

BLUEPRINTS: Under Construction: Developing Disciplineⁱ Part 1: Hebrews 12:4-11

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, church family. I want to say a special welcome to those of you that are guests with us today. Thank you for entrusting us with your Sunday. It is our prayer that our church already feels like home to you.

We love to connect with our guests. We would ask you to text the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. Just follow the instructions from there.

Or you can stop by Guest Connect located in the lobby. We have a team that would like to meet you and give you a gift as a way of saying thank you for being with us this morning. Thanks again for being here today.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are in a teaching series we've called Blueprints: Building Families by God's design. We're looking into God's Word as it is our blueprint. This is an important topic because godly families lead to good and godly societies. So far in our study, we've looked at the foundation of God's design. Gathering the power tools of prayer and building the structure of the walls of a healthy marriage. Today, we are beginning a 2-part look at what it means to be under construction, developing discipline in your home. Because I have a lot to learn when it comes to this subject, I gathered a lot of resources. As a result, when I was writing out this message, I really wanted to do it justice and I just couldn't in the time we have allotted. So, I am going to address a portion of the subject today and then pick it up next week. Okay with you?

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: 6th Grade Forgery

Talking about the subject of discipline, I can remember some of the attitude adjustments, as my parents called it, that I received at a kid. I know I've shared this with some of you, but there is one instance that really stands out in my mind. I was in the 6th grade.

I don't know if they still do this in schools today or not, but when I was a kid, halfway through the 6 weeks grading period, teachers would send progress reports home if your grade was below 70. And if you received a progress

report, you had to take it home, get it signed by your parents, and then bring it back to the teacher. Well, I got a progress report in math. Now, my parents took my school very seriously. So, my heart sank in my chest when my teacher handed me that progress report because I knew what was coming. And you know, there is never a good time to deliver bad news to your parents, so I didn't tell my parents about the progress report.

Well, when I got to school the next day, I knew I needed to turn in that report to my teacher. So, I started looking through my bag and found a permission slip that my mom signed. Yeah, you know what's about to happen, don't you?! I laid that signed permission slip under my progress report and began tracing my mom's signature. Not a good idea! The reason it was not a good idea is because, what I didn't know. My teacher was looking over my shoulder watching me forge my mom's signature.

My teacher asked me, "Chris, what are you doing?" Caught red-handed, I said, "My mom was a little shaky when she signed this so I'm fixing her signature for her." She didn't buy that lie. So, she sent me to the office.

After telling the principal what happened, he said that I had to call my mom and tell her. This was back when cell phones didn't exist, so we called my mom at work. She wasn't at her desk, so it went to her voicemail. Whew! In the clear.

That's when the principal said, "Okay. Let's call your dad." To which I said, "No, no. I'm sure my mom will be back soon. Let's try one more time." The principal didn't think that was a good idea, so we called my dad. And to my horror, he answered the phone. I swallowed real big and told him what I had done. And then the line that we all hated to hear, "We are going to deal with this when I get home." Man, I knew I was toast. He then said, "Put the Principal back on the phone." And all I heard was, "Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Yes, sir." And the look on the principal's face was not pleasant.

Well, I was dreading the day ending. That final bell rung, and I didn't want to go home. But when my dad got home, he sent me into my room. He calmly pulled up a chair in front of me and gave me a life lesson. I remember to this day, 35 years later! He talked about respecting myself and other. He told me that I have the great privilege of carrying my last name. He shared with me all about the great people and family that our last name represents. And he said, "Chris, your actions did not represent you or our family well." Man, I was in tears!

Then, he asked me to open my Bible and read a verse of Scripture. Proverbs 13:24. Some of you parents know that verse by heart. *“**24Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.**”* And after reading that verse, my dad calmly said, “I’m doing this because I love you. Turn around.”

Now, what occurred next is the creation of a sound that is forever etched in my brain. The sound of his belt moving swiftly through his belt loops. **[make the sound]**. Anyone else know that sound?! PTSD. Bro, I’m telling you that was a terrifying sound.

My dad gave me one lick across the backside and said, “That’s for misrepresenting your Great, Great, Great Grandfather.” The second, “For your Great, Great Grandfather.” The third, “For your Great Grandfather.” And in pain I shouted, “How many family members do I have?!”

