

Growing Kids God's Way 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2008)  
Chapter Summaries

Chapter One Summary  
How to Raise a Moral Child

This first session focuses on establishing the importance of the moral training of our children and how biblical ethics is the basis of that training. The Word of God is the source of both our example and precept. Its example shows how God places value on others and thus establishes the heart of biblical ethics – placing value on those outside of self. The precepts of God's Word set the absolute standard to which we are to train our children. Personality differences and temperament affect parenting in that they help parents identify areas which require special effort to raise children up to the same standard of moral training. However, the standards of training and the goals do not change with personality differences. Temperament differences are not an acceptable excuse for sin.

This session also identifies two common extremes and their sources – authoritarian parenting and permissive parenting. Each has short-term consequences and is ultimately destructive. The answer to these two extremes is biblical parenting, which focuses on moral training. Moral training instructs children with the principles behind parents' directions. This mindset helps the child adopt the principles as his own. Failure to teach in this way results in a child who is moral on the outside (behavior) but not on the inside (character). For children ages three and up, parental instructions should become characterized by including moral or practical reason why. Providing these reasons helps to make obedience attractive. The Lessons also challenge parents to pay attention to context, which allows them to guard against legalism.

Chapter Two Summary  
Right Beginnings

Presented in this lesson are the foundation of the family and identify two popular practices that threaten the family. From Genesis 2 and Ephesians 5, the husband-wife relationship is shown as a family by itself, even without children. The husband-wife relationship is the priority relationship among human relationships. This lesson focuses on horizontal relationships. The Christian's relationship with God (a vertical relationship) is discussed elsewhere.

The first practice that threatens the family is downplaying the significance of the husband-wife relationship. The greatest influence parents have on their children is as a husband and wife, rather than as a mother and father. Children derive much of their security from seeing the husband-wife relationship functioning smoothly. This lesson is not promoting egalitarian roles in marriage. Egalitarian is defined as "equality in marriage," meaning equal leadership as well as sharing common roles at both work and home.

The second practice that threatens the family is child-centered parenting. Children are to be welcome members of the family, not the center of it. Children who grow up in child-centered families grow up self-centered and ill-prepared for real life. Children have an intrinsic need to know their parents are solid in their relationship. Insecurities in this area affect every other learning discipline.

Some key applications from this lesson include activities that demonstrate the priority of the husband-wife relationship. Maintaining other relationships, date nights, special husband-wife activities, hospitality, and “couch time” all reinforce the principles outlined here. “Couch time” is a significant influence, helping children see the love Mom and Dad have for each other and the priority of their relationship. This simple practice affects many other areas of a child’s life and cannot be overstated.

### Chapter Three Summary Touchpoints of Love

There are two side to love – giving and receiving. Giving is the action side; receiving is the feeling side. Both are in the design of God. For love to begin in such a way that it is sensed and received by the other person, each person must understand what causes the other to feel love. In effect, each person must learn to speak to the other in their primary love language. Though the main focus of this session is on the husband and wife, the same principles apply to children. Each person has one priority love language, though all should be exercised. They are:

Encouraging Words – Building one another up through edifying and encouraging words (1 Corinthians 8:1)

Acts of Service – Deeds out of the ordinary that the other person will appreciate (1 John 3:18)

Gift Giving – Simple, impromptu gifts that say, “When we were apart, I was thinking of you” (Ephesians 5:25)

Quality Time – An activity that promotes communicating and sharing (this does not include most entertainment activities, but must promote two-way conversation) (Matt. 17:1; Mark 5:37, 9:2, 13:3, 14:33; Luke 9:28).

Physical Touch and Closeness – Hand-holding, a hug, or just being close, even without conversation, communicates love. Just knowing the other person is right there is enough to confirm a partner’s affection and care (Mark 10:13-16).

The lesson concludes with an immensely practical assignment to determine the love language priorities of different families members.

## Chapter Four Summary

### The Father's Mandate

Fatherhood can operate at three levels – the biological level, the material and sustenance level, and the loyalty level. The third and highest level is the focus of this session. Due to many factors, including the complexity of the current culture, work, finance, education, and leisure activities, most men never reach this third level. Even in recent history when Judeo-Christian influences were greater, men primarily operated at the sustenance level, erroneously thinking moms were more qualified to nurture children.

But, the truly biblical father will build his relationship with his children based on trust.

The Lessons challenge the contemporary notion of quality time and quantity time with the view that time is not the best measurement, but the caliber of relationship is. This can be gauged by how often children turn to Dad for advice and counseling. Trust secures the relationship, solidifying a child's position and giving him the sense of being loved. Failure to build trust causes a child to more readily find his identity with his peers and thus adopt their values.

