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BLUEPRINTS: Under Construction: Developing Disciplineⁱ Part 2: 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:

Several weeks ago, we began a teaching series we've called Blueprints: Building Families by God's design. We're looking into our blueprint, the Bible, to see how we are to build our families. This is an important topic because what we have seen in the Scriptures is that godly families lead to good and godly societies. And if you have missed any of these messages, I would encourage you to look up our podcast called, "Hope for the Broken." You can find that on any platform you listen to podcasts.

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. Last week we began a 2-part look at developing discipline and the fact that our families are under construction. So, today we will finish up on the subject of discipline.

We talked about the struggle of providing discipline when it comes to our kids. We don't want to be overbearing and push our kids away. But at the same time, we must see that providing discipline is vitally important. So, we began by looking at Hebrews, chapter 12, verses 4 through 6. We looked at two of the 5 components to a framework of discipline in our homes.

First, we saw **The Mandate for discipline**. In verse 4 of Hebrews 12, the author identifies the fact that we all struggle against sin. As a result, discipline

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is necessary to prevent us and our kids from experiencing destruction. Because sin only moves in one direction.

But we also saw, in verse 5, that God disciplines us. Therefore, following God's example, parents are mandated to discipline our kids. And the presence of discipline has eternal implications as it reveals to our children that they are indeed sinners in need of a Savior. Discipline provides the backdrop for them to realize their sinful state and Jesus' atoning work on the cross.

Secondly, we saw **The Means of discipline**. We looked at two keywords in verses 5 and 6; reprove and chastise. And by looking closely at those words, it revealed to us that Biblical discipline involves both words (reproof) and actions (chastisement), consequences. To be all talk and no action communicates that there are no real consequences to sinful behavior. But to be all action and no words is to be overbearing and that results in pushing your kids away.

We also looked at the difference between punishment and discipline. The word translated, "discipline," means to train, to educate.ⁱⁱ But just punishing our kids doesn't train them. Our goal is not behavior modification but building character. We do that by raising kids to know, love and follow Jesus.

Here's the graphic that we showed that outlines the difference between punishment and discipline. **Show Graphic**. Again, this is from the book *Effective Parenting in a Defective World: How to Raise Kids that Stand Out From the Crowd* by Chip Ingram.ⁱⁱⁱ The purpose of punishment is to inflict penalty for an offense. But the purpose of discipline is to train for correction and maturity. The focus of punishment is past misdeeds. The focus of discipline is future correct acts. The attitude of punishment is hostility and frustration. The attitude of discipline is love and concern. The resulting emotion of punishment is fear and guilt. But the results of discipline are security and freedom.

So, we are going to build on that framework by looking at motive, mission and maturity of discipline. So, turn with me to Hebrews chapter 12. We are going to be in verses 4 through 11.

MESSAGE:

Building upon the mandate for and the means of discipline is, number 3...

3) The Motive for discipline.

Look at verses 4 through 9. *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. ⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he **loves**, and chastises every **son** whom he receives.” ⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. **God is treating you as sons.** For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are **illegitimate children and not sons.** ⁹Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?***

We see in this section of Scripture that the motive for discipline is love. The focus in this passage is the Father's love. The example that the author of Hebrews uses is the personal relationship we have with God. We are God's children, His sons and daughters. And because of that relationship, God disciplines us. And again, we are to take the example set by our Heavenly Father in providing discipline for our kids.

The focal point of the passage we just read is verse 6, *“The Lord disciplines the one he loves.”* In other words, God's discipline is motivated by His love for us. In verse 8, it says that if we are not disciplined, then we are not true children of God. So, in verses 6 and 8, we get the clear picture that discipline is an act of love whereas a lack of discipline reveals a lack of love. When applied to us as parents, if we withhold discipline from our kids, we are not loving them well.

What makes discipline loving? Because I think we sometimes confuse love with passivity.^{iv} We tend to think that love is when we give second, third and fourth chances. But in reality, when we choose that path, we are actually neglecting to teach our kids where the boundaries are. Boundaries are important as they allow us to walk in freedom.

So, circle back to the question. What makes discipline loving? Well, in verse 4 we saw that we all struggle against sin. Discipline trains us in our battle against our sin nature, so that we can avoid destruction. As a result, discipline, is a display of love expressed by a desire to see to our good.

Verse 6 makes use of the word, “loves.” That word is the Greek word, agape. This is the supreme love, an unconditional love. It literally means to regard the

welfare of someone.^v So, the motive to following The Lord's lead in discipline is to be concerned about the welfare of our children, their best interests.

Now, I think most parents do love their kids. There are some out there that do not. But I think for the most part, parents love their kids. And as a result, many parents fall into the trap of avoiding discipline because they are either afraid that they will create psychological damage, or they are overly concerned with their kids liking them. I think primarily the latter.

