

The Do's and Don'ts of Disciplining Our Children

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Home Improvement Series

1 Samuel 2:12-29

This evening [morning] I am going to continue my series on the family that I have been calling "Home Improvement". And what I want to talk about today is the very frustrating and difficult subject of disciplining our children.

Now, right off the bat, I want to say that it is not easy to be a good parent. I am not going to suggest to you that if you just follow a few simple rules, life with your teenager is just going to be a cakewalk or that your two year old will suddenly stop saying "no" to you regarding everything.

I think one of the things that ham-strings parents is the suggestion that things ought to be a lot easier than they are in raising our children. Raising kids is hard work. We are dealing with another human being who has a will and who internally can be very defiant. Sometimes, you may be dealing with another person who is more strong-willed than you are. You may be nice and placid and even-tempered and have a child who has a will of iron.

It is not easy raising a child, especially one who has a very different temperament than you do. It is certainly not easy to raise a child when you are doing it alone. Many of you are single parents. And you are trying to play the role of both mother and father. It can be particularly frustrating to you when the rules that you are trying to maintain in your home when your children are with you are totally flouted by your ex-spouse, especially when your ex-spouse plays the role of Mr. Good Guy and lets the kids violate everything you are trying to teach them.

Again, it is not easy to raise children in the 90's. But I will tell you one of the things that I think has hamstrung parents, perhaps more than anything else, is the advice of the experts. We have become such an expert-driven society that parents that I talk with have come to a place of profound insecurity regarding their own intuition, their own common sense. Back 50 years ago if a child came home and spoke some kind of profanity in their mother's presence, mom would pick up the child and without a second thought have him swallow a bar of Ivory soap. No self-doubt, no second-guessing, no insecurity.

And parents wouldn't be undermined by contradictory messages at school or from mass media. The society was working together to enforce parental respect.

But what I see going on now in the lives of so many parents is profound self-doubt and crippling insecurity. We don't know what is right anymore and we can't trust ourselves. The experts are telling me that my methods are completely wrong. I ought never to get angry. I ought never to raise my voice.

It is no wonder that parents have such difficulty in knowing how to discipline their kids when the experts tell us that spanking is always a form of child abuse. Here is a direct quote. One expert said that the way to stop

violence in America is to stop spanking children because if you spank a child that automatically communicates to your child that violence is acceptable. He went on to say – again this is a direct quote – that spanking is the first step on the yardstick of violence. It is followed by hitting and then ultimately by rape, murder and assassination. I am not making this up! When you spank your child, this expert says, you are communicating a message that violence is okay in every situation when we are frustrated.

Does this make sense? You mean over the centuries when parents spank their children, they turned them into little assassins?

But we are regularly fed this “no spanking under any circumstance” message from the mass media, from Donahue, parenting magazines – Dear Abby is a strong opponent of spanking under any circumstance. Parents who read this kind of stuff, is it any wonder that they feel insecure. The experts tell us that the only method we should use is reasoning with our children. Have you ever tried to reason with a red-faced 5-year old? Or a defiant teenager?

One particular expert is a parenting book was asked what this parent ought to do when his son slammed the door in his face. You know, the kid gets angry and walks out of the room and slams the door in his dad’s face. What should dad do?

The expert’s counsel was to not do anything because your child is angry and you are not able to reason with your child when your child is angry. But wait until they cool down and then sit down and explain to them how dangerous slamming a door could be, since you might catch your finger in the door or get hurt by the slamming door. If you sit down and talk with your child about this, they will understand. There is no acknowledgment in any of this that the child’s behavior communicates profound disrespect, defiance. And parents are never allowed to get angry, only kids can according to the experts, express everything under the sun. Parents must be reasonable under all circumstances. Again, you see how this creates in parents a tremendous amount of insecurity. Should I get angry ever? No, no. Wait until everyone is cooled down.

And then, of course, there are all of the parenting books on how to communicate which makes us parents weigh every single word we say lest they damage our children’s psyche for the next 30 years. Parents are no longer allowed to say it like it is. We can’t communicate directly because that is using, according the experts, “you” language, like “You need to knock it off” and “You had better be quiet”. No, when we communicate with our kids, the experts tell us that we are to always use “I” language. I am hurt when you call me a stupid, fat pig. I get concerned when you stay out 3 hours past your curfew. Instead of “Keep the basketball off the flowers that I just planted,” we have to say, “I can’t enjoy the flowers if they get trampled upon.”

Even our compliments have to be carefully weighed. Parents are told that you don’t praise a child for being bright or pretty. No, no. You have to always be careful to praise the performance. It was a wonderful test. You accomplished very much by your hard work.

Is it any wonder why we parents find ourselves so incapable of disciplining our children when the experts have put us in these verbal straight jackets?

There are so many rules to remember regarding communication. I am waiting for one of the experts to say when your child tells you to jump in a lake or jump out the window, you ought to thank him for his travel advice.

