

WHAT I TEACH MY CHILDREN 3: TO BE RIGHTEOUS

I teach my children that God is righteous and just. But what is righteousness according to God? The best definition I found in the Bible is in Deuteronomy 6:25 (ESV) which says, "It will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us." This means that when God gives us commandments, He expects us to obey them. Though God gives us the freedom to obey or not to obey, yet He will always exercise His justice! He will reward the obedient and will punish the rebellious. As parents, it is our responsibility to prepare our children for their relationship with God, so that they will receive more blessings and avoid punishments.

When my children were small, we established three simple rules for them to follow: (1) No disobedience, (2) No lying, and (3) No disrespect. While we taught them that these rules cannot be broken, we also made it a point to explain our rules before we impose them. We followed the idea that says, when there are no rules there is no disobedience.

When our children violate our rules, we punish them. When they consistently obey, we reward them. However, some people would tell me that we should not spank because we can always reason with them. Unfortunately, at a certain point in their lives, children are not able to understand reason, only pain

I believe children are born with a very curious mind, so they always test the limits of this curiosity. They stop at the point when they get hurt. This is why there is such a thing called child trauma. Even when they get old, people remember their hurts when they were small. So in order to protect them from painful consequences when they grow up, we need to show while they are small that their disobedience has painful consequences.

In Ecclesiastes 8:11 (ESV) Solomon said, "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil." If you tell children that they will be punished if they disobey, and you withhold the punishment, you are teaching them to be manipulative. When they see that their mothers or grandparents can appeal to remove their punishments, you are teaching them the padrino system. Both of these do not reflect the true character of God.

As I close this post, I want you to know that the way you train your children will help form their views about God. You should, therefore, personally know God and His ways so that you can teach your children properly.