Discipline. You know what? I didn’t forge another signature again! That’s for sure.

When it comes to the topic of discipline, we realize that we are a family under construction. And I realize that there are many different views and approaches to discipline. And some views might tend to be more controversial than others. But I think the thing that we all share in common, those of you that are parents, is that the biggest heartaches and heartbreaks we’ve ever experienced in our lives is over our kids. And when it comes to the topic of disciplining our kids, we often feel like failures, or we just don’t know what to do.

Well, the Bible gives us a framework, a construction plan, a blueprint to how we can accomplish the goal of disciplining our kids and the next generation. And today we are going to look at that framework by looking at Hebrews, chapter 12. I invite you to turn there with me in your copy of God’s Word. We are going to zoom in on verses 4 through 11 this morning as we seek counsel on developing discipline in our homes.

BACKGROUND:

Let me mention a little bit of a background of what is going on in Hebrews 12. Many scholars believe the Book of Hebrews to be a sermon that was penned and distributed as a letter. The target audience was Jewish Christians. Former Jews that had trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior and were now Christians. They

were experiencing persecution from their friends and relatives who were not happy about their conversion.ⁱ

These newfound believers started well, obeying God. But times were getting tough, and they are drifting. They know what to do, but they are not doing it. Much like our kids, right? We raise them to know right from wrong, but they often choose wrong. And so, God disciplines them to get them back on track and moving in the right direction. And in this passage, we are going to see 5 truths that will serve as a framework for discipline in our homes. We will look at the first 2 today and then the remaining 3 next week.

MESSAGE:

The first thing that we are going to see is...

1) The Mandate for discipline.

The Bible requires us to provide discipline in our homes. Look at verses 4-5 of Hebrews 12. *“**4In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.**”* A couple of key things in these verses.

First, the word struggle. Specifically, the “struggle against sin.” The word translated “struggle” literally means to contend, to strive against.ⁱⁱⁱ And it is written as a present participle^{iv}, an ongoing action. In other words, in your constant struggle against sin, discipline is going to be necessary.

Now, when it comes to our kids, our little bundles of joy, let me share something with you. They are not little angels. They are little sinners. I know that because I have kids! HAHA! Our kid’s natural tendency is toward sin and selfishness. Have you ever noticed that you don’t have to teach your kids to steal, cheat, and lie. That comes naturally. Why? Because they are little sinners. So, we have to teach them to not steal, to not cheat and to not lie. The word translated as “discipline,” by the way, literally means to train and educate.^v So, we must provide instruction for our kids.

And here’s a truth, sin only moves in one direction: destruction. I came across a study from the U.S. Department of Education dating back to the 2017-2018 school year. And I can only assume that these statistics have probably gotten worse. It revealed 2.6 million students were given in-school suspensions that

year. And another 2.5 million out-of-school suspensions. That is 1 out of every 9 students. And this study didn't factor in the 101,652 expulsions that year! And listen, that's not an indictment against our school system, you understand. It's more of an indictment against parents. Simply put, our kids are self-destructing. And that is a result of a lack of discipline.

But you know, sin moving in one direction is true of adults, too. If we are not corrected in our sin, we will experience the destruction that sin brings. Lust and anger and pride will bring destruction. And so, therefore, discipline is vital. It certainly is vital for the protection of our kids.

But also, when we discipline our kids, they come to the realization that they are sinners. That they are in need of correction and forgiveness. And that's important. That sets the stage for when the Holy Spirit comes knocking on their hearts pointing them to Jesus as Savior, the ultimate forgiver of their sin. Because without discipline, they don't come to the realization that they need Jesus. And that has implications on their eternity.

The second thing we see in regard to a mandate for discipline is in verse 5. This verse begins a quotation of Proverbs 3, verses 11 and 12. It says we are not to, "***regard lightly the discipline of the Lord.***" What does it mean to regard lightly? Well, it can mean a couple of things.

We regard lightly when we disregard discipline's importance. When we say, "Oh well. I went to the school of hard knocks and looks like our daughter will as well." "What's the point of discipline? It creates too much of a tension in our family." "Oh you know, boys will be boys." And what we are doing is taking lightly the role of discipline in our homes.

