

March 30th, 2008 “Discipline and Self-Esteem”

Reverend Darryl R. Curtis

Psalm 84:10-12:

10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

We are returning to the topic of the intelligent method of raising responsible children. In our last lesson on our topic, back on March 9th, one of my theses was that we should abandon building self-esteem in favor of using discipline to develop character and build respect for the authority of God’s Word in our children. I found we have a disconnect in our definitions of discipline and of self-esteem, and I would like to clarify those concepts. Discipline has to do with training. **Proverbs 22:6** tells us:

6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 23:13-14 continues the thought:

13 Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.

14 You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell.

The first clause of verse 13 of Proverbs 23 is an important concept. That which the Bible is discussing in this passage of Scripture is a way is part of the process of training.

When anyone fails to perform a task in the manner that they are instructed by a person in authority, there are generally two possibilities to explain the failure. The failure is either a deficiency of knowledge or a deficiency of execution.

A deficiency of knowledge means that the person is incapable of performing the task assigned because they actually do not know how to do it.

A deficiency of execution means that the person actually does know how to perform the task, but makes the volitional decision, meaning the choice, not to do so. The method that you can use to differentiate between the two deficiencies is to ascertain whether or not the person could perform the task if their life depended on it.

If the person could not perform the task, then the deficiency is a deficiency of knowledge. If they could perform the task, then the deficiency is a deficiency of execution.

When the one that you are training fails to perform due to a deficiency of knowledge, the proper remedial solution is training. For example, if a child has been exposed to the multiplication table but does not understand the concepts, the child cannot multiply because they don't understand how to do so. In that case, the training that the child received was inadequate, and the child needs to be retrained. This would be the case of the child was trained in the facts of multiplication without prior training in addition. This child lacks facts needed to understand multiplication and needs to be retrained.

When the one that you are training fails to perform due to a deficiency of execution, **Proverbs 23:13-14** applies. Using the multiplication example, if the child knows how to multiply, and could perform the task if he or she desired to do so, but willfully declines to perform, their problem is one discipline rather than a problem of knowledge, and further training is not in order in this case. The Bible recommends corporal punishment as the most effective form of discipline.

Corporal punishment will only correct deficiencies of execution, and should only be used in the case of willful disobedience. As a parent, you have the responsibility to ascertain the type of deficiency that your child has before you decide on the proper remedy for the deficiency. A parent can only properly correct a deficiency when they understand the reason for the deficiency, so a parent should take the time to investigate the situation before they decide the form of correction, since there are always two possibilities. Since corporal punishment will only cure willful disobedience, corporal punishment should only be used when:

1. There is an actual deficiency.
2. The parent has ascertained that the deficiency is a deficiency of execution, not knowledge.

Children should not be chastised unless the parent has positive proof that the child needs correction. Children should not be chastised either arbitrarily or generally, or because of a parent's frustration. A child is not a dog to kick because you are mad.

I have heard of cases in which a parent chastises a child on a regular basis without any specific provocation; the parent's rationale for this is that the child should be chastised because he or she "must have done something". As I have previously stated, discipline is an act designed to correct, and you cannot correct a mistake unless you know the substance of the mistake. Corporal punishment not related to correcting a specific deficiency is not discipline; it is abuse.

That being said, corporal punishment, properly administered, is an excellent method of fixing actual deficiencies of execution. The child exposed to judiciously administered, corporal punishment will learn to discipline him or herself in order to avoid the unpleasant experience of being punished by someone other than themselves.

The disciplined child will obtain a positive self-image because of their accomplishments. The child responds to discipline, buckles down, and does well on the multiplication test, can be congratulated and will can develop a positive self-image from the knowledge that they have achieved a goal. This positive self-image is different from the artificial position of those that

believe in what we in our culture call “self-esteem”, which is an attempt to develop a positive self-image in a child apart from any accomplishment. “Self-esteem”, as it generally used, means that a child is worthy just because they are alive, which is certainly not the case. Listen to **Romans 3:21-26**, which says:

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

In the Biblical transaction of salvation, there is no righteousness in those of us that are saved; our sentence should be death, because we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Our righteousness is apart from our experience of following the law, because we have not done followed the law. Our deficiency is a deficiency of execution, because we could have followed the law, but chose not to do so. Our righteousness does not exist, because we are sinners, but we are declared righteous as a function of the works of Jesus Christ, who came to do the work required to justify us. Jesus is the righteous one; His work was his sacrifice on the Cross, and we are saved from the corporal punishment that those who do not believe in Him will receive because we are simply gifted with His righteousness. **Romans 12:1-3** follows this concept with this admonition:

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Self-esteem is thinking more highly of oneself than one ought to think, because the self-esteem is not based upon any accomplishment, either intellectual or physical, that we have had. Self-esteem simply means that we are choosing to worship ourselves, and leads us to ignore the commandments of God because we think that that which we want is more important. Emphasizing self-esteem leads to brattiness in children, and in adults, as well, and is a major cause of interpersonal problems, as we cannot get along with one another because we are arguing over who is the greatest. The disciples had that problem, in **Luke 9:46-48**, which says:

46 Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, 48 and said to them, “Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be

great.”