Of course, so much of the counsel being given is not only completely ineffective, but it is impossible for a parent to do. We can't always ooze sensitivity or weigh every single word or fear long-term damage if we refuse one of our children's requests.

Well, week-by-week I hold the Bible up to you and tell you how much wisdom is found in this ancient book. What we have here is parental counsel that has worked effectively for 3,000 years. It is not last week's creative counsel from a radio psychologist. This is counsel that has worked for 3,000 years. And it not only is effective counsel, but what I was trying to communicate before is that it is doable counsel. I don't know about you, but I can't live with a 1,000 different rules that hamstringing me every time I want to talk to my children or confront them about bad behavior. One of the wonderful things about biblical discipline is that parents can do it. It empowers parents over against trying them at every turn.

The rules are simple and are clear. They are easy to follow. Parents, if you study what the Bible teaches about discipline, you will find yourself empowered. And I speak especially to those of you who are constantly questioning yourselves and are constantly filled with self-doubt or are arguing with your spouse about what is right and wrong in every situation. You need to be empowered by the eternal word of God. Of course part of the problem with the experts is they refuse to acknowledge the existence of sin. They believe that children are blank slates and all we need to do is write good messages on them. The Bible teaches sin is real and as we saw last week, to know our children means in part to know them as sinners. Proverbs 22:15 says, "*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.*" The experts don't acknowledge this.

I guess there is a final thing that I would like to communicate before we look at the scriptures. That is to remind us that the Bible is God's communication. We are talking about counsel from a perfect being who knows everything. Who, himself, has no failings.

You know, I read recently about the personal life of someone who I believe is the best selling therapist in America's history. His books have been on the *New York Times* Bestseller List for over a decade. People gobble up his counsel. And yet at a personal level, he is an alcoholic. He is a notorious adulterer. And he has three adult children who refuse to speak to him.

Doesn't it make sense to follow the counsel of someone who doesn't have major life controlling problems or addictions? And if that person was perfect and gave perfect advice, it would make even more sense.

Well, today, we are going to look at what I am calling the "Do's and Don'ts of Disciplining Our Children." Let's pray.

I want to begin with a story of a man who refused to discipline his children. The man's name was Eli. He was perhaps the most respected man in the nation in which he lived for 40 years. Eli was Israel's religious leader. He was a high priest. He was also a judge, meaning that he had great legal authority. Judges

at that time would go on a circuit and so he was responsible for deciding all kinds of civil and criminal matters. He was a wealthy man. Yet, we are going to find in the story of Eli that he and his sons lost everything because Eli would not discipline his boys.

Is it important to discipline our children? God says absolutely yes.

You say, "Why? Why is it so important to discipline our kids?"

Here is the first thing. When parents don't discipline their children, their children don't respect God. Look at 1 Samuel 2:12"

"Eli's sons were wicked men. They had no regard for the Lord."

Parents, I want you to hear this real clearly. You represent the authority of God to your children. If your children consistently show you disrespect, then they will show consistent disrespect to the authority of God.

I know some moms who suffer from low self-esteem and some dads who, likewise, may suffer from low self-esteem who are continually struggling the question. "Why should I require respect from my children?" Because you want them to respect God. It is not just for your own sake or for your own self-esteem or so that you could feel like you are in control. It is because if you don't have your children respect your limits, they won't respect the limits of God. If they don't take you seriously, they won't take God seriously.

Why do you think the first commandment regarding our relationship with each other in the Ten Commandments, the first commandment before even "don't murder", "don't steal", "don't lie" – before any of those commandments, the first commandment in our relationship with each other was: "Honor your father and your mother." Because respect for parents is a foundation for respecting God's limits in every other area of life.

Let's continue to look at this situation with Eli's sons. Verses 13-16.

"Now it was the practice of the priests with the people that whenever anyone offered a sacrifice and while the meat was being boiled, the servant of the priest would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand. He would plunge it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot, and the priest would take for himself whatever the fork brought up. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. But even before the fat was burned, the servant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, 'Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw.' If the man said to him, 'Let the fat be burned up first, and then take whatever you want,' the servant would then answer, 'no, hand it over now; if you don't, I will take it by force.'"

When parents don't discipline their children, their children won't respect other people. See, if there are no limits with mom or dad, if I can get away with murder at home, then I am taught that life is to be lived on my own terms. Since mom or dad never say "no" to me, I am completely unaccustomed to hearing the word "no" from anyone else. Teacher, boss, principal, coach, mom, dad, if you want your children to respect not only the authority of God, but the authority of a future boss or teacher, to respect the rights of other people, you must draw limits and discipline your kids.

When I was teaching at OSU some years ago, I gave an exam. After the exam, about three hours later, I was sitting in my office working. And a student

came to my office and literally kicked the door open and said to me: "Nathan, I missed the test this morning. I would like to take the test now."

I was so startled by the brazenness of this guy that I just looked at him and said, "I am sorry, what did you say?"

He said, "Yeah, I missed your test this morning. I had some car problems. I want to take the test now."

I said, "Well, I am sorry. I am not going to give you the test now."