I understand the fear that we all battle when it comes to this subject. Many of us still deal with the negative effect of how our parents disciplined us. And the last thing we want to do is pass that onto our kids. I get it. But it is not loving to not discipline. The most loving thing you can do is discipline your kiddos. Next week, in part 2 of this message, we are going to see that the motive behind discipline is love.

But listen, God disciplines us. He sets the example by allowing us to experience the painful consequences of our sinful choices so that we will not go down that road again. And if God disciplines us, and our kids are on loan from

God, and they are, then we are to discipline them. When we provide structure in our homes, we are modeling the discipline of God. And our kids would do well to understand discipline so that when they experience God's discipline as an adult, they will tune their ear to His promptings.

When we consider the whole counsel of God, we come to the conclusion that discipline in our family is mandated. The Bible is full of counsel regarding the importance of discipline. The word "discipline" is mentioned 60 times.^{vi} One time for every second of every minute of our lives. Listen, when we consider the Biblical mandate, we realize that we must do the hard work of providing discipline in our home. It is absolutely crucial.

I read another **study** that showed that as of January of this year, 2024, the United States ranks 6th on a list of countries in the world with the largest number of prisoners per capita.^{vii} If our kids do not experience consequences now, they will later.

If for nothing else, discipline is necessary for the sake of our society. Psalm 112:1-3 says, "***1Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments! 2His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. 3Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.***" Let me just say this. Future generational blessing doesn't hinge on who is elected President. Hear me. I'm not saying that elections don't matter because they do. But blessing hinges on a godly society. And you know what? Godly societies produce godly leaders. And a godly society hinges on disciplined kids who delight in God's commandments.

I'm like Forest Gump. That's about all I've got to say about that. But, we see, first, the mandate for discipline. Secondly, ...

2) The Means of discipline.

This is important. Because the Bible doesn't just give us a mandate, it gives us the means, the ways, we are to discipline our kids. Look at verses 5 and 6. "***My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.***" Two key words here. Reprove and chastise. These are the means by which we discipline, train, our kids.

First, the word “reprove.” The word in the original language means to expose, to show to be guilty.^{viii} It carries the idea of convincing someone with evidence. This means that discipline involves words. We train our kids by way of verbal instruction. That’s the first tool in providing discipline.

Secondly is the word, “chastise.” That word means to flog, to scourge.^{ix} It is an action. That word is used in the Bible when God sent severe pain in the best eternal interest of the believer.^x It was also used at Jesus’ crucifixion.

Now, I just felt the room shift. Some of you are like, “Babe, I can’t wait to get home because The Bible says to scourge our kids!” Hold your horses Rambo. Others of you are like, “I can’t believe the Pastor is encouraging parents to beat their kids.” Just wait a minute, before you call the newspaper.

Nowhere in the Bible does it give the okay to abuse. And I’m going to give some practical tools here in just a minute. But let’s be clear, abuse is criminal. Verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or any type of abuse is condemned in Scripture. People are created in the image of God and deserve dignity and respect. That’s true of your kids.

But what Scripture is urging us with here is to employ both words (reprove) and actions (chastise). Words are instruction and actions are consequences. Not abuse. But I believe it is not either or, but both and. We are to use both words and actions when we discipline our kids.

When we are all talk and no action, we become parents manipulated by our kids and they don’t understand real consequences. And that will NOT serve them well in their future. You know what I mean by all talk and no action, right? To say, “I’m going to ground you if you don’t stop,” but not actually do it. Or to actually ground them for 2 weeks but let up after a couple days. The Bible says that *he who spares the rod, spoils the child*.

But likewise, if we are all action, then we become overbearing and our kids don’t understand why they are in trouble but just that they want to get out of the house as soon as possible, and you push them away. Times like when we just say, “Go to your room. I can’t believe you did that,” but not provide instruction on what they did wrong. The Bible says *don’t exasperate your children*. We must walk the tension between words and actions.

