

CHAPTER 6

Helping My Parents Do Their Job (Part 3)

Discipline

All young people have experienced discipline of some kind. Have you ever been punished for wrong behavior (doing something wrong or saying something wrong)? Have your parents set down any rules or regulations for you to follow in your home? Do you like these rules? Why do you think these rules have been given? Are these rules to help you or to hurt you? Are your parents **strict** (they make sure you follow the rules) or are they **loose** (they do not have many rules and they do not make you follow the rules that they do have)?

What is Discipline?

Discipline means **teaching** or **training**. It is **training** someone how to act and speak and live in the proper way. Discipline is helping a young person **learn** to avoid what is wrong and to follow what is right. Have you ever trained a pet dog? The dog needs to learn "good dog behavior." This is good for the dog and it is good for the family. You would not want the dog to sleep on the kitchen table or to go to the bathroom on the living room rug! Young people are not dogs, but they do need to be **trained**.

*Believers need to be trained, too! Is God concerned about how His children act and behave (Ephesians 4:1,31,32)? _____ Is God concerned about how His children speak (Ephesians 4:25,29)? _____ Read Hebrews 12:6. Does God love His children enough to discipline them and **chasten them** ("spank" them for their own good)? _____*

Learning to Like the Limits

A limit is something that you should not go beyond. If the speed limit is 55 miles per hour, what does this mean? _____ To discipline and train children in the right way, parents need to set some limits or boundaries. Limits are important and they help young people to live safely and securely. We should thank God for limits!

Suppose you were ice skating on a frozen lake and at the end of the lake there was an area which was marked off with a rope. The sign attached to the rope said: "Danger! Thin Ice! Don't

Go Beyond This Point!" Would you want to go beyond this limit? This limit or boundary is for your own safety! If all drivers traveled as fast as they wanted, how safe would the roads be? Speed limits are for man's own safety. The lion at the zoo has certain limits as to where it can go and where it cannot go. Aren't you glad this is so?

A football player cannot run anywhere he wants to. There are limits as to where he can go (these limits are called "sidelines"). When he runs across the sidelines he is out of bounds! If he did not have these limits he could run to the side, but where would he ever stop? There are limits in bowling. If the ball goes too far to the left or too far to the right it ends up in the "gutter." Can you think of problems the people at the bowling alley would have if there were no gutters?

Why do young people need limits? If people always bowled straight down the alley, would you need gutters? If the lion would always stay in his cage, would you need bars? _____ If people would always drive slowly and carefully, would you need speed limits? _____ The reason we need limits is because we tend to go the wrong way! Read Isaiah 53:6. Do people tend to go God's way or do they tend to go the wrong way (their own, sinful way)?

_____ Do people tend to stay in God's path or stray from the path (see Romans 3:12)? _____ Which dog would you need to restrain (get a leash or a chain for), the one which always stays by your side or the one that always wanders off? _____ So also young people need limits because they do not naturally go in the right direction.

Limits also help me to feel safe and secure. I feel safe at the zoo because of the limits placed on the tiger. I feel secure on the roller coaster because I'm strapped in and a safety bar is placed over me! How would you like to ride a roller coaster without such limits? I feel secure as my parents drive along the winding mountain road because there is a sturdy guard rail that separates me from the edge of the cliff. Oh how I love limits! Can you think of other limits that keep us safe and protect us every day?

Why All The Rules?

Why do Mom and Dad have so many rules? "Do this! Don't do that! Do that! Don't do this!" Are they trying to make life miserable for us or are they trying to help us? What about those "bedtime rules" or those "television rules" or those "computer rules" or those "eating-in-between-meals rules"? Are these meant for your good? If you were a parent, what kinds of rules would you have for your children?

God has given certain rules to His children. We call these rules "laws" or "commandments". Why does God give these commands? Does He want to make life miserable for the believer? Read Deuteronomy 10:13: "To keep the commandments (rules) of the LORD, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy _____." God wants to help us, not harm us! God is for us, not against us!

God has clearly spelled out His rules. They are found in the Bible. No thief could ever say, "I read the Bible, but I did not find any 'no stealing' rule" (see Exodus 20:15 and Ephesians 4:28). In the same way parents should carefully and clearly spell out the rules that they give their children for **rightness** (to help them to live right) and for **progress** (to help them to go forward and not backwards on life's road). You can help Mom and Dad with this. If there are some

rules that are not clear in your mind, talk to your parents about it. Have them explain what the rule really is and why they have this rule.

Parents also need to stand by the rules that they make. Rules are no good unless they are enforced. If the police never stopped anyone for speeding, do you think people would pay attention to the speed limit signs? _____ If your teacher said, "No cheating," but never did anything to students who were seen cheating, do you think they would still cheat? _____ The game of basketball has many rules. Would you enjoy watching a basketball game where the players could run with the ball (without bouncing it) and push and shove members of the other team without getting any fouls called?