If we're honest, the real reason we don't like to discipline our kids is because deep down inside, we not only want them to love us, but we want them to like us. So, we think that if we go light on them then they will be our friend. And the mistake we take is that we can be the friend that provides advice. If that is the approach you take, the opposite winds up being true. Let's see that in our passage.

Look at verse 9. *⁹We have had earthly fathers who disciplined us **and we respected them.*** Providing discipline leads to respect. When we withhold accountability from our kids, we are not showing love. Instead, we give them reason to lose respect for us. But our kids will come to respect us when we are their parent and provide accountability and a biblical approach to correction.

Listen, our kids don't need us to be their buddy, they need us to provide boundaries.^{vi} We are not our kids' friends; we are their parent. And if you are their parent when they need a parent, they'll be your friend later.

So, when we talk about love being the motive for discipline, we mean that love is the driving force that causes us to be concerned for our kids' welfare, their future. Boundaries are the keys to future success.

But we are also talking about love undergirding the atmosphere of our discipline. Like we mentioned last week, we are not to discipline out of anger and frustration, but rather out of love. So, mom and dad, take a moment, collect your thoughts, get on the same page, and then lovingly correct your kids.

So, we have seen the mandate for discipline, the means of discipline and now the motive for discipline. Fourthly, we see...

4) The Mission of discipline.

When I talk about the mission, I am referring to the goal. What is the goal of providing discipline? What is it that we are shooting for? Look at verse 10. *¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he [God] disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.* The mission of discipline is to point our kids toward holiness and obedience to God.

A couple of things I want to say about this aim. First, the goal of discipline is NOT punishment. Consequences are an important part of discipline. No doubt. But remember, we are not just punishing behavior. We are training our kids for a life of righteousness which is a life of holiness and obedience to God. And God's way of discipline provides both words and consequences. But only providing punishment doesn't help us arrive at the goal. We're not out for better behaved kids, we are out for kids that love and follow Jesus. Because when they love and follow Jesus, they will be obedient to Him.

ILLUSTRATION: Recidivism Rates

To prove the point that punishment alone doesn't work, consider the recidivism rate in the United States. Recidivism is the tendency for a convicted criminal to reoffend and end back up in jail.^{vii} The United States has the highest recidivism rate in the world. A study I read found that 66% of people released from prison were re-arrested within 3 years. 82% were re-arrested 10 years after their release.^{viii} Punishing the crime is absolutely necessary, but punishment alone doesn't correct behavior for long term. Discipline does.

And again, God's discipline is to be our guide. God never punishes us to make us pay for our sins. Follow me here. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the penalty of our sin. The Bible says that all have sinned. And that the wages of that sin, what we earn for our sin, is death. But when we come to faith in Jesus as The Lord and Savior of our lives, the Bible calls that justification. That is a giant theological word that simply means, "freed from the penalty of our sin." When we come to Christ, we are freed from the penalty, from the punishment of our sin. Not from the consequences, but from the penalty. Why? Because Jesus took our place on the cross. So, when God disciplines us, His correction is motivated only by His love, not by His justice.^{ix} He had to enact justice so that His love could be seen. But when God disciplines us, He is not out for our punishment, He's out for our holiness. This is a vital key in the way we go about disciplining our kids.

See, the target of discipline is the heart. We are not just concerned about outward behavior. We should be concerned about our kids' hearts. The goal is for our kids to develop a heartfelt orientation toward wisdom and obedience to God.^x

So, the mission of discipline is not just punishment. The second thing I want to point out in verse 10 is the grace of God. Look at it again. Don't miss this. *¹⁰For they [meaning our earthly parents] disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them.* I love this. Because God is perfect, even His disciplining us is perfect. But our discipline is imperfect at best. But that's where we can be grateful for God's grace. When we seek to do our best in disciplining our kids, following God's example, His grace comes in when we fall short. Mom and dad, you will fall short. You will make mistakes. But God's grace works.

Listen, my parents were not perfect in their disciplining me and my sister. They would be the first to tell you about the mistakes they made. But you know what? I have ultimate respect for my parents because I can see their efforts to raise us to be God-fearing people. And their imperfect efforts, coupled with God's grace, set us on a path to know and follow Jesus.

The mandate for discipline, the means of discipline, the motive behind discipline, and the mission of discipline. Fifthly, finally, ...

5) The Maturity of discipline.

When we talk about maturity in reference to an investment, we are talking about the end result of the investment. Discipline is an investment in our most valuable asset, our kids. And when we provide discipline God's way, we get to see an incredible outcome.

Look at verse 11. *¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.* Discipline is hard work, but the payoff is worth the investment.