Now, you get to determine the words and the actions taken. I’m not going to stand here and tell you one way is the right way. In fact, our experience with our 4 kids is that they are each different. And, as a result, we discipline them each differently. There’s consistency, but difference. I can just look at Carsyn and Eden and they melt. Our boys, on the other hand, not now, but back then, required the ruler of law at times. You know what I’m saying?

How do you practically use words and actions?^{xi} Well, stay composed, communicate clearly and effectively. Do what you say you’re going to do, make it realistic. Take away something they love. Listen, parents, if you pay for the phone or the car, that’s yours. Them having those things is not a right. Then communicate sadness. I’m sorry you made that choice. I’m sorry you put yourself in this position. And then offer forgiveness. I love you still. You’re forgiven, but you still have to suffer the consequences. Words and actions.

Now, that we know the means, it is important to know the difference between punishment and discipline. They are not always the same. I want to share with you something that I came across in my study this week. This is a table taken from Chip Ingram’s *Effective Parenting in a Defective World: How to Raise Kids that Stand Out From the Crowd*.^{xii} [show graphic](#)

	Punishment	Discipline
Purpose	To inflict penalty for an offense	To train for correction and maturity
Focus	Past misdeeds	Future correct acts
Attitude	Hostility and frustration on the part of the parent	Love and concern on the part of the parent
Resulting emotion in the child	Fear and guilt	Security

Really, the difference between punishment and discipline is the difference between behavior modification and character. Punishment addresses the behavior whereas discipline address the heart. Here’s the kicker. When our character is developed, our behavior follows. Next week we are going to see that our goal isn’t better behaved kids, it’s to produce kids who know and follow

Jesus. And out of a relationship with Jesus, the Holy Spirit guides and directs them.

CONCLUSION:

Next week we are going to pick back up and look at the motive for, the mission, and the maturity of discipline. Feel free, go ahead and study the remainder of Hebrews 12 and get a head start on it.

Parenting is hard. But it is worth it. Cathy and I are far from perfect on this. Lord knows I've made a ton of mistakes when it comes to disciplining our kids. But thank God for His grace and mercy. But I will say, most people dread the teenage years of their kids. But we have come to love it. We laugh with our kids. We are amazed by our kids. We enjoy our teenagers. Now, it's not all bliss I can assure you of that! But dedication to the important task of discipline will reap major rewards later. Trust me.

If you are here today and you sense The Lord speaking to your heart, we want to pray with you. At the end of our service this morning, our elders will make their way to the front and be here to visit with you. If you'd like to talk to someone about what it means to trust Jesus as Lord, we want to visit with you. If you have a prayer concern, maybe for your kids, or even if it's unrelated, we want to pray with you. If you'd like counsel and direction, we're here for you.

Thanks again, Bo, for being here and sharing with us about the important work of the Gideons. If you'd like to support the work of the Gideons with a financial gift, you can hand that to Bo or designate your gift by way of note and drop it in the contribution boxes at each exit.

