



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

Biblical parenting is training children in godliness in a way that is tailor-made for your child. Children won't grow well in a one-size-fits-all style of parenting. They'll bust out the seams if we try to force fit them. They yearn to be known intimately and personally, which requires that we care enough to spend time with our children; care enough to listen to their thoughts and share their feelings; and, when needed, care enough to confront.

Confrontation done well isn't condemnation, criticism, or humiliation. It doesn't erupt in angry outbursts or leak out as sarcastic fault-finding. It is speaking truth in love, which is perhaps the highest expression of care (Ephesians 4:15).

In this study, we'll take a biblical tour of God's thoughts on caring confrontation, and our first stop is the hall of wisdom: Proverbs.



### DIGGING DEEPER

In the *Searching the Scriptures* process a helpful exercise is determining what type of book you're studying. The Bible is comprised of all manner of literature including several books of poetry. The Old Testament book of Proverbs falls into the category of *books of poetry*. This collection of books is also sometimes referred to as *wisdom literature*. Take some time to read through the introductory material in your study Bible at the beginning of the book of Proverbs. Or read that same section in a commentary to help orient you to the unique nature of this magnificent collection of poetical expression.

In Proverbs, we learn *wisdom's perspective on reproof*. When God confronts, wise people see beyond the sting of reproof to God's benevolent hand. They understand God's motive is to protect them by correcting behavior that will lead to greater pain. Consequently, they don't resist His reproofs but welcome them.

## Quotable

*Confrontation  
comes after thought  
and prayer and at  
just the right time.  
Speak the truth in  
love so that your  
child can grow.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD  
Or loathe His reproof,  
For whom the LORD loves He reproofs,  
Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights. (Proverbs 3:11–12 NASB)

*Delight* is in the heart of a loving father who firmly pulls back his child from stepping in front of a speeding car. He cherishes his child as he saves her from disaster with a corrective hand. Children, however, feel only the yank. They don't see the danger they narrowly avoided, and they may lash out in anger, "You're mean, Daddy!" Words such as "This is for your good" don't diffuse their resistance.

However, what warnings do Proverbs 15:5, 10, and 32 issue to those who resist correction?

Children must learn by experience that, "If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself" (15:32 NLT). In addition, parents who *neglect to discipline* will harm their children—as well as the unfortunate people in their children's unruly path. Avoid confrontation, adopt a peace-at-any-price approach, and you'll pay a steeper price in the end.

Proverbs also teaches us *wisdom's guidelines for reproof*. After reading the following verses, answer the questions below.

Like apples of gold in settings of silver  
Is a word spoken in right circumstances. (25:11 NASB)

Faithful are the wounds of a friend,  
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. (27:6 NASB)

In the end, people appreciate honest criticism  
far more than flattery. (28:23 NLT)

Who has the right to reprove?



What is the lasting value of the wound?

Friendship includes the freedom to do what?

What harm could listening to flattery cause?

How should criticism be done?

At what time should reproof come?

Reproof done *in private* with words that *build up*, not condemn, and are given *at the right time* will give life to your children. If they accept them, they will dwell among the wise (healthy peers) and will acquire understanding (of how life works). Parents couldn't wish for more!



### A Closer Look

The next stop in our biblical tour takes us to the correspondence room where we find Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Here he gives counsel to children and their parents.

#### *Counsel to Children*

What are the two commands for children in the following verse?

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1–3 NIV)



Obedience is action; it involves a child's behavior. Honor, which conveys the ideas of respect and devotion, is attitude; it involves a child's thoughts and emotions. Both right action and right attitude are essential. To obey without respect is defiant compliance; to respect without obedience is empty lip-service.

What is missing in these scenarios of compliance and lip-service? *A trusting relationship.* At the heart of children's obedience is a trusting relationship in which they are secure in their parents' love. They know that their parents truly desire what's best for them, so they are willing to accept reproof and submit their will to their parents' will. Submission is the theme of this entire section in Ephesians which addresses husbands, wives, children, parents, workers, and bosses: "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (5:21 NIV).

Why does God instruct children to obey and respect their parents? Can you spot the two reasons in the verses above?

On the flipside, how might things *not* go well for disobedient and disrespectful children when they grow up and get married, try to hold a job, and live as citizens in a community?

#### ***Counsel to Parents***

How can parents help their children avoid the inevitable life storms that defiance and disrespect stir up? The apostle Paul advises fathers to take a balanced approach; mothers can learn from his instructions as well.

Read Ephesians 6:4. What does Paul warn against? What does he command?



Two Greek words in this verse are worth excavating. First, *parorgizete* means “provoke to anger.” Compare its usage in a parallel passage, Colossians 3:21. How might a father provoke his children to anger or, as the word appears in other translations, “aggravate” or “exasperate” them? According to Colossians 3:21, what happens to the child as a result?

The second Greek word is *ektrepheite*, which means “nourish.” Compare its usage in Ephesians 5:29. In this verse, Paul challenges men to nourish their wife just as they nourish themselves—and to view Christ’s love for the church as a model. As a father, a man must also create a nourishing environment for his children by providing for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Compare the two words in the following chart. We’ll list a few descriptors, and you can fill in some of your own.

<i>PARORGIZETE</i>	<i>EKTREPHETE</i>
Exasperate	Nourish
Provoke	Encourage
Aggravate	Praise
Nag	Affirm
Lecture	Support
Harass	Clear Boundaries
Ridicule	Patient Instruction





### Bring It Home

Confrontation is a dance between two partners who must learn to step in sync with one another. The confronter moves first with a gentle hand on his partner's back and an assertive step forward. The partner responds, trusting the gesture and submitting in turn. Back and forth the partners move, giving and taking, saying what's needed, and responding with respect—all in time to the music of love.

Here are a few guidelines for the dance.

- *Think and pray before you say anything.* If you react rashly and rush your reproof, you'll surely step on someone's toes. It will be difficult for others to trust your next move.
- *Don't share the reproof with anyone else.* The dance is for two people. Be wary of talking about your child to all your friends—and never when your child is in earshot.
- *As the change occurs, affirm!* Notice the subtle movements of your partner's response, and celebrate his or her success!

Do you need to confront one of your children? Take time now to pray and use the space below to write down the words you need to say. You'll know that you've done well when your child realizes how much you care, respects you for talking straight, and experiences the benefits of listening, learning, and changing.



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for Your reproofs which come at just the right time, always for the right reason, and in ways that we never forget. Give me Your words, timing, and lasting results as I reprove those I love for the sake of peace and harmony in my home. In the name of Jesus, amen.*



# BIBLICAL PARENTING

## Accepting Reproof from Those Who Love Us

*Selected Proverbs and Ephesians 6:1–4*

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



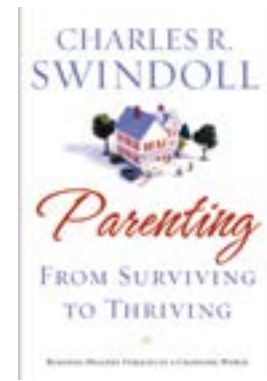
### Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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