

## Disciplining Children / Abraham and Isaac

**Tammy:** Hello! It's that time again. I'm Tammy and you're listening to *Women of Hope*. Hi Carol. How are you today?

**Carol:** I'm just fine. And I'm happy to be with you today.

**Tammy:** You know, Carol, the great thing about radio is you can keep doing some of your favorite things as you listen?

**Carol:** My radio is on almost all day long. I love the fact that you can keep cooking, sewing, or nursing your baby as you listen.

**Tammy:** We've been talking about parenting recently, and today we want to share some ideas with you about discipline at home.

**Carol:** So, Tammy, what does the word "discipline" mean to you?

**Carol:** When I was child I used to get into trouble a lot. So I suppose to me it means someone telling me I've done something wrong!

**Carol:** Well, yes, I guess that's one part of discipline – but it means a lot more than that doesn't it! Discipline means to teach and train children about, family values, about right from wrong, about how to respect the rights of others, about how to behave or not misbehave!!

**Tammy:** How to 'not misbehave' – that was me when I was a child!! Carol I know you will be talking a bit later about discipline in the home. Our friend listening might think we know it all when it comes to discipline in our families. But of course that is not true is it?

**Carol:** It's certainly not true. My children didn't always behave as I'd like them to. However my husband and I taught them to know what's right and what's wrong and how we expected them to behave. Discipline is a full time job. It needs to be happening all the time and not just when a child misbehaves. Of course a big part of discipline is being there with the children – listening to them and giving them encouragement when they do what they know is right. When you're with your children you must be a full time mom!

**Tammy:** You are listening to *Women of Hope*. My friend, if you find it hard going trying to discipline your children, let me assure you...you are not alone!

**Carol:** That's right. It's not an easy job. Is it? I wonder if you have ever done what I did not long ago. I asked our children what they remembered most about us as parents. It was interesting for me to hear what our children remembered about the discipline in our family. As they looked back they immediately remembered the times when they were punished. These emotional experiences stuck in their minds. Now, the only time we punished our children was when they were disobedient or hurt someone else or showed lack of respect for someone. They remembered some good times we shared together as a family, times when we had a lot of fun!

Every child is born with a different personality, but it's up to the parents to use their skills to mold and shape that little personality. You could think of it this way: When children are born they are like blank slates on which their parents lay the foundation and build their understanding of their world.

Discipline does not involve only the correcting of a child's mistakes but also teaching them, showing them the right thing to do. All children need loving discipline in their lives because this makes them feel safe. A child's character begins to be formed in the early years, so we must begin early. If we miss these early years, and our children develop behavior problems when they're young, these problems will grow as the child grows. And trust me, when the teenage years come, it may be too late to help them to change that behaviour.

So how do we teach our children?

We can do it with our words. We must always make time to talk to our children and communicate good values to them. Moms and Dads are usually very busy! But let me ask you this: How often do you really talk with your children? Do you listen to them, and talk about things that are important to you and to them? Are you available for them even when they are very young?

Do you know something? If you take time to talk with them when they are little, they are more likely to take time to talk to you when they are older.

We can show them by example. We learn new tasks by watching others do them don't we? Children – especially when they are young - learn by copying, or imitating their parents. But you have to remember that they will imitate both good and bad characteristics. As the saying goes: "Actions speak louder than words." Have you heard your child say something to a younger brother or sister – using just the same words that you used? Your example as a parent is so important.

Now here's a scary question. If your children were to imitate you, would they lie, cheat, smoke, drink, gamble, dress immodestly or would they live a clean life, speak kindly, work hard, be honest and help others? Do you have things about your life that you don't want your children to imitate? If so, then you need to think carefully about these things and make some changes and the sooner the better!

Another way to teach our children is to let them help us. Usually people learn best, not just by being told what to do or even by watching others, but actually doing the activity, guided by an instructor. Parents you can teach your children to work by having them help you work. You can do this with house work, gardening, making repairs and work of all kinds. If we do this, the things we want to teach them will soon become a way of life for them.

