

Harmony in Marriage: Expectations and the Righteous Disciplining of Children

A Review of Correct Doctrines and Principles

By Richard J. DeVries
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#1 - “True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.” (Elder Boyd K. Packer, “Little Children,” *Ensign*, November 1986, 17)

- “And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.” (Alma 31:5)

#2 - Most challenges in marriage come from differences in expectations, which arise from:

- A lack of communication of expectations
- Differences in the knowledge of facts
- Selfishness

- “And now, except ye do repent of that which ye have done, and begin to be up and doing, and send forth food and men unto us, and also unto Helaman, that he may support those parts of our country which he has regained, and that we may also recover the remainder of our possessions in these parts, behold it will be expedient that we contend no more with the Lamanites until we have first cleansed our inward vessel, yea, even the great head of our government.” (Moroni’s Epistle to Pahoran - Alma 60:24)

Expectation

- ▣ Something you anticipate will happen in a given circumstance.

#3 - Expectations must be communicated, fair and agreed upon for a relationship to prosper

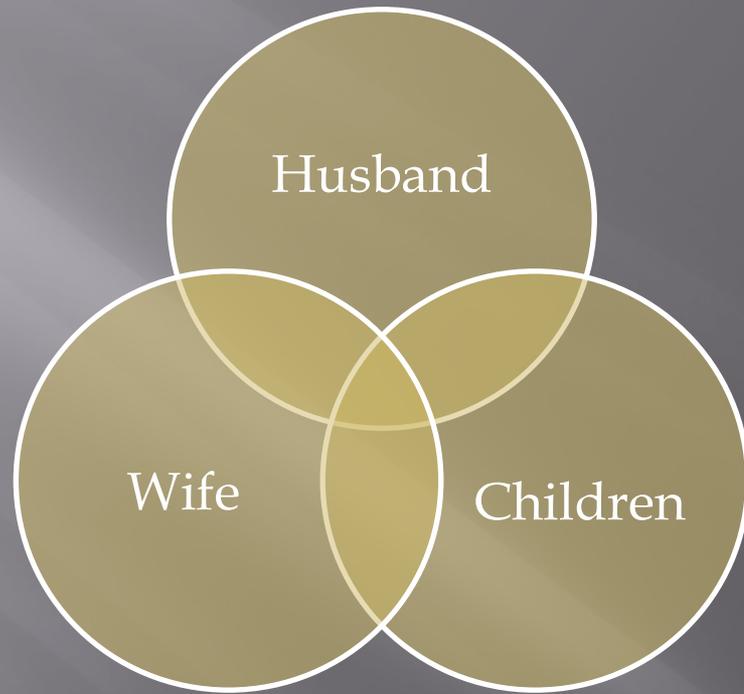
- “I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fullness.” (D&C 93:19)

#4 - Part of fairness in establishing expectations and consequences is a recognition of age, maturity and capability

- “For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation.” (D&C 82:3)

#5 – There must be unity in our relationships

- “I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.”
(D&C 38:27)



The greater the overlap of the interests, desires and expectations of these three circles, the greater the unity, harmony and love that will be found in the family.

#6 - There must be rules

- “And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds and conditions.” (D&C 88:38)
- “And also, if there was no law given against sin men would not be afraid to sin.” (Alma 42:20)
- “For us to have successful homes, values must be taught, and there must be rules, there must be standards, there must be absolutes.” (James E. Faust, “A Thousand Threads of Love,” *Ensign*, Oct 2005, 2-7)

#7 - There must be consequences for breaking the rules

- “How could there be a law save there was a punishment?” (Alma 42:17)
- “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2:17)
- “Without discipline, children will not respect either the rules of the home or society.” (James E. Faust, “A Thousand Threads of Love,” *Ensign*, Oct 2005, 2-7)

#8 – There must be unity in establishing and enforcing the rules

- “And every decision made... must be by the unanimous voice... in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with another.” (D&C 107:27)
- “And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (Mark 3:25)”

#9 – Unity must be achieved through righteous principles

- “The decisions... Are to be made in all righteousness, in holiness, and lowliness of heart, meekness and long suffering, and in faith, and virtue, and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity; Because the promise is, if these things abound in them they shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord.” (D&C 107:30-31)
- “For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me.” (3 Nephi 11:29)

#10 - Credibility must be established by
consistently delivering the consequences –
both positive and negative

- “But there is a law given, and a punishment affixed... and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.” (Alma 42:22)
- “So he drove out the man [and the woman]; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword.” (Genesis 3:24)

“Parenting Difficult Teens”

Robert A. Litchfield

Please click on the link below to be connected to the audio version of “Parenting Difficult Teens” by Robert A. Litchfield.

While the title refers to parenting teens, the principles taught apply to children of every age, and should be applied at the earliest age possible.