The same should be true for the rules of the house. The parents should stand by those rules and see that they are enforced. Suppose that one of the rules in your house is this: make your bed every morning. One day after you have already gone to school, your Mom goes into your room and finds that the bed has not been made and the room is a mess. What should Mom do about this? If you were a parent, what would you do if your child broke one of the rules of the house?

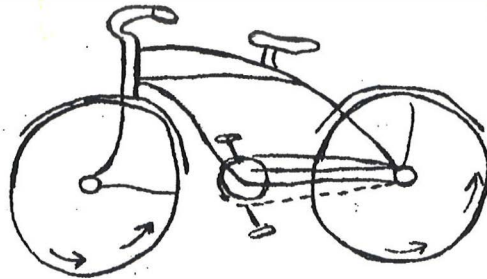
Do you like all the rules that you have been given? Do you think they are all fair? What should you do about those rules that you do not like? Should you refuse to obey and follow them (Ephesians 6:1)? _____ Should you complain and grumble and growl and tell your parents that you really don't want to follow these rules even though you will (because you do not want to be disciplined)? Should you try to get your parents to change the rules and try to make them change their "No" into a "Yes"?

Sometimes it helps to talk to Mom and Dad about rules. They need to hear your thoughts and you need to listen to them as they explain why they feel certain rules are needed. In some ways they might even let you help them in making rules. But remember, Dad and Mom have the **final say** because they are responsible to God and before God. They are responsible to discipline and train their children (Eph. 6:4). This is the job that God has given them to do. How can you help them do this job?

Remember also that rules sometimes change as you grow older. When you were very young, your parents may have told you to never cross the busy street that is near your home. Now they may allow you to cross the street because you are older and you realize the danger and you have learned to be more careful. Mom and Dad may allow an older child to stay up later at night. So don't get upset if you have an older brother or sister that can do certain things that you wish you could do. Someday you will be that old and some of the rules will change for you, too. Also your older brother or sister was once your age and was not allowed to do some of the things that they do now. Are there certain things that you are allowed to do that your **younger** brother or sister is not allowed to do?

Privilege and Responsibility

PRIVILEGE



RESPONSIBILITY



Privilege and **Responsibility** are like the two wheels of a bicycle. Both wheels are needed. If one wheel is not turning then the bicycle will not go. To make progress and to go forward both wheels are needed and both wheels must turn. As a young person you have certain privileges and you have certain responsibilities.

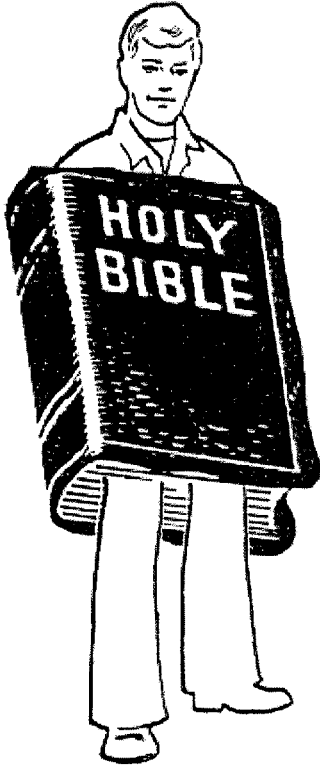
A **privilege** is the right to do something or to be something. It is the advantage or the favor you have.

A **responsibility** is a duty to do what is right and to do what is required of you. It also means that you must answer for your actions.

Suppose your Mom let you use her cookbook or suppose your Dad let you use his "how-to-fix-it" book. It is your privilege to use the book but it is your responsibility to use it carefully and not to abuse it (by throwing it around or ripping it up or losing it, etc.).

In the same way, God has given us a Book to use, even His precious Word, the Bible:

It's a **privilege** to have God's Word and to use it; it's a **responsibility** to use it carefully and not abuse it.



"I live in the Bible; I'm at home in the Bible."

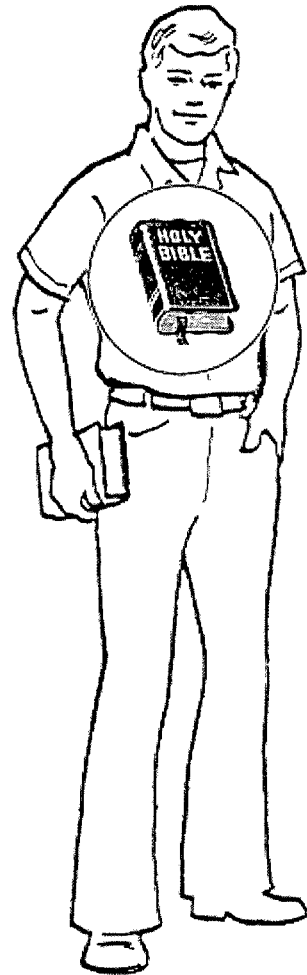
Its Promises -- I can believe what God says because He never lies and He always keeps His Word.

