

How Does God Want Me to Correct My Child?

I. The Nature of Correction

- You cannot correct your children unless they participate in the correction.
- They need to confess their sin.
- They need to ask for forgiveness for their sin.
- And they need to repent of their sin.
- Otherwise there's nothing you can do to help them correct.

II. Biblical Correction

- **“Correction”**
 - II Timothy 3:16
 - Correction is a restoration to an upright or right state.
 - It doesn't refer to a parent telling a child how they're supposed to live. It doesn't really have anything to do with punishing you. It's the process of being restored to a correct state. It refers to the improvement of their life and character.
- **“Correcting”**
 - Titus 2:11-12; I Timothy 1:20; Luke 23:22; II Timothy 2:25; Acts 7:22
 - The word *paideuō* is translated in the following ways: correcting, discipline, disciplined, disciplines, educated, instructing, punish, punished, taught.
 - This word is interesting because it contains parts of each of the four parenting jobs — instruction, reproof, correction, and training.
- **“Repentance”**
 - Luke 5:32; II Corinthians 7:9
 - The idea of repentance is that something is being changed. It's not something we promise, repentance is something we do.
 - In order to repent, though, the individual must recognize that they actually are a sinner. They need to embrace the reproof stage.
 - Though reproof may be very uncomfortable, when our children accept God's reproof and actually repent, it's a glorious experience.
- **“Save”**
 - Matthew 1:21, 8:25, 9:21; Romans 10:13-15; James 5:19-20
 - The Greek word *sōzō* is one that has many different uses. It can refer to being “cured,” “made well,” “recovered,” and the like. But more often than not it's translated save, saved, saves, and saving.
 - Also, in the Scriptures the idea of being saved can refer both to justification as well as sanctification. We'll look at an example of the latter in a moment.
 - We need to recognize that the idea of saving someone spiritually is not merely an act of God. Yes, God is the one Who saves. No one can save himself, and no person can save another person. But, God does invite Christians into the process of saving other people.
 - A person is saved by God when they call upon His name, but preachers are an important part of the process.
 - The correction stage of parenting requires that our children submit to our teaching and reproof. But when they've confessed their sins and asked for forgiveness, they will likely need help putting off their sinful ways and putting on righteousness.

- An Extreme Example.
 - Let's say — God forbid — that one of your children engages in homosexuality. Most Christians who know their Bible can teach their child that homosexuality is a sin and reprove them if they engage in it. The Bible is clear about the action and motivation being sinful, and the Bible explains who our actions and motivations should be.
 - But, what are we to do when the child confesses their sin but then asks how they're supposed to change? Sure, we can tell them, "Well, don't engage in homosexuality." But how do we help the child with their questions about the practical steps they're to take when they're tempted? What are they to do when they feel an attraction to someone of the same sex? What are the implications for their friend group and entertainment choices?
 - The Bible does give guidance for these questions and many more because it's sufficient for our life and godliness. But it takes someone even more mature in the Word of God to be able to help with those applications.
 - It's not too hard to read Ephesians 4:28 to our kids: "*He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.*"
 - That provides the general trajectory for correction. But what do we tell our children about how to respond to the temptation to steal?
 - Searching for the word "steal" in my Bible isn't going to provide that answer. We have to know what the Bible says about temptation in general.
 - Of course, we can start with James 1 to teach them the difference between temptation and sin. We can then move to I Corinthians 10:13 to help them learn that God will always provide a way to escape temptation. And then — depending on the unique needs of the individual — we may take them to Philippians 4 to help them address their thought life. Or we may take them to Proverbs 1 which details the consequences of sinful companions and then guide them to Ecclesiastes to learn about the joy of Christ-honoring friends.
- It's this correction stage, this counseling stage, that will require something new from us parents.
- Sometimes correction is easy and straightforward and the child — by the grace of God — renew their minds, put off their sin, and put on Christ's righteousness. But often there are many questions and related topics that will be involved in correction. We'll have to be able to guide our children to those biblical truths in order to help them genuinely return to the safety of God's harbor. Effective correction involves the participation of our child as well as an ever-growing Parenting Bible.
- If we want to help our child stop lying and start telling the truth, we're probably going to need to know more than simply what the Bible says about truth and lies. Liars have a worship problem. They have an idolatry issue. We need to know what the Bible says spiritual adultery, the role the heart plays in our communication, and we're going to have to be good at helping our children understand their unique temptations and how to respond to them. We're going to have to help them break their lifelong habits and replace them with God-empowered habits instead of self-strengthened new behaviors.
- The Correction Stage really is a glorious part of parenting, but it requires a lot of us.
- Often we don't get to enjoy the Correction Stage with our kids, not simply because they're not participating, but too often our kids are happy to participate. They're glad to confess and apologize and repent, but they need help repenting, and we — the parent — aren't prepared to actually help them correct their trajectory. We have no idea about what the Bible actually says to help them put off sin and put on righteousness.