

Ephesians Lesson 11 Article

We read countless passages in the Old Testament that warn against a latitudinarian spirit by which parents are so permissive that they refuse to discipline unruly children. Remember the statement that the parent who will not discipline his child, hates the child (Proverbs 13:24). Parents, when they are disciplining their children, often say, ‘This hurts me more than it hurts you.’ That really is true. There are times when parents find it extremely difficult to discipline their children because they don’t want to alienate the children and they don’t want to put up with the tears that may follow from disciplinary action. But when they just allow children to do whatever they want, without any discipline and without any instruction, they are loving themselves rather than their children.¹

Harvard University sociologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck developed a test (that proved to be 90 percent accurate) to determine whether or not five- and six-year-olds would become delinquent. They discovered that the four primary factors necessary to prevent delinquency are: the father’s firm, fair, and consistent discipline; the mother’s supervision and companionship during the day; the parent’s demonstrated affection for each other and for the children; and the family’s spending time together in activities where all participated (*Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1950], pp. 257–71).

The Christian psychiatrist Dr. Paul Meier gives a similar list of factors that produce right parent-child relations: genuine love of the parents for each other and for the children; firm, consistent discipline; consistency of standards for parents and children; the right example by parents; and the father as true head of the home. He also comments that the vast majority of neurotics have grown up in homes where there was no father or where he was dominated by the mother (*Christian Child-Rearing and Personality Development* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980], pp. 81–82).²

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).³

¹ Sproul, R. C. (1994). *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (140). Scotland: Christian Focus Publications.

² ³ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1986). *Ephesians*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (316–317, 319). Chicago: Moody Press.