Its Privileges -- It is a joy to be able to learn God's Word and put it into practice in my life.

Its Principles and Precepts -- I can follow the recipes that God has for daily living, such as 1 Thess. 5:16-18.

Its Purpose -- I want others to know about such a great God and what He can do for them! They need to see what He can do for me!

With the **Privilege** also goes the **Responsibility**



"The Bible Lives in Me; the Bible is at home in me."

It is my privilege to be God's child, to belong to Him because of the Lord Jesus Christ and to be able to say, "**my** God, **my** Saviour, **my** Father who art in Heaven" etc. But as a child of God, I also have certain responsibilities and sometimes my Heavenly Father must spank me and discipline me for my own good (Hebrews 12:5,6,7,8,etc.).

As a believer it is a real privilege to be free (see John 8:32,36; Galatians 5:1; Romans 6:17-18). But with this freedom there are also responsibilities: as a servant I am responsible to serve God (Romans 6:18) and I am responsible to not serve sin. I am responsible to follow the right ways of thinking and acting and to shun the wrong ways of thinking and acting.

Penalties for Breaking the Rules

A broken rule demands a penalty. Very often during a football game **penalty flags** are thrown down by the officials (referees). What does this mean? Each time this happens we know that someone has broken a rule. What kinds of penalties are given? The same is true in basketball (but instead of throwing a flag the referee blows a whistle). When a rule is broken in basketball, what penalty is given?

If your Mom or Dad were to be stopped by a policeman for speeding, what penalty might be given? If a crook were caught stealing from a home, what penalty might be given? If someone were caught selling drugs in school, what penalty might be given? If you were caught cheating in school, what penalty might be given?

God has penalties when His rules are broken. In Exodus chapter 20 we find ten rules (called "The Ten Commandments"). In Exodus chapter 21 we find what some of the penalties were for breaking God's rules. What was the penalty for murder (Exodus 21:12)?

_____ What was the penalty for cursing Mom or Dad (Exodus 21:17)? _____ What is God's penalty for living a life of sin (Romans 6:23)?

- a. 5 years in prison
- b. a \$1,000.00 fine
- c. the death penalty
- d. a terrible whipping

Who paid this penalty for us?
(1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 3:18)

Penalties are also involved when we break Mom and Dad's rules. When you break a rule in your home, what penalty or punishment do you sometimes receive?

When you were punished or disciplined, was this an enjoyable and joyous experience (compare Hebrews 12:11)? _____ Did you enjoy every second of it? _____ After the punishment was over did you say, "Oh thank you, please do it again!" ? _____ What good did the discipline do for you? Did it do anything for you **afterward** (see Hebrews 12:11)? Did it help you to change anything? Did it help you to think twice before doing the same thing again? Did it help you to be a better person? Did it help you to respect your parents?

We need to **learn** from penalties. We need to think about what happened! We need to ask ourselves questions like these: Why did I break this rule? Was I ignorant (perhaps I did not know about the rule)? Did I yield to temptation (the cookies seemed to say, "Eat me!" and that's what I did)? Did I have a physical problem? (I did not feel well and that is why I did not eat all the food on my plate.) Sometimes we need to talk to our parents about these things and get help from them.

Sometimes a wrong action can lead to **worry** and then to another wrong action. For example, suppose you were to steal \$10.00 from your Father. After you do this you start to worry about your Dad finding out. Later your Father sees you and he asks, "Have you seen the money that was lying on my desk?" Quickly you answer, "What money? I didn't see any money on your desk." It's bad enough being a thief, but now you are a liar, too! One sin can lead to another sin. See Genesis 4:1-9. Did Cain's sin lead to other sins? His first sin was to bring the wrong kind of offering.

What other sins followed? 1) _____ 2) _____
 _____ When we sin and do wrong we need to learn to stop right away and confess it to God and to man. If you do not conquer sin, sin will conquer you!

Not All Parents are the Same

Some parents are strict (they see a need for discipline and they want to practice discipline in the right way). Some parents are loose or lenient (they do not see a need for discipline and they let their children do as they please). Some parents are too strict (the parent might get angry and punish the child for the wrong reasons).