I'm going to pray. Let's all reflect on what The Lord is speaking to us. We will close with some announcements and then be dismissed. Let's pray [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, "The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Hebrews," Moody Press: Chicago, 1983; George H. Guthrie, "The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews," Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1998; David Guzik, Enduring Word Commentary, "Hebrews 12 – Reasons to Endure Discouraging Times," published by Enduring Word, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/hebrews-12/>; Trent Hunter, "Parental Discipline With A Destination," article published by Heritage Bible Church, April 28, 2023, accessed online: <https://heritagevbl.com/parental-discipline-with-a-destination/>; Ray Pritchard, "Discipline: Coaching Your Children to Greatness," sermon published by Keep Believing Ministries, January 15, 1995, accessed online: <https://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1995-01-15-discipline-coaching-your-children-to-greatness/>; T.O. Banson, "The Importance of Parental Discipline," article published by Cedar Ministry International, September 28, 2023, accessed online: <https://cedarministry.org/the-importance-of-parental-discipline/>; Tim Waddle, "What Does Proverbs 13:24 Teach About Parental Discipline?," blog published by Life, hope & Truth, 2024, accessed online: <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/life/blog/what-does-proverbs-1324-teach-about-parental-discipline/>; Chip Ingram, "5 Characteristics of Biblical Discipline," article published by Focus on the Family, 2006, accessed online: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/five-characteristics-of-biblical-discipline/>; Axis, "5 Biblical Principles for Parenting Your Kids," article published by Axis, March 16, 2023, accessed online: https://axis.org/blog/5-biblical-principles-for-parenting-your-kids/?utm_agid=&utm_create=&utm_device=c&utm_placement=&utm_source=google-ads&utm_campaign=&utm_term=&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_acc=2651648146&hsa_cam=20845172066&h_sa_grp=&hsa_ad=&hsa_src=x&hsa_tgt=&hsa_kw=&hsa_mt=&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gad_source=1&gclid=0AAAAAocJch4Ujolz0o8cLxEwMq760_BPm&qclid=CjwKCAjwufq2BhAmEiwAnZqw8qI7_qGL_ZKR2Oc_6DvqDCbVlzeqQaj7SHNcVN8D8bS80t1ZLyuLR8BoCRIIQAvD_BwE; David Chakranarayan and Ken Ham, "Disciplining Children God's Way," article published by Answers in Genesis, accessed online: https://answersingenesis.org/train-up-a-child/christian-parenting/disciplining-children-gods-way/?gad_source=1&gclid=0AAAAAC3KUjuVBrhS_WqGmeuU8oPuhIbJ&qclid=CjwKCAjwufq2BhAmEiwAnZqw8pgFH-k8OfDRn0HMj_8V462jLyu17ydpTKHHWVsOZbA-zLWC3DcSvhoCdkIQAvD_BwE; Matthew John, "A Better Way to Discipline Kids? The Results Suggest 'Yes' (Part 1 of 2)," article published by Bright, 5/30/2022, accessed online: https://www.theepochtimes.com/bright/a-better-way-to-discipline-kids-the-results-suggest-yes-part-1-of-2-4452695?utm_source=google_news_ar&utm_medium=GoogleAds&utm_campaign=reg_news_ar_0404_24_SupremeCourt&utm_term=reg_email&wall=7&gclid=0AAAAACi38KqXfroXMbF2stqPUxo1EloL&qclid=CjwKCAjw3P-2BhAEEiwA3yPhwDVNFypS-D1pTiCRntpy42HKu-V8BkHgzjOwQqEVvlsikmX0L0-EMxoCQNMQAvD_BwE; Brian Smith, "Parenting: When to Disciple and How," article published by Wildwood Church, accessed online: <https://wildwoodchurch.com/parenting-when-to-discipline-how/>; The Disciple Making Parent, "Principles of Discipline From Hebrews 12," article published by The Disciple Making Parent, accessed online: <https://www.thedisciplinemakingparent.com/principles-of-discipline-from-hebrews-12/>; Jack Graham, "Generation Next," sermon published by sermons.love, accessed online: <https://sermons.love/jack-graham/11561-jack-graham-generation-next.html>; Chip Ingram, "How to Discipline Your Child Effectively," sermon published by Living on the Edge, accessed online: <https://livingontheedge.org/broadcast/how-to-discipline-your-child-effectively/?srsltid=AfmBOoxC40YjgNo5i0yTBIUcmmRams4mpEX8-bNuLJcGEYxhSdpJJ1a>.

ⁱⁱ Good discussion on this can be found in MacArthur's commentary, pages 383-384.

ⁱⁱⁱ Strong's Concordance, 464, antagónizomai.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Strong's Concordance, 3809, paideia.

^{vi} "Discipline in Scripture: How Often and Why It Matters," article published by Christian Pure, accessed online: <https://christianpure.com/learn/discipline-in-scripture/>.

^{vii} <https://www.statista.com/statistics/262962/countries-with-the-most-prisoners-per-100-000-inhabitants/#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20is%20home,nations%20had%20far%20fewer%20prisoners.>

^{viii} Strong's Concordance, 1651, elegchó.

^{ix} Strong's Concordance, 3146, mastigoó.

^x Helps Word-studies, 3146, mastigoó.

^{xi} Suggestions adapted from Chip Ingram.

^{xii} Chip Ingram, "Effective Parenting in a Defective World: How to Raise Kids that Stand Out From the Crowd," Tyndale: Carol Stream, 2006.