Christian Parenting Boiled Down
Scripture: Ephesians 6
Code: BQ83010

The command to parents is for them to **bring up** [their children] **in the discipline and instruction of the Lord**. *Paideia* (**discipline**) comes from the word *pais* (child) and refers to the systematic training of children. It includes the idea of correction for wrongdoing, as seen in the well–known proverb, “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently” (Prov. 13:24). In the several uses of the term in Hebrews 12:5–11, the translators of the Authorized Version rendered it “chastening,” which is clearly the emphasis of that context. Paul’s meaning here is expressed even more fully, however, in the proverb “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it” (22:6). **Discipline** has to do with the overall training of children, including punishment.

Susannah Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, raised seventeen children and had these words to say about raising children: “The parent who studies to subdue [self–will] in his child works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil’s work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body forever” (cited in *The Journal of John Wesley* [Chicago: Moody, n.d.], p. 106).

Nouthesia (**instruction**) is literally a “putting in mind” and also includes the connotation of correction. It refers to the type of instruction found in the book of Proverbs, where the primary focus is on the training and teaching of children. It does not have as much to do with factual information as with right attitudes and principles of behavior.

The key to right **discipline** and **instruction** of children is its being **of the Lord**. Everything parents do for their children is to be of Him—according to the teaching of His Word, by the guidance and power of His Holy Spirit, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to His own glory and honor.

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