

Child Training — Letter to Eddie and Mary

“Where there is no vision, no revelation, the people go unrestrained” (Pr 29:18). Unless we have the proper revelation of child training and the purpose for it, we, along with our children, will perish. What is the purpose of discipline? Why does the Lord discipline us? “No discipline at the time seems pleasant; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (Heb 12:11). So, if righteousness is what we’re after in our discipline, we must know what righteousness is. What is it?

Abraham’s FAITH was credited to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). Faith is both hearing from the Lord and obeying. Not just hearing, not just obeying, but hearing *and* obeying. So this is how we are to train our children — to listen, hear, and then obey. That will lead them to faith, and faith will lead them to Salvation. We must catch hold of that vision, for the Lord has given that vision to the church. The grace is here; we can have it. So, this is our responsibility as parents. If we lack wisdom, we can ask for it. The first step in gaining wisdom is to realize that we don’t have it. The second step is to find it. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. That’s why “Hear, O Israel” is the first commandment. Our children must hear us, and we must hear from the Lord in every detail, in order to properly train them (Dt 6:4).

The foundation for all child training is in Gen 18:19 (Abraham’s seed) and in Mal 4:5-6 (spirit of Elijah restoring the hearts of the fathers to their children). When our children are fully trained, they won’t need the rod any more. They’ll be sensitive to our heart — what we desire, they will have been trained to desire. When our children know this, it gives them hope and vision to receive their discipline.

Jdg 11:31-39 — Motherly instinct, like sexual instinct, is from God; but unless it is under government, it will destroy instead of help. This instinct will tend to cause us not to allow our children to go through stages of growth. When our standards for our

children are too exacting and no allowances are made for our fallen human nature, the weak and immature cannot see their own worth and value, and there is self-condemnation. Therefore, we must be patient. We force withdrawal if we don't allow time for growth. But with proper training, it will be done. People must be properly trained in order to hear from God.

Dt 30:15-20; 6; 29:29 — It's a promise to us that our children will be saved if we train them in the way they should go. We want to raise up a church without spot or wrinkle, that overcomes Satan by the word of our testimony.

Teaching vs. Training: 1) Responsible action is necessary to train children; only knowledge is required to teach. A child can't be taught unless he is first trained. 2) Children respond more to what they see than what they hear. It must be our life going into them, not just telling them what to do. 3) A child must be treated as having worth, because he does. He is created in the image of God. Then he won't have to prove who he is by attention-getting actions. 4) Must be an absence of fear. Praise, encouragement, and hope, along with discipline. 5) Discipline, in order to be effective, must be consistent, controlled severity, and applied early in life, and immediately after an offense (Pr 22:6). The church needs to be the training ground. Mt 7:28-29 — Teaching with authority is training. The difference between training and teaching is that training changes us. If we merely teach and not train, we allow children to live selfish lives. There's no use teaching the untrained. If people aren't disciplined, they are illegitimate children (Heb 12:8).

Proper training is essential from the beginning. From ages 1-4, the basic personality is formed that will last until death. We can train our child to wait until we give a command twice, three times, threaten them, or scream, before they will obey. Or we can train them to obey on the first command when we speak in a normal tone of voice. However we train them, that's how they will be. When one is properly trained, he won't depart from his first teaching if he hears another, different, teaching. TRAIN: Drill,

prepare for contest, form to shape, instruct by exercise. Sealed through the authority of God, a person learns something so deeply that he never forgets it.

1 Sam 1:11,27; 2:12; Eph 6:4 — Hannah prayed for a son to give back to God. She never doubted that her son would do anything that he was told. Like Hannah and Sarah, we need to desire and pray for children, that they would come into the world as wanted children. 1 Sam 3:13 — Eli taught them, but he didn't train them. He loved God, was sincere, was a priest, but God cut off Eli's children because they weren't properly trained. How can we prevent our descendants from going into apostasy? Proper training (Pr 22:15; 13:24; 23:13-14; 29:15-18; 19:18).

They must be disciplined early in life and early in offense. "NO, no. I'll wait until he's older, then he'll understand more!" "If I discipline him, he'll only rebel more." Does God really mean what He says? If we don't do it, we don't believe it. Ezra 9:8-9 — We must have that peg of commitment in order to receive discipline.

