

Parenting Kids | Establishing Structure in Your Home

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Your kids are shaped by the environment that you create. If you don't provide structure and routine from the very beginning, you are setting yourselves up for a long, hard road. Starting with a structured environment helps to establish an important precedent that you will need as they become teenagers.

Structure keeps parents sane and kids safe

Structure provides consistency. Parents can feel more confident and in control when structure is established and kids will learn to find comfort in knowing that things stay the same. Problems in parenting arise when parents feel like the kids control them and not the other way around.

Structure starts from the beginning

From infancy, kids need to understand that they are coming into your world and they have to fit into what already exists. Establishing a schedule of when it's time to eat, sleep, and play is all part of shaping your kids to understand that life doesn't revolve around them.

Structure continues in the school-age years

As your kids grow, they will have more activities and homework to manage. This is a great way to teach responsibility and time management. Kids should have a routine that they adhere to both for getting ready for school and for how things go after school. Kids should have a clear understanding of when they wake up, when homework is completed and when it's time for bed. Having a routine saves you from arguments and power struggles if it's been well established from the beginning. Here's an added bonus- establishing structure and routine early on will reap great benefits in the teenage years.

Discussion Questions:

1. *Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.*
2. *What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?*
3. *On a scale from 1-10, how structured are you in your own life?*
4. *Do you feel like you have control in the home or do the kids run the show? Explain.*
5. *Do you agree that structure and routine help kids to feel safe? Explain.*
6. *How does keeping kids(babies) on a schedule help the kids? How does it help the parents?*
7. *What happens when structure or routine is lacking?*
8. *How does structure help school aged kids? How does it help the parents?*
9. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*

Parenting Principle #1: Put God First

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If you truly want a healthy foundation for your family, create a God-centered home for your kids.

Parenting Principle #1: Put God first

It's important to start with the right foundation. God is the creator of all things, including the family. He knows how it's all supposed to work. We need to follow His plan. If you make God a priority, that relationship will positively affect every other part of your family.

Parents need to model a pursuit of God in the home

Parents, you set the tone in your home. If you want God to be at the center of your family, then make sure God is the center of your own life, first. Your spiritual disciplines will help to shape you into the kind of parent God wants you to be and your kids will observe and follow your lead.

***Deuteronomy 6:5** And you must love the lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength*

God should be the top priority in the home

We give our time to the things we value most. Think about all the time you give to hobbies, TV, friends, sports, and God. Where you spend the majority of your time indicates what has the greatest priority in your life. God needs to be at the top of this list. Your kids should understand that taking time to read the Bible, praying together, and going to church are of the utmost importance.

***Deuteronomy 6:7** Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.*

Discussion Questions:

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.
2. What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?
3. Did you grow up in a home with spiritual values? Have those values shaped you as a parent?
4. What is the current spiritual climate in your home?
5. Do you currently make a habit of reading and praying on your own? How can your [spiritual habits](#) affect the rest of the family?
6. Read [Deuteronomy 6:5](#). What do you think this verse is asking of you? How can this verse make you a better parent?
7. Take a "time inventory" for your family. What does it say about your priorities?
8. Read [Deuteronomy 6:7](#). What are some practical things you can do, as a family, to pursue God?

9. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*

Parenting Principle #2: Discipline Is NOT Optional

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The Bible says that if you love your kids, you will discipline them. It can't be optional. Discipline isn't just punishing your kids for wrong choices. It's more about leading and training them to do the right things.

Parenting Principle #2: Discipline is not optional

God is clear on this topic. Kids need correction and parents have the responsibility to do the correcting. Our culture may try to say that discipline is bad and destructive, but don't believe it. Kids need discipline to understand what's right and wrong.

***Proverbs 13:24** Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.*

Parents should direct their kids on the right path

Parents are the leaders in the home. You need to direct your kids in the direction you want them to go. You have to teach and guide them toward healthy things. What they learn as kids will influence who they become as adults.

***Proverbs 22:6** Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.*

Good discipline turns a child's heart toward God

The goal isn't just to create compliant kids that obey outwardly but then resent you inwardly. The hope is that as you teach them about "right" and "wrong", they will have a heart that wants to **obey their parents**, and ultimately, desire to honor God above all else.

***Hebrews 12:11** No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.*

The 3 C's of discipline

- clear-establish clear rules and expectations and the consequences
- consistent-follow through every time a rule is broken
- corrective-consequence should deter them from making the same mistake again

Discussion Questions:

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.
2. What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?
3. What messages have you heard regarding discipline in our culture? Do you tend to agree or disagree?

4. *How was discipline used in your home growing up? How has it shaped you as a parent?*
5. *Read [Proverbs 22:6](#) How does discipline help to direct your kids on the right path? Do you think this verse [promises](#) that your kids will turn out well? Explain.*
6. *What can happen if you don't discipline your kids?*
7. *Talk about [the importance of disciplining kids](#). Share your thoughts and insights.*
8. *How can you encourage a heart of [obedience](#) in your kids?*
9. *Talk about [the 3 C's of discipline](#). Which one needs the most improvement in your home?*
10. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*

Parenting Principle #3: Every Kid Needs Praise

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Kids need to know that they are loved. They need to know how special they are. Failing to praise your kids leads to poor self esteem and encourages your kids to seek the attention they crave from someone else.

Parenting Principle #3: Every kid needs praise

Praise works in tandem with discipline. You need both to raise healthy kids. Discipline is for correcting wrong behavior. Praise is for building up their self esteem. You should shower your kids with words of love and encouragement.

God models this for us

God spoke loving words over Jesus affirming His value and purpose. If God took the time to do it, so should we.

***Matthew 3:16-17** After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. 17And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."*

Praise needs to be intentional and authentic

Don't speak in generalities. Be specific with each of your kids about what you love about them. Praise them for their unique qualities that are different from any other person.

Use the 3 T's of praise

- Talk – Use your words to speak love and praise over your kids
- Time – Give your time to spend with your kids. Show them they are a priority
- Touch – Show affection

Discussion Questions:

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to [set up the conversation](#).
2. Describe the "love" climate in your home growing up (affectionate/affirming or cold/distant?)
3. How have those family dynamics affected the way you express love to your kids?
4. Read [Matthew 3:16-17](#). What stands out to you about what God said? Why do you think God spoke those words?
5. How does praising your kids for specific things encourage their self esteem?
6. How well do you speak love to your kids? How could you improve?
7. How well do you show love to your kids? How could you improve?
8. What does spending time with your kids communicate to them?
9. Are you familiar with the [5 love languages](#)? What would you guess is your kid's language? How can knowing

their language help you love them more?

10. Write a *personal action step* based on this conversation.