

Biblical Discipline
Shepherding a Child's Heart: Tedd Tripp. Pages 60-130

Parenting is not an exact science. There is not a special formula that can be applied to it and bam! You get perfect children. Parenting comes from a mix of methodological approaches grounded by biblical approaches. Tripp says, "We cannot be indifferent to methodology. Biblically, the method is as important as the objectives. God speaks to both issues". Like I said...it's hard to define what's "good parenting". However, there are methods that, in the end, doesn't really match up to biblical teaching. Tripp lists out several methods that have proven to be unbiblical.

The first one is the "I didn't turn out so bad" technique. The idea is that my parents use to punch me in the face and hey, I didn't turn out so bad. So why can't I just go around knocking my kid out once in awhile? His point is that many parents unquestioningly employ whatever method their parents employed.

The second unbiblical method that Tripp refers to is pop psychology. Here's the scenario – well my kid doesn't want to do his homework...I know, I'll bribe him. If I bribe my kid...then they'll do what I want.

Or another one is contracts. We'll sit down with each other and we will draw out an agreement that commits you to perform certain things if they perform certain things. Tripp calls these methods superficial...which they are. The point of appeal in bribery and contracts is crass self-interest. These methods rarely ever address the heart of the problem. If anything the child then learns sooner or later how to manipulate the system. As long as the terms are met, the child gets a reward.

Another unbiblical goal is behavior modification. The idea is to reward good behavior in some tangible way; ignore or perhaps punish bad behavior. Emotionalism is another method. When the child does something wrong I turn on the emotions and make her feel bad; that or appeal to threat. The story Tripp gave was a mother and her daughter were in the airport and the little girl didn't want to do what the mother told her. The mother then turned and became distant and said "fine, go do your own thing...I don't like you..." It threw the daughter into shock and she came running back to her mother but the mother kept pushing her away. That's emotionalism. Another variety of emotional appeal is to shame a child. Punitive correction is using the threat of punishment to control their children. The punishment can be anything from hitting to yelling at their children. The most popular form of punitive correction is grounding. If the child breaks some rule, they're grounded from tv, the internet, or even from other children. However, according to Tripp, grounding is not corrective. It is simply punitive. Again this form of methodology does not address the issue at the heart of matters, rather it curbs the instant actions and demands quick change.

The last form of unbiblical method is erratic eclecticism. This is a pattern of discipline that frequently moves about. There is no consistency in how the parents distribute punishment. This confuses the children and they are never too sure of how mom and dad are going to respond. "They are never sure what system is in effect now".