For the moment, discipline is painful. That's true whether you are the recipient of discipline or the giver. But the urging here is to keep in mind that the short-term is driven by the long-term. If we settle for ease in the short-term, we set ourselves up for discouragement in the long-term.

This is important to keep in mind as a parent. Let me tell you why. The focus on the long-term will help you remain faithful in the short-term. Let's face it. It's hard when we see the pain in our kids' eyes when discipline comes. And it's easy to see that and then want to avoid it. But we know, in the long run, it is so very beneficial to them. Win the battle now so that you can enjoy them later.

I like the NIV translation of this verse. It reads, *"No discipline seems pleasant at the time."* Have you ever played the game where you place emphasis on a different word to change the meaning of the sentence? I want to do that with this translation for just a second. NO discipline seems pleasant. Providing no discipline seems easier. And it is at the time. But no DISCIPLINE seems pleasant. Actions are often painful. Do you see the difference is the emphasis?

But here's the deal, both approaches yield something. NO discipline results in a child that is undisciplined. But DISCIPLINE results in the peace of righteous living. Short-term pain for long-term gain.

When our kids are little, their discipline will primarily be external, driven by us as parents. But the end goal is for discipline to become internal. See, when discipline is internal, our kids are no longer motivated to obedience by external consequences, but by their internal drive. The goal is that discipline is so integrated into who they are that it becomes self-discipline. That's the mission. And that's why it is so vital to start disciplining at an early age.

ILLUSTRATION: Tom Landry

It's no secret that I am a Dallas Cowboys fan. Even though they let us down last Sunday. But some of the greatest years of the Dallas Cowboys was during the Coach Tom Landry era.

Coach Landry was a strong believer in Jesus. He is known for his many accomplishments as a coach, but he is widely known for his faith in Jesus.

But he has a famous quote on the topic of discipline that I want to recall to your memory. He said, "The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don't want to do, in order to achieve what they've always wanted to be."

When I think about the role of discipline in our homes, I think about this quote. The job of a parent is to leverage the tool of discipline, to do what is often hard and unpleasant, in order for their kids to achieve and experience the abundant

life with Christ. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

The bible mandates parents to discipline their kids. It shares with us the means, the ways to discipline. The Scriptures tell us that love is the motive. The mission is the heart, not just behavior. Knowing it all the hard work, the maturity discipline brings.

CONCLUSION:

I hope this discussion has been an encouragement to you. Parenting is hard, but God is good, and He rewards the efforts of parents in this arena.

I hope above all, you've seen how much God loves you today. His love is displayed in the cross. It is in the person and work of Jesus that God has purchased your forgiveness. So, if you are here this morning, and there's never been a moment where you have trusted Jesus as The Lord and Savior of your life, I want you to know that our elders would love to visit with you about that today. Don't leave here today without knowing Jesus as Lord of your life.

Maybe you are here this morning, and you are in need of prayer. We would love the pray with you and over you this morning. When this service concludes, our elders will be here at the front ready to receive you and pray with you.

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://heritagegvl.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&hsa_grp=&hsa_ad=&hsa_src=x&hsa_tgt=&hsa_kw=&hsa_mt=&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwufq2BhAmEiwAnZqw8qI7_qGL_ZKR2Oc_6DvqDCbVlzeqQaj7SHNcVN8D8bS80t1ZLyuLR8BoCRIIQA_VD_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=CjwKCAjwufq2BhAmEiwAnZqw8pgFH-k8OfDRn0HMj_8V462jLy17ydpTKHHWVsOZbA-zLWC3DcSvhoCdkIQA_VD_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 Discipline 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=AfmBOoxC40YjgnNo5l0yTBiUcmmRams4mpEX8-bNuLJcGEYxhSdpJJ1a>; Vance Pitman, "A Word to Parents," sermon preached at Hope Church Las Vegas, September 15, 2019, accessed online: <https://hopechurchlv.com/messages/a-word-to-parents/>.

ⁱⁱ Strong's Concordance, 3809, paideia.

- ⁱⁱⁱ Chip Ingram, "Effective Parenting in a Defective World: How to Raise Kids that Stand Out From the Crowd," Tyndale: Carol Stream, 2006.
- ^{iv} Borrowed from Chip Ingram.
- ^v Strong's Concordance, 25, agapaó.
- ^{vi} Adapted from quote from Vance Pitman.
- ^{vii} Oxford Languages.
- ^{viii} Ashley M. Biggers, "The US Has the Highest Recidivism Rates in the World – Here's Why," article published by Success®, updated September 19, 2024, accessed online: <https://www.success.com/recidivism-rates/>.
- ^{ix} Guzik.
- ^x The Disciple Making Parent.