, saying,

“Because we said so!” As her parents, there are good reasons for the time chosen, but Michelle does not see this in the light of the others in her friendship circle. The reasons for her parents chose the 11:00 PM time are the following: 1) They usually head for bed around that time. Having a daughter out after going to bed would keep them up and waiting for the safe return. 2) There is church on Sunday morning and the parents do not want Michelle falling asleep in the services or being inattentive for something so spiritually important. 3) Her parents do not want her to get hurt. Though there is no guarantee that a person is going to be hurt if they stay out after 11:00 PM, there is reason to believe that the danger level increases. 4) The curfew for minors as imposed by the city council states 11:00 PM is the time for all kids to be in for the night.



With this in mind, the plan of instruction is to ask if there is a specific law in the Bible that tells us about the 11:00 PM time. Though the Bible does not directly come out and identify that specific time, it does make it clear that we are to obey the laws and rulers of the land, including a curfew put in place by the city council.

- Rom 13:1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.
- Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,
- 1 Pet 2:13-14 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

By not obeying the laws that are passed down by government officials, then we are not really “Loving Our Neighbor” as God has instructed.



Are there any principles that cover the 11:00 PM curfew concerning the reasoning of the parents? Once again, yes! Parents are to be looking out for the child, for that is a responsibility from God. *Eph 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* This rearing is inclusive to the spiritual, emotional and physical nurturing of the child. The parents want their daughter to be alert in the worship. They also want themselves to be attentive in worship as well, not having to wait up late for the return of their daughter. They have determined through experience that a time later than 11:00 PM for a curfew would not make this possible in the long run.

Knowing that there is law and principle established does not mean that it ends there, for there is still the test of freedom. As mentioned, the parents are charged with the care of the children, not the other way around. *2 Cor 12:14 ...for children are not responsible to save up for {their} parents, but parents for {their} children.* Knowing this, there are going to be some calls made by the parents that will be based on a gut feeling and / or past experience. Even though there are laws and principles to be cited, there is also an issue of freedom, the freedom to make a parental decision based on experience. What if the parents wanted to impose an earlier curfew because of past behavior problems or special conditions? What if the child needs to be up for a fishing trip at 4:00 AM? Do the parents not have the freedom to choose an earlier curfew? Absolutely!

In summary on point two, it is important to give the “Whys” concerning instruction. A sound biblical strategy for the parents to use when explaining the curfew is to sight the law, then the principles and ultimately the freedom. This will allow the daughter to better understand what is at stake in the violation of this structure. If the parents were to simply impose their will apart from the actual instructions of that will, the lesson will not stick in the end for the moral inventory was not constructed. By doing it in the Law, Principle, Freedom route, there is a well established moral inventory for the child in the future.

### Application #3

Jake and Cody were two brothers in a sandbox, playing with their toys and having a good time. Their mother was in the house doing the dishes and observing the two playing together when all of a sudden an argument breaks out over the possession of a toy. Cody, being the oldest and biggest, took control of the dispute by bopping Jake on the head with a yellow Tonka truck, causing the younger to scream at the top of his lungs. Both of them came running into the house, the younger ahead of the older. Jake, screaming at the top of his breath said, “Cody hit me in the head with the Tonka truck!” Cody immediately responded in denial, “I did not! Jake is a liar!” The mother, hanging onto the arm of Cody and confronting him said, “I saw from the window what you did! I saw you hit Jake in the head with the toy!” Cody tries jerking his arm out of the grip of his mother screaming, “Let go of me!”

What does the biblical-based parent teach concerning the problem at hand? If handled correctly, it will lead to something very educational for the child and the parent. Yet if mishandled it will lead to more bad behavior.

### Honoring the Parent(s)

The first and highest violation at hand was the infringement of respect and honor for the parent. That child had no business mouthing off to the mother in such a way and must see the error of his way. *Deut 5:16* “*Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged...*” Until Cody recognizes this problem and seeks reconciliation with the parent on this matter, there is nothing else to discuss.

### Sanctity of the Heart

What led to the entire incident was a violation of the principle “Sanctity of the Heart”, translated from the tenth commandment “Thou shalt not covet.” Cody wanted the Tonka truck in the worst manner and was determined to have it regardless of who got in the way. The desire that Eve had for the fruit, that Lot had for the plain of the Jordan, that Jacob had for the blessing, that Balaam had for the wages, that Achan had for the treasure, that Eli’s sons had for the meat, that David had for Bathsheba, that Ahab had for a vineyard, that Gehazi had for the handouts, that a rich young ruler had for the riches, that Annanias and Saphira had for the real estate funds, that Simon had for the miracles, was the same for little Cody possessing the Tonka truck. The Bible is filled with examples of violations of this principle, therefore it would be good to use them. It is wrong to desire something on this earth to the point of hurting others and self, for that is coveting. Cody’s mother must address this principle “Thou shalt not covet”.