The Lessons identify and detail eight duties that cultivate and strengthen the child's confidence in Dad's leadership.

1. A father must cultivate a sense of family identity.
2. A father must regularly demonstrate love to his wife.
3. A father must understand and respect his child's private world.
4. A father must give his children the freedom to fail.
5. A father must be the encourager of the family.
6. A father must guard his tongue and his tone and learn to measure his response against the excitement on their faces.
7. A father must routinely embrace his children.
8. A father must build the trusting relationship on God's Word, not on human wisdom.

## Chapter Five Summary

### Your Child's Conscience

The Bible speaks frequently of the conscience and the Old Testament equivalent, which is the heart. The Scripture hints at many aspects of the conscience, and the Lessons

introduce some supportive terms to accurately represent the scriptural intent of these passages. The primary conscience spoken of in Romans 1:18-21 is imparted by God to all men and is that intrinsic sense of right and wrong – the sense of an ultimate accountability. The primary conscience produces an awareness that God exists, truth comes from God, righteousness comes from truth, and judgment comes from righteousness.

The moral conscience is the highlight of this session. Psalm 119:11 illustrates this facet of the conscience. This conscience is the trainable part. That is, it is the part that can be instructed and developed with principles from God's Word. While the primary conscience provides the inborn sense of right and wrong, the moral conscience provides the learned standards of right and wrong.

### Chapter Six Summary

#### Character Development: Respect for Authority and Parents

Character is the quality of workmanship that went into the personality. It is the combined quality of a person's personality and the moral restraint or encouragement of inward and outward behavior. The best way to evaluate character quality is by the presence or absence of three attributes – respect, honor, and honesty. These must be the observable, outward results of inner, or heart, training. The lesson provides the strong, scriptural basis for each and draw out several applications that help parents develop character in their children.

### Chapter Seven Summary

#### Character Development: Respect for Age

Respect for Age. In this section, there are several uniquely practical applications, such as the interrupt rule, the use of titles (such as Mr. and Mrs.), and other implications of respect. In this section, there are several uniquely practical applications, such as the interrupt rule, the use of titles (such as Mr. and Mrs.), and other implications of respect.

### Chapter Eight Summary

#### Character Development: Respect for Peers, Property, and Nature

The emphasis of this session is on teaching children to respect the dominion of others, whether it be time, space, objects, or rights. The emphasis is not the object but on showing respect for the person who owns the object. Teaching children how to respect nature is part of this discussion.

### Chapter Nine Summary

#### Principles of Obedience

In this session, the question of, "What is obedience?" is expanded to its full meaning. Children are to honor their parents through obedience. An obedient response is first-time, immediate, complete, and with a verbal response from the child. Parents must say what they mean and mean what they say; yet they must be sensitive to scripture, not

exasperating their children by being unfair, unjust, or untimely. In some situations, giving a five-minute warning or providing a legitimate “door of escape” from conflict is helpful. Certain parent types hinder the process of training children in obedience. The Lessons describe these parent types clearly: the threatening/repeating parent, the bribing parent, and the negotiating parent. Understanding the objective nature of first-time obedience is of great importance. When parents require the standard, the child alone determines when he will be punished, eliminating many arbitrary and inconsistent decisions in discipline.

The ultimate goal in obedience is self-generated initiative. There are four levels of initiative described. The first and highest is self-generated initiative, the second is prompted initiative, the third is forced initiative, and the fourth is suppressed initiative. They focus on both attitude and action.

### Chapter Ten Summary Discipline with Encouragement

This session provides a detailed look at all aspects of discipline, both the encouragement side and the correction side. It is the most complicated of all the lessons; understanding these concepts is crucial to the moral development of the family. The principles presented here are, however, both logical and common sense. The discipline flow chart provides an overview of the entire process. Discipline must keep the long term in mind and not just the needs of the moment. God gives parents the responsibility to constantly assess the needs of their children with the insights into attitudes and motivation.

The Lessons first differentiate skills and behavior. Skills are not moral issues and therefore do not have a corrective side. Encouragement in a skill area can consist of verbal praise and goal incentives. Verbal praise should be linked to the reason of improvement. “Great job catching the ball, Ryan. I can see how much your practice has helped you.” Unanticipated praise will have the greatest impact on your children. Goal incentives should not be overused.

Behavior and its associated attitudes and motivations have two sides: correction and encouragement. Both are important. The encouragement side consists of pre-activity reminders and questions to stimulate good attitudes and behavior. The best time to teach is during periods of non-conflict. The post-activity side consists of praise and occasional rewards. Rewards must be unanticipated and used carefully and sparingly.

