Discipline or Discipleship? Yes!

Modern Family, Week Three

One of the most commonly discussed topics among parents - discipline!

Should we spank or not?
Is time-out effective?
Is duct tape an option?

We want to know what works, what's acceptable, what's effective.

One problem is that we're focused on discipline as correction. And correction is all about past bad behavior.

But have you noticed that discipline and disciple are such similar words? That's because they come from the same root and have similar meanings.

A disciple is someone who follows and learns from someone else. Discipleship is all about growing as followers and students of Jesus.

When you disciple your children, you're not just correcting bad behavior. You're assigning them purpose for the rest of their lives.

Our big task, as parents, is to align our children with their God-given destiny and purpose, lovingly offering correction when needed to help them learn how to stay on the path of purpose.

Proverbs 22:6 NLT
Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.
This is a popular verse among parents. You may have heard the KJV before, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he shall not depart from it.”

Sometimes parents say, my kids are doing ___, but I didn't raise them that way. I taught them better. And God's word promises me that they'll eventually come back...

I’ve so often heard believers talk about this “promise” in terms like, “they might rebel for a while, but if you taught them right, they’ll always come back home.”

We often make several wrong assumptions about this verse.

- It’s NOT a “promise.” This is from wisdom literature. It’s wisdom, not a guarantee. It guides us. It doesn’t safeguard us. You should preface these thoughts with “Generally speaking…”

- “Training” kids is about WAY more than what you say to them about what they should believe. We’re beyond the age of handing kids a bulleted list of what they should believe and how they should behave and calling that discipleship.

**Discipleship is life-on-life training by both example and message. It’s rooted in the principle of relationship, the foundation of which is love.**

**Ephesians 6:1-4 MSG**

Children, do what your parents tell you. This is only right. “Honor your father and mother” is the first commandment that has a promise attached to it, namely, “so you will live well and have a long life.” Fathers, don’t exasperate your children by coming down hard on them. Take them by the hand and lead them in the way of the Master.
Real *training* happens through genuine *connection* in the context of *relationships*, not simply by downloading *information*.

And as we deepen our relationships through close, genuine connection, we want them to catch some truth from our lives...

1. God wants them in his forever family through Christ.
2. They are fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image.
3. They are uniquely gifted and able to do big things.
4. Correction is an act of love, not an act of anger.
5. There is always more grace available from God.
6. Our relationship always matters more than their performance.

Remember that the best example of parenting is always going to be the way that our heavenly Father parents us.

He’s made it possible for you to be part of his forever family!