

SESSION 7: NEW TOOLS

- **Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes**
- **Session #7 Teaching: New Tools: 15 minutes**

Part of disciplining our children means letting them learn from uncomfortable situations that they make for themselves. You may think of this as punishment, or consequences, but whatever you call it, there is no easy way to do it. Many of us become parents with an ideal in mind for how we will train our children, but that quickly goes out the window and we get frustrated when our children don't respond to consequences as quickly as we'd hoped, or a certain method works for one child but not another. It is important to 1) know your child, 2) check your motivation, 3) have lots of tools in your tool belt. The end goal of every instance of discipline must be restoration of relationships.

First let's address the elephant in the conversation; spanking. While sometimes spanking may be effective with some children who have no reason to fear or mistrust adults, sometimes parents are under the impression that spanking is a biblical mandate; sometimes we think it must be the best and thus only tool we need; and sometimes we just don't know what else to do. Well, good news; there are lots of other tools that work for different children, and there is not anything in scripture that teaches that parents HAVE to spank. For more thoughts on this, you might want to read this article (<https://connectedfamilies.org/spank-or-not-spank/>). For children who have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect or abandonment, spanking should be recognized as very damaging, not an appropriate tool. In fact, for foster or adoptive families, it is strictly forbidden by agencies, and for good reason.

What other tools do we have to teach our children and help them heal at the same time? Here are some options that will help your child learn, reinforce trust in you, and teach them to have safe and healthy relationships.

- Use scripts: especially effective with young children or those with processing struggles, short phrases that carry a strong message do a long way. Examples: "use good words", "no hurting", "gentle hands"
- Playful engagement is a quick way to defuse escalation and teach at the same time. "Whoa, are you a bear? I don't think my girl wants to growl at people, you might scare us into hiding!"
- Re-do: children learn best by practicing good behavior when they are calm, and often react in emotion when upset. If misbehavior occurs, whining or a disrespectful tone, you can say, "Would you like to re-do on that? Let's practice doing it the right way." Role playing situations ahead of time is great too.
- Time-in, or sometimes a time-out: some children benefit from time alone to decompress so they can then discuss the issue and learn. Others have feelings of abandonment, and keeping them with you while they calm down and prepare to repair an offense is a more helpful approach.
- Mommy or Daddy time out; sometime WE are setting the kids off, and everyone needs to take space.
- Natural/Practical consequences; don't intervene when your child's choices are going to lead to discomfort (not danger of course). If your son chooses not to do his chores or homework, let him be the one to let his friends know he can't come over that day. If you daughter breaks someone else's toy... have her replace it with one of her worn or pay for it. Your toddler hit? Give them a way to do something good with their hands. Most situations have a natural or practical consequence that can apply.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- What discipline tools do you find yourself using most with your children, and why?
- What was effective or not effective for you as a child?
- What can you do to assess your child's needs before you implement consequences when they have committed a wrong?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

- What did you cover in your small group time? What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minutes

- Do your LIFE Starter Journaling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Here are some things to consider.

- 1.Is it an effective tool for this child and this situation? If a parenting tool builds a wall between a parent and child rather than opening doors for communication and teaching, it's not an effective tool.
- 2.Are there other consequences that are better tied to the behavior that needs correcting? Natural/practical consequences help the brain of a child utilize the logic part of their brain, making it easier for the lesson and correlation between the issue and the result to take deeper root.
- 3.Self-control and anger. Many of our kids behaviors trigger responses or frustrations in us that aren't really even about our child. When we our buttons are pushed, it's hard to manage our own emotions, making us more susceptible to impulsivity and less able to connect with our child. When we are angry, we are more prone to humiliate or shame our child.
- 4.The Rod of Discipline: Many people have been taught that the rod of discipline in the Bible is a mandate to spank. But in the Bible, the "rod" was a tool a shepherd used to direct his sheep. If we are going to spank, are we directing?
- 5.What is your motive? Are you looking for control; a quick change in behavior; or for your children to have a changed heart open to the love of God.
- 6.Does my child have an unknown history, known trauma or extenuating circumstances, processing or learning delays, or other circumstances that could be impacting their ability to do what I am asking them to do? Make sure you are in tune with your child, you understand their emotional state, motivations, etc.

While spanking gets all the attention as a hot button issue, here are some other ideas to put in your tool belt:

- 1.Pause fun activities until responsibilities (chores, school, etc...) are met.
- 2.Consider time out (a good rule of thumb is 1 minute per year old) or a time in (stay close to the parent until able to discuss the issue).
- 3.Restoration training. If they said an unkind thing, after apologizing, have them tell 3 kind things to that person. If they use their hands to hit, have them use their hands to do something kind to restore.
- 4.Rewind the conversation. Explain how the words or tone they used were hurtful or not helpful. Then practice the conversation again to model the appropriate behavior. Karyn Purvis has a lot of great little scripts that work with younger kids, like "Try that again with respect please", of "Would you like a re-do?"

SESSION #7

WK. 7 DEVO 1

Read Jonah 2

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #7

WK. 7 DEVO 2

Read John 18:15-27

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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SESSION #7

WK. 7 DEVO 3

Read John 21:9-17

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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SESSION #7

WK. 7 DEVO 4

Read Luke 15:17-24

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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