Another effective way of teaching is through repetition. We humans are 'creatures of habit', and habits develop by doing things over and over again. Talking with our children, being a good example and letting them help us, all these need to be repeated throughout our child's life. But parents when your child needs correcting, this repetition should not turn into nagging and lecturing. When children already know something they will not appreciate a long lecture. A short reminder may be all they need.

It is important as a parent to help children learn lessons from life as you see things happen. For example, if you see a car crash, you might talk to the children about the reasons for obeying the law. And when you're talking about rules at home, don't just tell your children what your rules are, or punish them for disobeying rules. Tell them why you made the rule. Discuss with them that rules are usually to keep order, and to protect them.

When we as parents instruct our children, it must be done in a positive way. We can do that by being fair with our children. The goal of discipline is to teach your child self-control and acceptable ways to behave that will help them to live with themselves as well as with others. Discipline is

something you do for a child, and not to a child! Again we want them to learn something about their choices, not just about what makes Mom or Dad angry. Why? Because growing in wisdom is going to protect them from even more painful results down the road. Have you noticed that as you grow older, foolish choices tend to be more costly? And often the pain is greater.

As we discipline our children we must be firm but not angry. We need to explain the reasons the best we can. Sometimes a child will keep asking 'Why?' Sometimes we simply have to say, "That's just how it is" and they must learn to live with it. You set the boundaries because you can see what they cannot see. You can guide them to go the way they should go.

We need to be friendly, patient and compassionate. When there are difficulties, we need to remind ourselves that we are not against our child but against their behavior. We must make it clear to them that we love them and that is the only real motivation for discipline.

So enjoy your family; spend happy times together. And when you enjoy them, they will enjoy time with you!

**Tammy:** That is so true – that when we are enjoying our children they will enjoy being with us! And you said something that makes a lot of sense to me. You said, 'If you take time to talk with them when they are little, they are more likely to take time to talk to you when they are older.' That's what I'm finding happening with my son now as he's getting older. We have really interesting conversations. Thank you, Carol for sharing with us.

**Carol:** What a blessing children can be and we can thank God for them can't we! Today we have a story from the Bible about a father who waited a very long time for his first child.

**Tammy:** We have Ros here today. Welcome, Ros.

**Ros:** Thank you for inviting me here today. I want to tell you a story from the Bible that touches my heart. It's the story of an amazing father and his little son. It's not a story about discipline but it's a story of a father and son who loved each other. It's the story of a father whose faith was tested by God – and a son who would have learnt so much by his father's example.

This father and his son set out from home together, along with two servants. They had travelled for three days when the father said to the two servants, (Genesis 22:5) "You stay here with the donkey while my son and I go over to that mountain to worship. We will come back."

So they set out towards the mountain with a bundle of wood, which the father gave the son to carry on his shoulders, while he carried a pot of hot coals and a knife.

The son was excited about this trip with his father...an only son, he was young, and may have never been away from his mother before, so he felt very special. But the father's feelings were very different. What the son didn't know was that three nights before this, God had spoken to him and said, (Genesis 22:2) "Go get Isaac, your only son, the one you dearly love! Take him into the land of Moriah, and I will show you a mountain where you must sacrifice him to me on the fires of an altar."

If I was the father, Abraham, I'm sure I would have said, "What? What are you talking about? How many years have I waited for you to give me this son you promised me so long ago? And you're asking me to sacrifice him? How could you ask me to do such a thing?"

You see, many years before this, God had made three promises to Abraham, who was then called Abram. God had asked him to leave the comfort of his country, his family, and his relatives and in God's words, (Genesis 12:1) "Go to a land that I will show you." Then he said, (v2) "I will bless you and make your descendants into a great nation". And the third promise... "You will become famous and be a blessing to others." (v3) Abram was then 75 years old.