This means that we shouldn't give anyone a command unless we see to it that he obeys. The rod must come wherever there is disobedience. Let's not ever use the rod unless it hurts. It should be that the child would never want another spanking. He won't want it to be repeated if it hurts. This is love. If there's no pain, he will not know that disobedience causes pain to his father. This is love. Superficial love wants another way, but real love comes at a great cost. Real caring hurts. We're raising up illegitimate children in an orphanage if we aren't disciplining our children. And what does God do after discipline? He comforts us and restores us.

When discipline is used consistently, it is never associated with anger, because there is no stored-up wrath. Acts of disobedience are not gauged by degrees. It is the same discipline for every act of disobedience. The motive is not for us to have nice children. That won't give us grace to carry on. It is to bring them up into Salvation. They must learn to live by their conscience. We teach them to obey their conscience by

disciplining them when they disobey their conscience (do something that makes them feel “bad” inside).

The child is frustrated if he doesn't know his limits, which are set to him by discipline (Col 3:20-21). Lack of discipline is hate; this hate is subconsciously implanted in the child, and he reacts with rebellion. This is why we have rebellious people today. No limits have been set for children because there is no love. We are to become like Yahshua and submit our will to his will, so we should bring the will of our child into submission to our will. As the child grows older, he transfers that submission to Messiah. It is a painful process to wait too long to discipline our children. Calloused hearts are difficult to break. Jer 13:23 — Can a leopard change its spots? Eph 4:17-18 — Each child is different, but the rod never changes, and neither does God's Word. Will all this discipline break the spirit of a person? No. It allows our spirit to flourish. It is only the pruned vine that produces fruit. Christianity is not just academics — it's warfare.

We need training, not just teaching. Concerning the church, God speaks of grace, but speaking of the kingdom of God, He speaks of responsibility. God will work until we obey His will instantaneously. Our goal is that our children will obey without our using the rod. We don't discipline for curiosity, or natural activity, but only for disobedience (Dt 6:6-9; 20-24; 11:19; 12:28; 31:12-13; 32:46; Ps 34:11; 78:4-8; Isa 38:19; Joel 1:3; Pr 3:12; 13:24; 19:18; 22:6-15; 23:13-14; 29:15-17; Jn 21:15; Eph 6:4; Col 3:21; 1 Tim 3:4-5,12; Titus 1:6; 2:4; 2 Tim 2:15). God wants to instruct us with His eye (Ps 32:8).

In raising our children, we want to prepare them to receive the Kingdom of God. Jn 15:14 — You are My friends if you obey Me. Heb 2:11 — He's not ashamed to call us friends and brothers. Pr 29:19 — There will come a time when we won't have to discipline our children anymore. But a servant won't be corrected by words or teaching alone, but only by the authority of one who loves him. It is only the respect for discipline that will cause him to act like who he is. If we know who we really are, then we have no

problem in recognizing who God is. Without proper discipline, children can't know who they are. Rebellious parents will produce rebellious children. We reap what we sow.

Messiah doesn't come down in His glorified body to discipline us — He confines His Spirit to a place. If the mother says, "Wait till your daddy comes home, then you're going to get it!" this only instills fear of judgment for the child. The mother must discipline the child so that when the father comes, the child had great expectation and love. In the same way, the church, the mother, must discipline us, so that we just don't wait for the coming of Messiah with fear of judgment. It's better to be too severe than to under-discipline them.

When a child is rowdy, the command should be given politely, but sternly, once. The reason we administer discipline is to save his soul. We have a vision that our children are being raised for the glory of God. If we are raising our children just to be good children, then we will fizzle out and we won't persevere and be consistent (1 Jn 3:18). If we don't sufficiently discipline, then we strengthen their rebellion.

Some say, "I'm not going to discipline my children until they can reason." Then, that is too bad; they will never learn to reason rightly. Discipline brings reason. The Lord says, "Come, let us reason together" (Isa 1:18). But unless one has been raised with discipline, he cannot reason. People of the world cannot reason with God. If they would, they would become believers. The rod is the authority in a child's life. Rom 13 speaks of all government. All government is meant to prepare us for the Kingdom of God. Bad government is better than no government. Train a child up so that he might reason intelligently. Mt 16:7-8 — The disciples here weren't reasoning correctly. Lk 12 — Here is the bizarre reasoning of modern man; it's normal to man's way of thinking. Heb 5:8-14 — Yahshua learned obedience through the things He suffered.

