

BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE THAT REACHES THE HEART

PARENT FOLLOW-ALONG WORKSHEET

Name: _____

Date: _____

OPENING REFLECTION

Think back to before your child was born—or before you first met them. What did you hope they would become? Write a few words inside the frame.

WHO DO I HOPE MY CHILD BECOMES?

TODAY'S HOPE A biblical framework, practical tools, resources for further study, and renewed hope for your home.

1 LITTLE SINNERS

Before Scripture tells us how to discipline our children, it first tells us who our children are.

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” — Psalm 51:5 (ESV)

We do not become sinners only because we _____; we sin because we are _____ by nature.

“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.” — Proverbs 22:15 (ESV)

The problem is not merely in the behavior. Folly is bound up in the _____.

Because sin is fundamentally a _____, biblical discipline must aim beyond behavior to the heart.

Hold Both Truths Together

GOD-GIVEN DIGNITY	OUR DEEPEST NEED
Our children are image bearers—full of unique gifts and God-given potential.	Our children are sinners who need a Savior— hearts that need shepherding and folly that needs wisdom.

Notes

2 TRANSFORMED HEARTS > JUMPING THROUGH HOOPS

The goal is not merely outward performance, but gospel-shaped transformation.

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” — Proverbs 4:23 (ESV)

If we want real _____—not just temporary compliance—we must get beneath the fruit and address the root.

Children can change their _____ without real heart change.

“A change in behavior that does not stem from a change in heart is not commendable. It is condemnable.”
— Tedd Tripp

REMEMBER We are not simply referees who stop bad behavior. We are shepherds who help our children understand and respond to what is happening in their hearts.

The ABCs of Biblical Discipline

	STEP	PURPOSE
A	Ask Heart Questions	Draw out what is happening in the heart.
B	Bring Biblical Reproof	Apply God’s Word to what you have discovered.
C	Coach Repentance	Help your child practice the biblical alternative.

Fill It In

A — Ask _____ questions.

B — Bring biblical _____.

C — Coach _____.

Notes

3 A — ASK HEART QUESTIONS

Draw out what is happening beneath the behavior.

“The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.” — Proverbs 20:5 (ESV)

The man of understanding knows how to ask thoughtful _____ and listens carefully.

Behavior Questions vs. Heart Questions

Behavior questions only deal with the _____, not the root.

BEHAVIOR QUESTION	HEART QUESTION
Why did you take that?	What did you want so badly that you took it?
Did you lie?	What did you believe would happen if you told the truth?
Why did you blame your brother?	What were you afraid would happen if you took responsibility?

Four Heart-Drawing Questions

HEART GRID	ASK: JESUS’ EXAMPLE	ASK AT HOME	BIBLICAL ANCHORS
WANT	“What do you want me to do for you?” Mark 10:36	What did you want so badly that you chose to disobey?	Want (Desire) James 1:14–15 James 4:1–3
BELIEVE	“Do you believe this?” John 11:26	What did you believe would happen if you told the truth?	Believe (Trust) Proverbs 3:5 Romans 14:23 Hebrews 11:6
LOVE	“Do you love me?” John 21:15–17	What were you loving more than obeying God?	Love (Affection/Worship) Matthew 22:37 John 14:15
FEAR	“Why are you so afraid?” Mark 4:40	What were you afraid would happen?	Fear Proverbs 29:25 Isaiah 41:10 Matthew 10:28

Notes

4 B — BRING BIBLICAL REPROOF

Lovingly bring God's Word to bear on the heart you have uncovered.

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." — Ephesians 6:4 (ESV)

"The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother." — Proverbs 29:15 (ESV)

Biblical reproof is not yelling, shaming, or saying, 'You should know better.' It is lovingly applying _____ to the heart.

Discipline without reproof and instruction will _____ and confuse our children.

God's law does not only tell us how to live; it shows us our need for a _____.

LANGUAGE TO USE "Now let's look at what God says about that." • "Here is where your heart wandered." • "Here is what Jesus calls us to."

The Gospel Aim

Every act of discipline is an opportunity to point our children to _____.

We lovingly show them that they have broken God's law and point them to the only One who perfectly kept it—Jesus.