So now we move on...to when Abram is 99 years old. Over many years God had repeated these promises to Abram, and yet he still had no children with his wife Sarai. So here was God speaking to him again, and saying, (Gen 17:1-5) "I am God all powerful. If you obey me and always do right, I will keep my solemn promise to you and give you more descendants than can be counted." By this time Abram could have said, "Yeah, yeah, I've heard all this before and nothing has happened!" But oh no, he was a man of faith. He silently bowed his face to the ground and kept listening as God said, "I promise that you will be the father of many nations. That's why I now change your name from Abram to Abraham." This means 'father of many'.

(v15) Then God continued, "Abraham, your wife's name will now be Sarah. I will bless her and you will have a son by her. She will become the mother of nations." Once again, Abraham bowed his face to the ground, but this time he smiled as he thought, "I am almost a hundred years old. How can I become a father? And Sarah is ninety...how can she have a child?" And Abraham began to laugh!

But, sure enough when Abraham was 100 years old, their son was born, and they named him Isaac which means 'laughter'...a very suitable name don't you think? And Sarah also laughed with joy. (Ch 21:6) "God has made me laugh", she said, "Now everyone will laugh with me...in his old age I have given Abraham a son." What a joyful time that was for Sarah and Abraham!

Now let's join the father and son again...on the way to the mountain to make the sacrifice. Abraham was not laughing now... Imagine his thoughts, "After all this time with no child, and after God giving us this promised son, why is he taking him away?" Now... the son, Isaac, who has seen his father make sacrifices to the Lord before, asks the question that I imagine Abraham was hoping he would not ask. (Ch 22 v7) "Father, we have the coals and the wood, but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?"

And Abraham, with total faith in God, answers, (v8) "My son, God will provide the lamb". Imagine the knot in the father's stomach as he gives this answer to his son. The two of them walked on...the father with his own deep thoughts...and the son looking forward to making this sacrifice together.

Now let me read to you from the Bible what happened next:

(Ch 22 v9) 'When they reached the place that God had told him about, Abraham built an altar and placed the wood on it. Next he tied up his son and put him on the wood. He then took the knife and got ready to kill his own son. But the Lord's angel shouted from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Here I am", he answered.

"Don't hurt the boy in any way!" the angel said. "Now I know that you truly obey God, because you were willing to offer him...your only son." Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in the bushes. So he took the ram and sacrificed it instead of his son.'

Imagine the emotion going through Abraham's heart as he realised that he had answered his son's innocent question about the sacrifice with the words, "God will provide a lamb". And I'm sure

Isaac never forgot his father's faith and what happened that day. I'm sure he would have grown up to respect, admire and imitate his father.

And you know, our father, God, provided his own Son, Jesus, as the 'Lamb of God' to be sacrificed for us, to take our sins away.

Let's thank him:

*Father God, Thank you for loving us enough to give your only son Jesus...whom you loved...to be a sacrifice...to take our sins away. Amen*

**Carol:** This is *Women of Hope* and we're so glad you're with us today.

We parents have to take care of our children and set an example for them as they are growing up don't we? The Bible says we are to share God's commandments with our children. (Bible Deuteronomy 6:7) It says, "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the door frames of your house and on your gates."

**Tammy:** But to do this we need to know God's commandments ourselves don't we! Did you know that God wants us to have a close, personal, relationship with him? He wants us to understand his love and he wants us to get to know him and to love him too, as our father.

**Carol:** Would you like to talk to God about it? If you would, then pray with me.

*Father God, we thank you for the gift of life that you have given us...and that you know everything about us... You know the things we enjoy and the things we struggle with. You know that we have done wrong things and deserve your punishment. Thank you for sending Jesus, your son, to take that punishment for us. Thank you that we can be made right with you because Jesus has taken away our sins. And we can look forward to having a loving, child-like relationship with you...in this life and after we die when we will join you in heaven. Amen.*

**Tammy:** Amen! We would love to hear from you. You can write to us here at TWR Women of Hope. Our email address is [TWRWomenofHope@twr.org](mailto:TWRWomenofHope@twr.org). Or you can visit our website at [TWRWomenofHope.org](http://TWRWomenofHope.org). Or visit our Facebook page.

Have a good week!