

Never Discipline Whom You've Not Disciplined

Have you ever broken a rule that you didn't know was a rule?

You may have had this happen to you as a boy. Your curiosity and sense of adventure gets you into a mess. Then you get into terrible trouble because you didn't know that it was wrong, or dumb, or foolish.

A few years ago, I became frustrated at one of my children because they did something so obviously foolish that I couldn't believe they did it. I wanted to explode in my anger, but the Spirit began to instruct me saying, "Neil, did you ever instruct your child about this? When did you teach them a principle concerning this? Never discipline whom you've not disciplined."

I learned that I had a responsibility to teach my children. This is not something that I can pawn off to others and expect the results that I want. I can't shrug off this duty. Yes, I can employ a school and entrust them to be raised in a church but it is my calling to train them in the way they are to go.

Did you know that Abraham was chosen to be in covenant with God because of his teaching ability? That's right, God chose him because, "he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised to do."

God actually assigned His covenant blessing to Abraham because he could be trusted to teach.

Children are insatiable learners. If we as parents do not teach them they will get their wisdom from someone else. Unfortunately, they often will go to the unknowing for

knowledge. The knowledge that children learn from the world or from their friends is often the knowledge of good and evil. It can be sinful and wicked. You don't want to relegate your responsibility to others.

Notice, that Abraham's teaching would ensure God's promises. God said, "I will bring about for Abraham what I have promised to do."

If you want to ensure that your child does not depart from the way of God, you must teach them. Here is the simple, three-step strategy I use to teach:

Precept

A precept is an established authority. It is immovable, eternal, foundational truth. When you read the Word of God, look for precepts. When you start with a precept, your teaching is based upon foundational truth and authority. It isn't because you say so but because it is established. An example of a precept is, "Do not muzzle the ox while he is treading out the grain." This is an agrarian and ethical treatment rule to allow an ox to graze while he is working.

Principle

A principle is the universal truth and application of a precept. This principle should direct my behavior, belief system, and conduct. Our example of, "do not muzzle the ox while he is treading out the grain" helps us understand that we should employ ethical treatment of an animal that is under our care or in labor of use.

Practice

Practice is taking the precept, converting it to a principle, and applying it to my life. I may not have an ox, so is this precept irrelevant to me? It would seem not, but in fact, the Apostle Paul used this example to teach that ministers of the

gospel should receive their financial salaries from ministering the gospel.

We are created with a deep desire to learn and receive knowledge. We should always be looking to expand our mind, to learn, to think. As men, we don't want to participate in useless exercises based on theory. We want to know what works. Call it street smarts or common sense, but men want practical, real-life applications. Your children are no different. They need real-world knowledge, too. Your children need to know how to make and invest money. They need to know what to do if the car breaks down or they have an accident.

Practically speaking, I teach my children as we go in life—when we're driving, playing golf, eating, etc. Don't try to over-structure your teaching time with them. Do it as you do life together.

***FivestarMan** was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*

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