Failure to train brings about an ICHABOD (1 Sam 4:20) in the next generation, for if our children don't grow up to bring about the Kingdom of God, then the glory has departed from Israel. We can't expect perfection from our children, though, and be

defensive for their faults. We are family units within a larger family, the church. So we can't be so judgmental and point the finger, because it's our fault, too. Ezra 9:8 — We've been given a little relief in our bondage. Godly men of old — prophets, priests, and kings — all failed to raise up their children in the way they should go. Israel failed, the first church failed, everyone thus far has failed. Mal 4:5-6 has not been fulfilled. If we do it, we'll be the first ones. But someone MUST do it! It takes the indwelling Holy Spirit to bring about the consistency we need to enforce our commands that we give to our children. It takes a people to do it. People who will be their brother's keeper. The church started out being a sheepfold but ended up being a zoo. It's our responsibility to bring our generation under submission. God must continue laboring until we obey Yahshua like Yahshua obeys the Father. He that loves a child is diligent to discipline him. If our children grow up to carry out the Father's will on the earth, we have truly loved them (Pr 17:10; 27:6; 29:1; 12:1; 10:17).

As we say that it's better to go to heaven with one eye than to go to hell with two eyes, it's better to go to heaven with welts than to go to hell without welts. Our children need to respect us as we respect our heavenly Father. It's the rod, respect, and reason. We can only reason on the basis of the rod. [Even when the children are only a few weeks old, they can dominate the parents. It doesn't hurt children to cry. If the mother can't go to the bathroom, cook, or do something because she has to carry the baby to keep it from crying, then she is being controlled by the child.]¹ If our children aren't properly disciplined, then in 10 or 15 years, they'll lead a rebellion in the church. The married people must train the unmarried as to discipline. The older married couples must train the younger married couples. We must be true to the gospel we've received

¹ This was in the original teaching, but is superceded by later teachings as greater understanding has come to us regarding the care of infants. See *Child Training — Warm, Tight Hands* (1998.08.05-T01); and *Clingy — Letter from ha-Emeq to Sharon Harris* (1994.05.03-L01)

about disciplining immediately after the first act of disobedience. Otherwise, we strengthen their rebellion. Children's obedience will express their submissive spirit.

Our children are different and they will walk, talk, and crawl at different times. We need not compare them with each other. Neither should we compare ourselves. We're different, and we're part of one another and we should live that way. Also, our children will mature a lot faster than children in the world. This will happen because our children will be raised in a proper environment where all the good traits of those in the Church will go into them. They will mature in every way, not just knowledge of the mind, but socially, mentally, emotionally, and psychologically.

Do not fear using the rod, because authority is established to children by reproof and discipline. Lk 16:10 — If we are faithful in small things, we will be faithful in much. Pr 4:23 — Our children are our priority; they must continue the same work that we have started. All authority is from God. When you come against authority, you come against God. When our children come against our authority, they are trying to destroy God's order and authority.

God tolerates less and less, and expects more and more from us as we mature. It is the same with our children. We set a precedent of restraint from the beginning. A child is completely blank, knowing nothing; it is ours to fill them with a correct spirit, a spirit of discipline. When a child starts acting on what he knows, then discipline begins. What we are trying to get at is the rebellion within them. It manifests itself in acts of disobedience but also, especially in older children, in attitudes.

Frustration sets in when we must repeat commands — frustration in us, insecurity in them. God is concerned with the root of rebellion in us; we're concerned with roots of rebellion in our children. Whining, pouting, excessive crying — in us it shows up in grumbling (Ex 16; Num 11). The children should know that we know what is best for them. Therefore, we should not tolerate their whining, because God does not tolerate ours (Heb 3-4). We don't want them to grow up with their infantile emotions undealt

with. Grumbling is an effort on our part to influence each other or the Lord. It is the effort on our children's part to manipulate the parents. If we give in to their complaints, we have shown them how to manipulate us. The child doesn't know what is good for him. All he knows is that he wants what he wants. They must learn to operate on our will, as we must learn to function on God's will. We conform them by restraint. We reinforce their proper behavior with encouragement.