5 C — COACH REPENTANCE

Help your child practice the biblical alternative.

Put off the old self ... and put on the new self. — Ephesians 4:22-24

Biblical repentance is not only turning away from sin; it is learning a new way to live in _____ to Christ.

We are not merely punishing sin; we are training _____.

PUT OFF	PUT ON / PRACTICE
Lying	Go back and tell the truth.
Harsh words	Go back and speak words that are kind and encouraging.
Refusing to obey	Practice joyful, immediate obedience.

Notes

6 THE ROD OF DISCIPLINE

A tender subject that must be governed by Scripture, love, wisdom, and self-control.

“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.” — Proverbs 22:15 (ESV)

Our experiences—whether good or bad—must not become the final _____. God’s Word is our authority.

A Definition with Safeguards

“The rod is a parent, in faith toward God and faithfulness toward his or her children, undertaking the responsibility of careful, timely, measured, and controlled use of physical punishment to underscore the importance of obeying God, thus rescuing the child from continuing in his foolishness until death.” — Tedd Tripp

Key Safeguards

A parent	God entrusts parents with the primary responsibility to shepherd their children.
Faith toward God	We trust that God’s wisdom is better than our own—even when obedience is difficult.
Faithfulness toward the child	Discipline is an act of love, not a way to vent frustration.
Careful • timely • measured • controlled	Never impulsive, excessive, humiliating, harmful, or administered in anger.
To underscore obeying God	The goal is larger than getting children to obey Mom and Dad; all authority belongs to God.
Rescuing the child	Biblical discipline interrupts a path of foolishness and lovingly trains a child toward wisdom.

Biblical discipline is not the opposite of love; it is one expression of love. — Proverbs 13:24; Hebrews 12:6

Worldly Substitutes That Do Not Shepherd the Heart

- Bribery — teaches that obedience is negotiable.
- False threats — teach children that our words may not mean anything.
- Emotional manipulation — trains people-pleasing rather than God-pleasing.
- Endless reasoning — erases the line between loving leadership and negotiation.

7 WHEN IS SPANKING APPROPRIATE?

Discern the difference between childishness, inability, accidents, and willful rebellion.

NOT APPROPRIATE	MAY BE APPROPRIATE
Childishness • inability • accidents	Direct disobedience: a clear instruction was understood and knowingly refused
Any time the parent is angry, embarrassed, irritated, or out of control	Defiant rebellion: open disrespect or refusal of God-given authority

Guidelines for Biblical Chastisement

1	Shepherd your own _____ — Wait until you are calm. The goal is restoration, not retaliation.
2	Shepherd your child's _____ — Ask heart questions, bring biblical reproof, and lead toward confession.
3	Teach the _____ — Identify what should have happened and coach obedience.
4	Use an appropriate _____ — Never use your hands or any object that could injure. Correction must never cause harm.
5	Be clear about the _____ — Calmly explain beforehand how many swats will be given.
6	Discipline _____ — When reasonably possible, connect the offense, God's truth, and the consequence while fresh.
7	Protect their _____ — Always administer corporal discipline privately; never shame or humiliate.
8	Require _____ — Make things right, seek forgiveness, and practice the obedience that should have happened.
9	Reconcile and _____ — Pray, embrace, express love, and do not keep bringing the offense back up.

8 GRACE FOR PARENTS

We have been given a framework, not a formula—and our confidence is in God, not perfect parenting.

GOOD NEWS God's grace is sufficient not only for our children's failures, but for ours. It is never too late to begin obeying God's Word.

We cannot change our children's _____, but we know the One who can.

My Next Faithful Step

What is one pattern I want to change in the way I discipline?

Which part of the ABC framework do I most need to practice?

Is there anything I need to confess to God—or apologize for to my child?

Write a short prayer for your family:

Keep Going

- Keep abiding in Jesus.
- Keep asking heart questions.
- Keep bringing biblical reproof.
- Keep coaching repentance.
- Keep praying, planting seeds, and entrusting your children to the Lord.

CLOSING PRAYER May God give us grace to faithfully shepherd the hearts He has entrusted to us.