### Sanctity of Life

The primary problem with sin is that it generally does not stop with one area of violation, but spreads rapidly to everywhere that it can find refuge. In Cody's case, the coveting led him from valuing the life of his brother. The result was a bop on the head of the life that he should have been valuing. *John 13:14-15 "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.* Jesus washed all the disciples feet because he valued all of them, even Judas. We are to be "devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Rom 12:10), not being divisive with anger. We are to "pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another" (Rom 14:19), not tearing each other down. *Gal 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.* Cody violated this principle and will need to be educated in this as well.

### Sanctity of the Truth

When confronted with the fact that he actually hit his brother in the head with a Tonka truck, Cody feared about his mother finding out what he had done, therefore he denied the truth, translated...LIE. This is a violation of the principle "The Sanctity of the Truth". When we violate the truth, making it not important to us, we will end up living a lie. God saw what Cody did, for He sees all. His mother must remind young Cody that *Prov 5:21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths.* Cody needs to know that everything that He does is before the Creator. *Heb 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.* Cody must understand that Christianity and the whole message of Jesus is TRUTH. *John 8:31-32 ... "If you abide in My word, {then} you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

If Cody's mother will take the time to biblically instruct, then the lesson will last a lifetime. *Prov 4:2 For I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my instruction.* When instruction is properly administered, then the children will receive it into their hearts.

*Prov 24:32 When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, {and} received instruction.*

### Additional Note

As you have probably noticed, the law, principle and freedom standards not only apply to the teaching of children, but also for the teaching of parents. Parents need to analyze why they feel the way they do. When we as parents fail in that task, it sends a message that we no longer need instruction. Don't expect a child to hold to a standard that we are not willing to hold ourselves to. It simply will not happen.

### Parenting: Nothing New Under the Sun

Generational tension is not a phenomenon which erupted in the last couple of generations. It is as old as the trouble Adam and Eve had with their two boys. Parents need to remember that. For example, when did this conversation occur?





## Lesson Six

## "Making Applications" (part B)

As we can see from all that has been covered in the series thus far, everything concerning Biblical instruction of another human being can be boiled down to three types of instruction, law, principle and freedom. When a command or request is being made of another, the director of that instruction must ask why he or she would like something carried out or followed. Once the reasons are listed, we must ask if they are law, principle and/or freedom, making it possible to put the proper weight behind the command. If something is law, then it is quite clear in the scripture and really does not need interpretation. If something is principle, then what is being taught is reflected in the Bible, but must have more interpretation rendered. If it is neither law nor principle, then it must be a freedom issue. This does not mean that it does not have to be followed, for that could lead to a violation of the first two, either a tradition being rammed down someone's throat or being rejected by the recipient in an opposite fashion. With that in mind, let us continue the examples.

### Application #4

Sally is fourteen and has decided to wear a shirt that reveals her navel to the Sunday morning worship. Her mother does not approve of this and tells her to go change into something less revealing. Sally petitions, saying "Betty and Wilma wear shirts like that to church, why can't I do the same? Are you saying that I will go to hell if I wear this?" This set off an argument between the two and resulted in the mother caving in to Sally after a series of appeals. Sally's navel was on display for all the congregation that morning.



What should the mother do in regards to instructing young Sally? As always, we must ask "WHY" Sally's mother did not want her to wear the low-cut shirt to worship. The following reasons would be offered: 1) Sally's mother feels that the standard of apparel is showing too much skin, something that really does not reflect well for the Christian image. 2) She is concerned what the other members of the congregation will think when they catch a peek of her daughter's navel. 3) She is concerned that the daughter is missing the point of worship being Christ-centered instead of man-centered.

With the thoughts organized in her mind, she must be willing to use the Bible to weigh in on her instruction for the daughter. Is there a law in the Bible that prohibits the wearing of a belly T-Shirt in worship? To the best of my knowledge, there is not a direct quote describing the material, the length, the color and the style requirements of worship apparel in the Bible. Therefore we can conclude that the prohibition of it is probably not law.