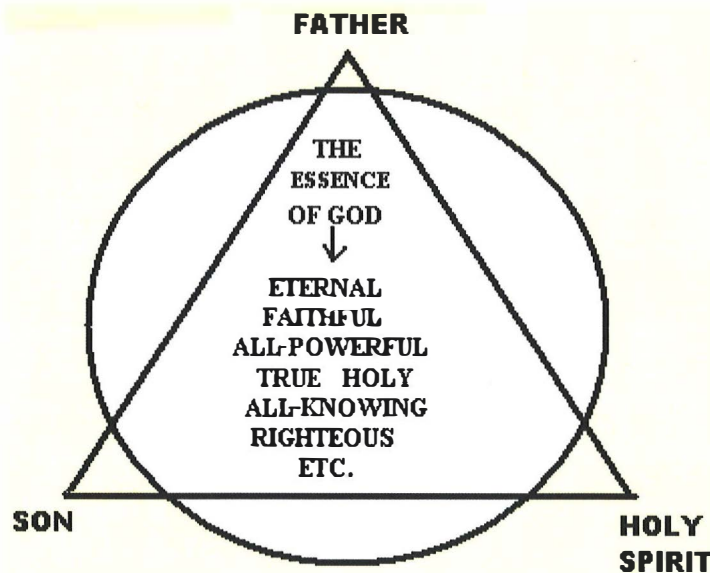
What if my parents are too strict in the wrong way. What should I do? If my Dad comes home drunk and strikes me, what should I do? Should I strike him back? Should I run away from home? Should I hide? I must remember that even though my parents may not do what is right, I am responsible to do what is right! **[If you are ever seriously harmed by a parent, either by being hit or in any other way, be sure to talk to your Pastor about this or tell your teacher.]**

What if my parents are too loose and lenient and let me do whatever I please whenever I want to do it? What should I do? Even though my parents let me do what is wrong without ever stopping me or disciplining me, I am still responsible before God to do what is right. For example, if your teacher let everyone in the class cheat, should you cheat? If I do not have any limits, then I must make them myself. If I do not have any rules, then I must make my own rules. I must make rules that keep me on a good and right course and rules that help me to grow up as God wants me to.

What if my parents are strict in the right way (they care for me enough **not** to let me do what is wrong)? What should I do? I should be **thankful!** Parents that really care are really rare! Very few have what I have. If I am not thankful, **God help me** to be thankful!

Sometimes there are even differences in the same family. Mom may be strict but Dad might be loose or lenient. Or Dad might say "No!" and Mom might say "Yes!" Can you think of why there might be such differences? (For example, Mom might be saved and Dad might be unsaved). I need to be the young person I should be even if Mom and Dad are not always the adults and parents they should be.

Remember, the family is like a balancing act. Every member of the family is important. **You** are important and you need to do your part.



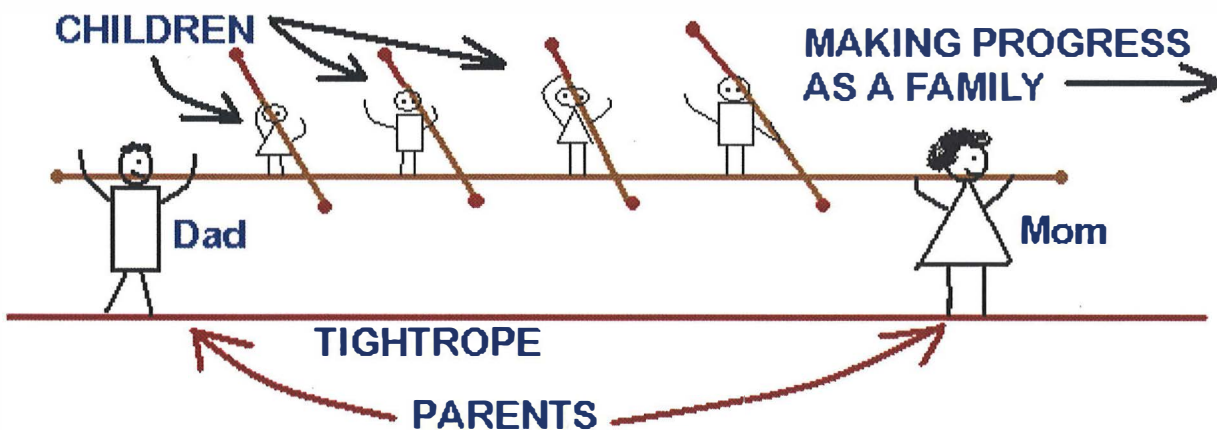
How can you help your Mom and Dad?

How can you help your younger brothers and sisters?

How can you help your older brothers and sisters?

How can God help all the members of the family?

We are always before God and in God's presence.



It may not seem important to others what do and what you think, but it is important to God and so it is important to you. The people around you may fall and crash but **you do not have to fail and fall.**