

# Explore the Bible: August 9

By Laura Lee Leathers

**Accepting Discipline • Proverbs 29:1-3, 12-20**



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One of the most challenging responsibilities of parenting is consistent discipline. “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid” (Proverbs 12:1 ESV). Discipline is not to be withheld from a child (Prov. 23:13). Have you ever told a child, “If I didn’t love you, I would let you do whatever you wanted to do but because I do love you, there will be consequences for your disobedience.” Proverbs 13:24 backs up that statement: “...but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.”

Take a moment to read Hebrews 12:5-11. Quoting from Proverbs 3:11-12, the writer urges the reader not to take the Lord’s discipline lightly, “...for the Lord disciplines the one he loves.” Why should a Believer be disciplined? The writer states, “...but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness” (v. 10b). Today, the lesson is from King Hezekiah’s collection of Solomon’s proverbs regarding the value of discipline.

**The Goal (Prov. 29:1-3).** Willingness or obstinance? A teachable or unteachable spirit? Once again, note the contrasts. If an individual has a teachable spirit, it benefits every aspect of humanity. However, those who are

wicked or stiff-necked will make life complicated and bring misery to everyone. Society functions at its best when righteousness abounds (Prov. 14:34). Choosing wisdom means knowledge plus obedience, and will make our earthly father and our Heavenly Father glad. It demonstrates a humble heart and a desire to please Him.

Discipline is a benefit, not a penalty. "When we say *no* to one thing we are saying *yes* to something else... Living with discipline puts us in the position to flourish spiritually and relationally" (LifeWay).

**The Availability (Prov. 29:12-14).** With whom do you associate? To whom do you listen? Solomon warns if one lies or listens to lies, the result will be more falsehood. The example is a ruler who lies and his associates are also liars (v. 12).

Verse 13 states, "The Lord gives light to the eyes of the poor man and the oppressor." Both groups are held accountable for His truth because wisdom (sight) is available to everyone. In verse 14, the king who is fair and wise in his duty to judge the poor will have the blessing of knowing, "His throne will be established forever."

Also, note the importance of leadership upon the people. Throughout the Old Testament, the citizens had no voice in their government. Therefore, depending upon the ruler's integrity and his desire to follow God, the people were either treated fairly or mistreated.

**The Responsibility (Prov. 29:15-17).** Wise parents know they have a God-given obligation to raise their children in the wisdom and admonition of the Lord (also see Prov. 13:24, 22:6). Solomon's advice is to apply corporal punishment when necessary, but do so with kindness and love. Discipline brings the hope that children will produce godly virtue and bring parental joy. There is this warning, too: "But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (v. 15b).

The LifeWay writer shares: "To discipline a child is to find age-appropriate ways, both positive and negative, to correct bad behavior and reward good behavior. Discipline is nurturing, instructive, corrective, and boundary setting."

**The Source (Prov. 29:18-20).** Do you want to know how, when, where, and why to apply discipline? Then your go-to source of all child psychology books, The Bible, is available to everyone and it gives everything that pertains to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-15).

Discipline is a two-way street. Parents administer out of grace and love. Children should respond out of respect and obedience. The same is true in our relationship with our Heavenly Father. "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb.12:11).

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