Don't mistake compromise for mercy.

The child can't be raised above the level of the parents. A spirit is passed on, the spirit of the parents; it is their life, transmitted to the child. Training is communication. Discipline won't come by following the letter of "one command, then discipline." A machine can do that by the letter. Discipline requires life on our part to pass on to our children. We must be in fellowship with the Lord in order to hear from Him how to raise our children. It's impossible without His wisdom.

Discipline can't be done in a distasteful way, uncontrolled anger, a "holy" manner (overly calm or efficacious), or in a withdrawn fashion. We must discipline in controlled severity, expressing our true heart, that we are displeased with them. This is true communication. The more we communicate, the more we care. In whatever degree we are concerned, to that degree we will penetrate the child's life. If we are communicating, the child will learn to hate rebellion; if we aren't, the child will learn to hate discipline. If we hate discipline, we'll teach our children to hate it, too.

If they go into a frenzy when disciplined, they are escaping their discipline. They are storing up their disobedience and rebellion for another time. We can quench a child and intimidate them if we are too harsh with them. Discipline won't substitute for affection, or love or any other needs of children, but it is foundational. Without it, no other need will be fully met.

[Clinging is a result of over-attention or the wrong kind of attention. We must let our children grow up and away from us. Let them do it. Teach them not to be overly

dependent upon the parents.]² Don't create an unrealistic world around your children so that when they leave you, they lose their bearings. They come to expect this abnormal treatment as normal. Continually train our children to receive other people and value others.

We should not teach our children to indulge in fantasy. How much do we need fantasy? How much does God dwell in fantasy? A doll seems innocent, until we realize that our children are developing unreal relationships with inanimate objects. Some of our children would rather play with plastic toys than spend time with the barn animals. This can only be the result of some spirit that gives them *good feelings*. This unnatural affection develops with a stuffed toy, or eventually with a piece of carved wood (Rom 1) in an image of man or a beast. This is the root of our own idolatry — we get excitement and good feelings from antiques, pretty clothes, pets, alcohol, books, games, sports, etc.

How much would God provide plastic toys, dolls, and other toys for our children, if our relatives wouldn't send them to us? What need do we have of these things? Our children need to be involved in life, in reality, in the things we are doing; that is, unless we are not doing anything worthwhile. If we are expressing the Kingdom of God, then our children should have that purpose (Dt 5-6).

It's very difficult to be Israel. Always the world has come into Israel. Israel has taken on the customs of other nations. Much of the world is in us and it's only through much suffering that we can be restored. It's only by the Lord's great mercy and faithfulness that we could ever be sanctified.

Our children need the opportunity to obey or disobey; we can't remove potential situations where our child might disobey. Rather, give them clear-cut limits and when they obey, praise them and if they disobey, then discipline. At times, we as individuals

² Again, this is superseded by the wisdom expressed in the letter, *Clingy – Letter from ha-Emeq to Sharon Harris* (1994.05.03-L01).

make mistakes — we'll be too lenient, or too harsh, but the church will help bring us to a balance.

How can we be sure that we won't go apostate in the future? By properly training our children. Any age can understand the rod — he doesn't have to be able to reason before the rod is given. It is too late to discipline when they are able to reason. Never give a child a command just for the sake of seeing whether he will obey or not — always with a purpose. God hates purposelessness. If we give our child a command, then we must make sure it is obeyed. Discipline always leads us somewhere, so there is comfort and forgiveness after repentance. Whenever discipline is consistent on the first act of disobedience, there is never frustration. It is inconsistency that frustrates our children and us. How frustrated we would be if the sun were inconsistent in rising!

It's better to be too severe in our discipline than too lenient. It is very difficult to increase discipline later on, but it isn't difficult to decrease. Children learn to reason wrongly if left to themselves. Don't think that we can shun the government of God now, and then just walk right into the Kingdom when Messiah returns. Yahshua's time was spent teaching the disciples to rightly reason (Mk 8:16-31; 9:33).