Jesus’ answer doesn’t sound much like He is pumping up the disciples, does it? The argument recurs among the disciples, and Jesus answers it once again, in **Luke 22:24-27**:

24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.

25 And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’

26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.

27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

We are not called to self-esteem, but to service. I’m back to my point about accomplishments. When we have accomplished something, we should thank God for the ability to do that which we have done, but even then, our pride in ourselves should be minimized. **Luke 17:5-10** reads:

5 And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

6 So the Lord said, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’?

8 But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’?

9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ”

Self-esteem is the leading cause of sin. Self-esteem is the leading cause of willful disobedience. Self-esteem is thinking more highly of oneself than one ought to think, rather than thinking soberly about one’s position and accomplishments. Even if we do everything that the Lord tells us to do, we would only have done our duty. We would still not be the one that cause the worlds to twirl on their axes, put the vitamins in vegetables and the proteins in meat so that we could survive. We are still not the ones that died on Calvary’s Cross so that our lives on this side have meaning, and so that we can have a right, and a just right, to the tree of life. We are, at best, even if we follow God’s commandments, unprofitable servants who have simply done their duty.

I hope that this gives us some perspective on ourselves. We have a position in God’s kingdom because of His magnanimous mercy, because of His wonderful goodness, and because of His amazing grace. What have we done to merit these blessings? Nothing. We will not even receive them unless we choose to discipline ourselves to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and present ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy, not because we are so righteous, but because we have chosen to set ourselves apart for His work in His Kingdom. We have no kingdom, nor should we aspire to be kings. Our prayer should be, thy Kingdom come, my kingdom go, because if I were king, it would be a kingdom of sin.

Children need to develop competency and humility rather than self-esteem. Rather than creating an artificial good feeling in ourselves and in that which we want, we should rather create trust in the Lord, as **Proverbs 3:5-6** tells us:

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

David, the sweet singer of Israel and a great King, was given the power of God when he chose to trust in God rather than in himself. David was just a boy when the giant warrior Goliath challenged Israel to send him a man.

4 And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.

6 And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders.

7 Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him.

8 Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.

9 If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us."

10 And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together."

11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

Fear was the reaction of the men of Israel. That fear was probably well founded, because their opposition was six cubits and a span, which is over 9 feet, tall. His bronze armor weighed five thousand shekels, which is 125 pounds. This was a seriously large fellow. As verse 11 of 1 Samuel 17 tells us, the Israelites' self-esteem was extremely shaken. There were some warriors among the Israelite army, and the army had been successful in the past, but this guy Goliath was a piece of work.

The Israelites were rescued from Goliath by a boy that had a singular perspective. David, the son of Jesse, who was too young to be in the army, was sent to the front by his father with supplies for his older brothers. When David heard Goliath's declaration, he went to see King Saul. 1 Samuel 17:32-37 tells us:

32 Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock,

35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it.

36 Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like

one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.”

37 Moreover David said, “The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”

Nowhere in his declaration does David say, I can do it. David says that the Lord will deliver him. This is not arrogant self-esteem, or faith in his ability to fight, but trust in the Lord. The confrontation between David and Goliath is recorded in **1Samuel 17:41-47:**

41 So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield went before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was only a youth, ruddy and good-looking.

43 So the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”

45 Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

46 This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD’s, and He will give you into our hands.”

Of the two of them, David and Goliath, who is the one with the self-esteem? Goliath calls upon his own power, but David calls upon the power of the Lord. The battle is completed in **1Samuel 17:48-51**, which says:

48 So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David.

51 Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

David sings of his trust in the Lord, which was the bedrock of his strength, in the 71st Psalm.

1 In You, O LORD, I put my trust; Let me never be put to shame.

2 Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; Incline Your ear to me, and save me.

3 Be my strong refuge, To which I may resort continually; You have given the

commandment to save me, For You are my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

5 For You are my hope, O Lord GOD; You are my trust from my youth.

6 By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.

7 I have become as a wonder to many, But You are my strong refuge.

8 Let my mouth be filled with Your praise And with Your glory all the day.

9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails.

10 For my enemies speak against me; And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together,

11 Saying, "God has forsaken him; Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him."

12 O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!

13 Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt.

14 But I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more.

15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.

17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.

19 Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You?

20 You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, Shall revive me again, And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

21 You shall increase my greatness, And comfort me on every side.

22 Also with the lute I will praise You— And Your faithfulness, O my God! To You I will sing with the harp, O Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed.

24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long; For they are confounded, For they are brought to shame Who seek my hurt.

There is no self-esteem in the 71st Psalm. Nor should there be any no self-esteem in us. Our souls are redeemed, not by our goodness or by our righteousness, but by God, who provided the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that our sins might be forgiven. He is the King, we are only his worthless servants, but it is better for us to dwell in His gracious Kingdom than in the worthless situations that we can construct. David tells us, in **Psalm 84:10-12:**

10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good

thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

We have the good things that we have, not because of our own power, but because the Lord has chosen to not withhold them from us. The Lord is the one that paid the price on Calvary, and is the one of whom we should think when we contemplate our self-esteem, considering ourselves more highly than we ought. Let us remember the words of David when self-esteem become the issue, and let us train up our children in the way that they should go, not to trust in their own righteousness, but to trust in the Lord.

Reverend Darryl R. Curtis
Family Life Baptist Church