

Biblical Parenting Essentials, Phase 3 I application

I. Biblical Correction requires salvation.

- You can biblically teach an unbeliever and biblically reprove an unbeliever, but you can't biblically correct them because true participation in the Biblical Correction Phase requires new life in Christ.
- An unbeliever can only ever change their behavior and reinvent their personalities in their own strength and for their own glory. They can't truly mature spiritually in the power of God if they aren't born again. Since biblical counseling is synonymous with discipleship and one-anothering (activities that can only take place between believers), you can't really guide an unbeliever through that process.
- Correcting unbelieving children is going to be limited by the fact that they can only achieve superficial, self-motivated change that won't result in glorifying God or in spiritual life.
- The point is that you recognize that the biggest change—the biggest correction—they need is submission to Christ in salvation. That means that your teaching and reproofing all have one bigger and more important focus in mind beyond the need of the moment—evangelism.

II. Quality Correction requires application.

- Merriam-Webster defines application as “the act of putting something to use.”
- Valuable application is one of the most difficult parts of any of the Biblical Parenting Phases.
- Your kids aren't equipped to accurately and valuably apply the truth you're giving them.
- To rightly apply such truth will require help—help from you, the parent.

III. Quality Application requires a Godward focus.

- We obey because God deserves it and demands it. We can only obey in the power of God. To obey we must do what the Scriptures say, and we do these things because we want to please the Lord.
- Even if you know your child is an unbeliever, you need to apply God's truth in God's ways for God's reasons. That's the best application.
- This is not to say that there won't be specific application that doesn't come as a direct quote from the Bible, but your kids must be able to easily recognize that the specific application is *rooted* in God's character, deeds, and will.

IV. Quality Application requires *unique specificity*.

- This is the absolute golden, secret, power key of Biblical Correction. If you want to apply truth in any meaningful way, you *absolutely need* to be as *specific* as possible. Application that can only apply to *one* person is the *best* kind of application.
- If any application happens at all, most of the time it's not specific enough or it's so specific that it's inaccurate.
- If while you're correcting your child—counseling them in how they can stop doing wrong and start doing right—if your application of the biblical truth can be meaningfully applied to more than one person, it's probably not as helpful as it could be.

- The Application Onion

- Layer 1: **You Need a New Destination.** This Level reveals only that change is necessary, but sets no destination or trajectory for said change.
- Layer 2: **You Need This General Destination.** This approach provides a destination, but no path is laid out for reaching that destination. Also the destination is too general, nebulous, and lacks real definition. This is often the application you hear from pulpits and lecterns.
- Layer 3: **You Need to Do This in Order to Arrive at This Less Important Destination.** This Layer is often very detailed and sounds really good and even accomplishes things in the long run, but it misses the spiritual needs. This is the pop-psychology, Pinterest-mom approach. It's original, unique, very specific, and not necessarily wrong, but it doesn't deal with the real heart issues. Even if this approach seems "successful" in the short term, genuine spiritual maturity is likely not taking place, and that truth will be revealed before long—either in this same scenario or in a different one.
- Layer 4: **You Need to Do This in Order to Move toward the More Important Destination.** This application is more specific and Bible-centered. It's focused on the more important direction, but it still lacks specificity in how to arrive. But we don't just want our kids to move toward obedience without achieving it. We want them to actually arrive at obedience. Your children have no idea how to pivot from loving themselves to loving God and others. That's the actual correction that's needed in the moment. What your child needs is not merely the destination, and not just part of the path, they need the full path that is guaranteed to lead them to the destination.
- Layer 5: **You Need to Do This in Order to Arrive at the Most Important Destination.** This Layer provides clear, relevant, personal, precise instruction about how to actually live the most important biblical lesson necessary at the moment.
- A surgeon is going to know the fine details required to do brain surgery, but they're also going to study their patient, and they're going to have to have back up plans for what they may find or experience while performing surgery, and many of their choices are likely going to be specific to that one case, that one surgery, that one brain. And that's what you want from a surgeon. And that's what our kids need from us.
- So, when it comes to applying truth to your kids' lives, work toward razor sharp application. Make it biblical, practical, personal, and precise. And often you won't have all of these answers right up front, so you need to ask questions in order to better understand their heart and their struggles. But since your child wants to participate in the Correction Phase, coming up with valuable application won't be a drudgery.
- Of course, if the child fights the conversations and questions needed to come up with precise application that will guide them to spiritual success . . . you're clearly not in the Correction Phase.

V. Quality Application requires *unique specificity*.

- The Correction Phase is the breaking-a-bad-habit-and-replacing-it-with-a-good-habit-phase.
- On average, change takes over 66 days, and true, spiritual change often requires much more time.
- Your child will likely need over 2 months of consistent teaching, reproof, conversations, accountability, role-playing, equipping, applying, refining, and hand-in-hand, life-on-life discipleship . . . for each area of correction in their life.
- Consistent, God-focused, careful, specific, Bible application to the need of the moment is so important, and it's even more important that your child actually, genuinely be participating in the correction.