Is there anything in the scriptures concerning principles that suggest that the bellybutton T-shirt should not be worn in worship? Remember that principles will be centered in the two great principles "Loving God" and "Loving Thy Neighbor". There are three primary principles concerning the "Loving Thy Neighbor" category that we can conclude.

The Bible teaches to avoid stumbling-blocks. We are to avoid putting stumbling-blocks in the way of others and that most definitely can include choice of apparel. Sally's mother is concerned about the thoughts of others and has a right to be, for she is the parent.

- Rom 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this-- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.
- 1 Cor 8:9 But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

There may be someone in the congregation that finds it offensive to dress in a particular way. Perhaps some of the young men might find it hard to concentrate in worship if Sally looks like a Britney Spears stunt double. Perhaps someone would think that Sally is trying to impress the boys rather than worship, something that would be very offensive to the mind that is trying to center on God. We don't know for sure, but the odds are good in the typical congregation that someone would be distracted in that way.

When the Bible tells us that we are to "Love Our Neighbor", does that also include the young men that already have a hard enough time focusing in worship? Does not the "Thou Shalt Not Kill" principle refer to both physical and spiritual death? *James 5:19-20 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.* It may only be a bellybutton, tight T-shirt in the physical world, but in the spiritual world, it was a stumbling-block.

The Bible teaches that irreverent apparel can communicate a message of irreverence.

- Matt 22:8-13 "Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find {there,} invite to the wedding feast.' 10 "And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. 11 "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, 12 and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless. 13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

It wasn't that he did not know he was going to a wedding feast, for he showed up. It wasn't that he did not have the clothes for the feast, for the implication was that there was a choice on his behalf. The man was invited, he came dressed, but apparently lacked reverence for the king and his son. He could not give a defense for his actions, for he was speechless.

For the most part, our society stresses dressing up to show reverence. We dress up to show our date reverence while in courting mode. We dress up to show reverence at funerals while in grieving mode. We dress up to show reverence for a potential employer during hiring mode. We dress up for weddings while in marriage mode. We dress up to show reverence in court while in legal mode. Does it not make sense concerning something as important as worshipping the Ruler of the universe? What message do we send to our lost friends when they see us dress better for a company

parties, job interviews and a court appearances instead of worship? Does it not send the message that our priorities are out of line?

The Bible teaches to demonstrate modesty in apparel. This standard is there to communicate a focus on Christ through humility of outward appearance instead of becoming a distraction.

- 1 Tim 2:9-10 Likewise, {I want} women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; 10 but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness.
- 1 Pet 3:3-4 And let not your adornment be {merely} external-- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but {let it be} the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

God does not want a woman's bellybutton to be the focus of the congregation, but His Son. God does not want the focus of worship to be prospecting for dates, but looking forward to the date in the future when the sky shall be rolled back like a scroll in the second coming. Reverence can and should reflect modesty, for that is a principle found in the Bible. A person who goes to worship primarily focusing on their outward appearance rather than the inward appearance violates a principle of modesty. *2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.* Are we really "Loving God" the way we need to when making ourselves a focus of worship? If we have allowed our minds to drift to the distractions of the world when we are assembled together to focus on the Creator of the cosmos, is this what the Father wants?

The Biblically Reasoned Argument: Perhaps Sally's mother would do well to simply say the following:

- 1) We are to seek to honor God in our worship and not draw attention to ourselves instead. We really need to make sure that we are loving the Lord thy God with all our heart, particularly in our collective worship.
- 2) We cannot be a stumbling-block to others who might be distracted in their effort to worship God. There are many men in the congregation that struggle with this type of apparel in the world all week long and this should be a refuge from it. You love them and you should want to guard their heart (Sanctity of the Heart) from stumbling.
- 3) If you value their spiritual life (Sanctity of Life) then you should want to do the right thing.
- 4) Someday they are going to be married or are already married and we need to honor their marriages (Sanctity of Marriage) by keeping them pure.

Conclusion: Though there are many examples that could be discussed, they all go under the same standards. Law, principle and freedom are different, yet complimentary. If at any time the child sees inconsistency in the instruction, then respect for it will be lost. The object of instruction is to draw the child closer to the heart of the Father. If we are using the word of God to instruct, then that goal of God will be accomplished.

Closing Comment: I hope this not only aids all the parents in the class to be better instructors to their children, but also to their friends, their relatives and mostly themselves. If you use this structure in your approach to relationships, your families and friends will be closer and your children will eternally thank you.

God Bless,  
Doug Hamilton