If we wait until the child can reason before we begin discipline, we have waited too long. It will be a marvelous day when we can say to our children, "Come now and let us reason together." If there is proper discipline, then we should be able to begin to reason with our children after about 4 or 5. Our purpose is to reason with them. We won't have to spend so much time with them, getting them to reason, because we've spent a few years in disciplining them to eradicate rebellion and restore obedience beginning with planet earth.

Training involves the cultivation of sound judgment, knowing the difference between good and evil. Mt 16:7-8; Mk 8:16-21 — All the hope of heaven was on the disciples. In order to reason together, the faculty of mind to judge good from evil must be exercised. Rom 12:1 — We, very cognitively, give our bodies as a living sacrifice

because it's a rational thing to do. We need vision so that we can endure to see the goal of our labor.

Dt 29:29; 30:15-20 — We are not just responsible for our own generation, but for our children and grandchildren. How many of us believe that we are stewards of God's child? If we love our children and want to obey God, then we must take a rod and discipline them for disobedience. We know that there has been far too much teaching in Christianity. Before we teach, we must train. Training is teaching with authority. Obedience comes at the cost of pain to ourselves. A common fear is the fear of caring.

Eph 5:23; 6:1-4 — The husband establishes his authority with his wife by loving her as his own body. He establishes it with his children by the rod and reproof (Pr 29:15). The father carries the weight of discipline because he carries the rod. The bulk of child rearing happens with the parents. The help of others is useless unless supported by the parents.

Child rearing is a life-transfer. The child's essence is shaped through discipline and instruction. What is communicated is demonstrated in the child's life — the reflection of his parents. Our children must know that they have personally displeased us when they are disobedient; their disobedience touches us.

WARNING: Be consistent. Child abuse comes from frustration, which comes from inconsistency. Security comes from knowing where his boundaries and limits are and where their transgressions are. Ps 50:17 — First, the parents must love discipline. Not the pain itself, but the peaceful fruit of righteousness that it produces. We must pray that God will give us grace to raise our children.

The wife's authority over children comes from submission to the husband. If this order is not present, then the breakdown is passed on to the child. Chaos results. Eph 6 — Respect brings with it submission. Submission is something wrought in the heart of a child. We train our children to fear and reverence us so that they will fear and reverence God. God is the Father of all. Authority that doesn't command respect is dead. If Father

is not the pillar of authority, then the wife can't do anything; children won't receive discipline. God's problem in the universe is that His authority over man has been ignored.

A character defect can be traced through several generations, so we must communicate the life of God, else we'll communicate the sins of our fathers. God deals with the heart of man; just good behavior won't do. Eventually, respect replaces the rod and they no longer need the rod, for they have learned obedience. Their judgments are our judgments; their mind is our mind.

The rod brings respect. When you respect your father, you respect all authority because authority wields the rod. In a broad sense, lack of communication is our biggest problem. Inconsistency breeds insecurity. Mercy isn't not disciplining; mercy isn't inconsistency. When discipline is inconsistent then the children become calloused to discipline — they could get 100 spankings a day and they won't know what's going on. Soon, because discipline brings with it no limits, no dimensions, the child begins to hate it and he lies to avoid it. He'll become deceptive to get around it. Cunning is developed to the point of the inconsistency and insecurity passed on to them. They won't admit their sin and disobedience, even when they're confronted with it. They voice their frustrations through whining. Thus, the child grows up with an attitude of insecurity, unable to believe God, and won't submit to authority. He doesn't know the true penalty for disobedience.

Pr 21:15-16 — The execution of justice is joy for the righteous but is a terror to the workers of lawlessness. A man who drifts from understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead. He who spares his rod hates his son (Pr 13:24). This is a high standard of justice. Many will be terrified at the standard in the last days and will desert that standard. They will drift away from what they have heard. But he who loves his son will be "diligent to discipline him." The ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it produces vegetation, but if it yields thorns and thistles it is worthless and ends up

being burned (Heb 6:7). 1) DILIGENT TO DISCIPLINE and 2) DISCIPLINES DILIGENTLY can be kingdoms apart in their meanings. We may be diligent to discipline but the discipline that we administer may not be with diligence within the standard we have received. The difference is according to our hearts (Ex 19:5).