

Theme: Like unplowed ground, young children must have the soil of their hearts prepared through loving discipline and have the seeds of God's Word planted through careful instruction.

I. Intro – Seasons of Life Series

- A. Will be doing a series on seasons of life
- B. One of our focal points for the year (PP)
- C. Importance of different times in life (Eccl 3:1-8)
- D. Problem in current culture – loss of distinctions
- E. A look at the seasons of life - metaphor

II. Spring: Early Childhood

- A. Our earliest years – 0 – 10 years old
 - 1. Not exact, but most fall in this general range
 - 2. Foundational nature determined by maturity & purpose
- B. Maturity – or lack thereof!
 - 1. Their maturity level - virtually nonexistent!
 - 2. They simply can not handle responsibilities
 - 3. They can not understand most reasons yet
- C. Basic purpose – soil prepared & seeds planted
 - 1. Key issue: learning obedience & discipline (Eph 6:1-4)
 - 2. Can not do anything else until this is done

III. Preparing Soil - Discipline

- A. The need for discipline – foolishness & rebellion
 - 1. Prov 22:15 – foolishness in child
 - 2. Prov 12:15 – fools won't listen to advice
 - 3. Prov 13:19 – fools detest turning from evil
 - 4. Prov 14:16 – fools hotheaded & reckless
 - 5. Prov 29:11 – fools full vent to anger; no self-control
- B. The method of discipline – rod and verbal
 - 1. Prov 13:24 – spare rod – hate son
 - 2. Prov 22:15 – rod removes foolishness
 - 3. Prov 29:15 – rod imparts wisdom
 - 4. Prov 23:13-14 – use rod; child will not die; save soul
 - 5. Tips on using rod – not anger; not beating
 - 6. Also physical restraint, verbal – not bribes!

IV. Planting Seeds – Instruction

- A. The need for instructing children –
 - 1. Eph 6:4 – Training and instruction
 - 2. Deut 6:6-11 – instruct constantly

3. Prov 4:1 – learn from fathers

B. The method – devotions and daily life

1. Devotions – planned times of teaching (ask me)

- a. Plan on at least 4-5 times a week – daily!
- b. Mix it up – Bible; Narnia; Pilgrims Progress; pray; sing
- c. Not too long – 15-20 minutes is plenty

2. Daily life – spontaneous times of teaching

- a. Look for these spontaneous moments
- b. Car rides, work in yard, etc.

V. Conclusion & Summary

A. Do you see that this is hard, but necessary?

- 1. This takes a LOT of work – tiring!
- 2. Must prepare soil and plant to get harvest later
- 3. Avoid this – and reap a terrible harvest later!

B. Do you see how much culture misses this?

- 1. Tries to treat children like little adults
- 2. Tries to give this responsibility to others

C. How are you doing in raising your young children?

1. Are you disciplining them?

2. Are you instructing them?

Spring: Young Children

Ephesians 6:1-4

May 29, 2005

??????????

Numbers 6

15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. Proverbs 22:15

15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. Proverbs 12:15

19 A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but fools detest turning from evil. Proverbs 13:19

16 A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless. Proverbs 14:16

11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. Proverbs 29:11

24 He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him. Proverbs 13:24

15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. Proverbs 22:15

15 The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. Proverbs 29:15

13 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. 14 Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death. Proverbs 23:13-14