[Link to "Parenting Difficult Teens" by Robert A. Litchfield](#)

Summary Quotes from Robert A. Litchfield:

- “If your child is struggling, usually there is a credibility problem that you have. And the credibility problem is this – they don’t believe that they need to do what you ask them to do.” (Robert A. Litchfield)

- “One way you can check this in your own situation is to look at the word “No.” What does the word “No” mean to your children?
 - I asked the wrong way?
 - I asked at the wrong time?
 - I asked the wrong person?
 - I just haven’t asked enough times?”(Robert A. Litchfield)

Summary Quotes from Robert A. Litchfield (page 2):

- “The solution is to talk less and act more.” (Robert A. Litchfield) 
- “The key to credibility is consistent follow-through on whatever we say. Kids consistently respond to consistent follow-through.” (Robert A. Litchfield)
- “And as the words have gone forth out of my mouth even so shall they be fulfilled.” (D&C 29:30)

#11 - The rules and consequences must be applied fairly to all children

- “For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there – and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?” (D&C 38:26)

#12 - If parents choose to break some of the rules, then children have tacit* permission to break any of the rules

- “Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words.” (Alma 39:12)

*Tacit = implied or indicated but not actually expressed.

#13 - Discipline is patient teaching, not angry retribution

- "...Power or influence can or ought to be maintained... only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile." (D&C 121:41-42)
- "Certainly the overarching and undergirding principle is that the discipline of children must be motivated more by love than by punishment. Brigham Young counseled, 'If you are ever called upon to chasten a person, never chasten beyond the balm you have within you to bind up.'" (James E. Faust, "A Thousand Threads of Love," *Ensign*, Oct 2005, 2-7)

- “Prove to them that you do love them by your every word or act to them. ... When you speak or talk to them, do it not in anger, do it not harshly, in a condemning spirit. Speak to them kindly; get them down and weep with them if necessary and get them to shed tears with you if possible. Soften their hearts; get them to feel tenderly toward you. Use no lash and no violence, but ... approach them with reason, with persuasion and love unfeigned. ... You can’t do it any other way. You can’t do it by unkindness; you cannot do it by driving. ...

“You can’t force your boys, nor your girls into heaven. You may force them to hell, by using harsh means in the efforts to make them good, when you yourselves are not as good as you should be.” “The man that will be angry at his boy, and try to correct him while he is in anger, is in the greatest fault. ... You can only correct your children by love, in kindness, by love unfeigned, by persuasion, and reason.” (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, fifth ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, pp. 316-317)

#14 – Correction (reproof) should occur as quickly as possible following the breaking of a rule

- “Reproving *betimes**... when moved upon by the Holy Ghost.”
(D&C 121:43)

*Betimes = In a short time; speedily

#15 – Correction should be provided that is clear and easy to understand

- “Reproving betimes with *sharpness*,* when moved upon by the Holy Ghost.” (D&C 121:43)

*Sharpness = Clear in outline or detail; set forth with clarity and distinctiveness

#16 – Correction should be provided as directed by the Spirit

- “Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost.” (D&C 121:43)
- “For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.” (2 Nephi 32:5)
- “This voice of the Spirit speaks gently, prompting you what to do or what to say, or it may caution or warn you. Ignore or disobey these promptings, and the Spirit will leave you. It is your choice - your agency.” (Elder Boyd K. Packer, “Personal Revelation: The Gift, the Test, and the Promise.” *Ensign*, November 1994, 59)

#17 - A demonstration of increased love must follow discipline

- “Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost.”
- “...and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprov'd, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy.” (D&C 121:41-43)

#18 – Teaching discipline to children requires that parents discipline themselves.

- “Children are more influenced by the sermons you act than by sermons you preach.” (David O. McKay, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1955, p. 26)

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#1 - The study of doctrine will change behavior more quickly and more permanently than the study of behavior will.

#2 - Most challenges in marriage come from differences in expectations, which arise from lack of communication of expectations, differences in the knowledge of facts, or selfishness.

#3 - Expectations must be communicated, fair, and agreed upon for a relationship to prosper.

#4 - Part of fairness in establishing expectations and consequences is a recognition of age, maturity and capability.

#5 – There must be unity in our relationships.

#6 - There must be rules.

#7 - There must be consequences for breaking the rules.

#8 – There must be unity in establishing and enforcing the rules.

#9 – Unity must be achieved through righteous principles.

#10 - Credibility must be established by consistently delivering the consequences – both positive and negative.

#11 - The rules and consequences must be applied fairly to all children.

#12 - If parents choose to break some of the rules, then children have tacit permission to break any of the rules.

#13 - Discipline is patient teaching, not angry retribution.

#14 – Correction (reproof) should occur as quickly as possible following the breaking of a rule.

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