### Chapter Eleven Summary Discipline with Correction

The correction side requires parents to consider the motivation behind a child’s particular action. Parents must determine if the action was childish or foolish. Childishness is innocent immaturity. There is no rebellious intent or selfish motive. It still necessitates correction, but not the same way a foolish action does. Foolishness includes deception, trickery, disobedience, and unwise or rebellious (active or passive) behavior.

Childishness may be dealt with by admonishment or, more seriously, with related consequences of temporary removal of privilege or property or having to make restitution.

Foolishness must be understood in the context of the severity of the child's actions and how he is normally characterized. When a child is not characterized by the type of infractions in question, the less intense forms of correction such as admonishment, warnings, and reflective timeouts can be used. The reflective timeout must not be understood as the contemporary tool of punitive action for sin but as a way to stop the child before he commits a rebellious act and thus cause him to "foresee evil" (Proverbs 22:3).

In the younger years, foolishness will be dealt with most frequently using consequences and physical correction. Consequences may be natural in that they happen as a natural result of the child's sin, or they may be induced or structured, such as the pain of chastisement, isolation, or logical consequences. Isolation may accompany or act as a follow-up to chastisement but is not intended to be used as a routine substitute for it. Logical consequences include removal of privileges or freedom for a period to help the child accept responsibility for an unaware action. There must be a connection between the offense and the punishment.

In all these insights, the punishment must fit the crime. Over-punishment exasperates the child; under-punishment fails to put a correct value on the offense.

#### Chapter Twelve Summary Consequences and Punishment

This session focuses attention on the specific side of corrective discipline called chastisement (spanking). Although the Ezzos do not believe spanking is commanded in Scripture, it is commended because it is associated with wisdom training. This chapter provides an expanded explanation and warning concerning the proper and improper use of chastisement.

#### Chapter Thirteen Summary Repentance, Forgiveness, and Restoration

One goal of the corrective side of discipline is to bring children to repentance. The word most commonly used in the Greek New Testament for repentance is *metanoia*, meaning to regret or have a change of mind. Unfortunately, people often confuse regret with repentance. You cannot repent without regret, but you can regret without repentance. But how do we distinguish true repentance from regret? The Lessons explain each steps involved in the restoration process. They also explain what happens to children when true repentance is never realized.

## Chapter Fourteen Summary Discipline Issues (Part One)

This lesson introduces an important concept that gives valuable insight into a possible cause of tension in your family – parenting outside the funnel. In an attempt to be gracious to their children, many parents unknowingly promote conflict by allowing their children freedoms that are not age-appropriate. These can be too many choices in decision-making, too many verbal freedoms, and too many physical freedoms. What do these freedoms accomplish? They cause a child to be “wise in his own eyes.” Being “wise in his own eyes” means that a child thinks he has a self-sufficient wisdom that he does not possess. How can you know if a child is wise in his own eyes? One way is to listen to the way the child speaks. Does he ask if he can do something, acknowledging parental authority in his life, or does he tell his parents what he is going to do? This presentation can help parents determine if their child is addicted to choice and offers practical measures that must be taken to place the child in a position that reflects his maturity.

## Chapter Fifteen Summary Discipline Issues (Part Two)

The chapter illuminates several common areas of discipline in the light of reinforcement training and non-reinforcement training. Reinforcement training is any behavior or attitude supported, directly or indirectly, by the parent. Non-reinforcement training is anything discouraged by the parent. This chapter takes up such topics as, whining, tantrums, dishonesty, stealing, gossip the hyperactive child and much more.

## Chapter Sixteen Summary The Appeal Process

The standard for children is a standard of first-time obedience. But how does one achieve this without exasperating the child or by requesting something that is unreasonable? How does one balance “Children be obedient...,” and, “Fathers do not exasperate...” (Col. 3: 20, 21)? The appeal process offers the solution. The appeal process gives children a way to present new information to the parents, giving parents the option of altering the original instruction. Children can be exasperated if they have no way to give the parent new information. When carried out properly, the appeal process maintains the parent’s authority and makes obedience attractive to the child because he trusts his parents to be fair. It also reduces a child’s frustration, prepares him for a real world relationship to authority, and develops self-control and character.

## Chapter Seventeen Building a Healthy Family

What are the marks of healthy families? Our ministry to parents has afforded us a greater than average opportunity to observe and study the characteristics of healthy and not-so-healthy families. We have followed a number of their children from highchair graduation

to high school graduation. And while not every healthy family will exhibit identical characteristics, it is our experience that they all demonstrate interdependence. How to build healthy family relationships is the center piece of the chapter.