Here was a young man whom I am certain was not used to being defied by his mother or father. He had such an exaggerated sense of self-importance that when I told him I wouldn't give him the exam then, he used profanity and said, "Let's stop _____ with each other. What are you going to do for me?"

I stood up from my desk and I said, "I'll tell you what I am going to do for you. I am going to fail you on this test that you just missed and then I am going down in just a few minutes to the Dean's office and throw you out of my class."

This guy couldn't believe what he heard. He stormed out of my office. Kicked a bunch of doors on the way down the hall and I am sure in future years became a holy nightmare for every teacher and every boss who crossed his path.

When parents don't discipline their children, their kids don't respect other people. When parents don't discipline their children, their children don't know that they are loved.

Proverbs 13:24 says, *"He who spares the rod, hates his son. But he who loves him is careful to discipline him."*

Likewise, Hebrews 12 says: *"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you because the Lord disciplines those whom he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."*

One of the ways that the Lord communicates that he loves us is that he disciplines us. The writer of Hebrews goes on and says: *"If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons."*

In other words, not only do we love our children by disciplining them, but in fact one of the ways that our children know that they are loved is that mom and dad care enough to set boundaries. I know some of you really struggle with drawing lines and exercising discipline because you feel like it is unkind. That you are not being generous. And that discipline is unloving. But the Bible says the exact reverse. Not only do you love someone by exercising discipline, but also they feel loved. That doesn't mean they enjoy the discipline. It just means that they know you care.

A young woman told me that when she was in High School, her mother discovered drugs in her purse. Mom came to her and help up a bag and said, "What's in here?" The daughter said, "What do you think it is?" Mom said, "Well, it looks like pills." She put them on the table and walked out of the room and never said another word to the girl about what she discovered in her purse. The girl said that from that moment, I determined that my mother couldn't care less about me.

If you don't draw lines regarding whom your kids are hanging out with or what they are doing in their free time, what their curfew is, then you don't care about your kids. That is the message they get.

And then, when parents don't discipline, something other than God is in control of their home. 1 Samuel 2:27-29:

"Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, 'This is what the Lords says: Did I not clearly reveal myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence? I also gave your father's house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?'"

Listen to what the Lord says to Eli. Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribe for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourself on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?

What a rebuke: Why do you honor your sons more than me? When parents don't discipline their children, something other than God is in control. In this home, we don't respect God's limits. What God says about profanity or drugs or sexual sin or respect or money – no. Like Eli, some of us want our children's approval more than we want God's approval. We have to be our children's buddy, our children's friend. So what if God is dishonored as long as our children like us?

What you sometimes see in homes is that one of the parents becomes the good guy, the buddy. The other parent is always forced into the role of bad guy and disciplinarian. Typically, dad wants to be the buddy.

Now, I know single parents, it is particularly difficult for you when your rules are flouted as I said earlier in your ex-spouse's home. Unfortunately, there is very little you can do about your ex-spouse's child raising and wanting to be the buddy of your children. But you can determine in your own heart to not play that game and not try to buy off your children and to honor God and God's ways in your home.

When parents don't discipline their children, something other than God is in control. It could be like Eli, you want your children's approval or it could be your own guilt. Again, let's look carefully at 1 Samuel 2:29: *"The Lord says, 'Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?'"* You know, it wasn't just his sons that were fleecing God's people by stealing extra hunks of meat from them; Eli was doing the same thing. He was getting fat from the sin of his sons as well. We are clearly told that in verse 18 of chapter 4 when Eli is judged. It says: *"Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died for he was an old man and very heavy."* He was very fat.

Eli couldn't challenge the sins of his children, because he himself was involved in those sins. And you know, I think that is one of the major reasons why parents don't discipline their kids. Because we parents feel guilty about our sins and our own participation in those things. Dad, how can you challenge your son using pornography, when you use it? Parents how can you challenge your

kids smoking when you smoke? Or angry outbursts when you constantly explode? Guilt over our own sins really demoralizes us. It makes us unable to speak a clear word to another.

By the way, if you are interested in studying this matter further, you need only look at the relationship of King David in the Old Testament to his sons. David, for all of his goodness, was a horrible dad especially after his affair with Bathsheba. He simply would not discipline his kids. It says in 1 Kings 1:6 that concerning one of David's sons, David never interfered with him by asking why do you behave as you do?

Let's review this then. When parents don't discipline their children, their children don't respect God. When parents don't discipline their children, their children won't respect other people. When parents don't discipline their children, their children don't know they are loved. And when parents don't discipline their children, something other than God is in control: a desire for approval or guilt or maybe it is career involvement. A parent is caught up in his or her own issues. Something other than God is in control.

You know, God our Father is the model of all fatherly, motherly discipline. I read to you before from Hebrews 12 that those whom God loves, he disciplines. And I believe parents that we can learn some very clear lessons about discipline by examining the ways that God disciplines his children. And so, on your outlines I say to you parents if you want to be effective in discipling your kids, be clear regarding your expectations and the consequences that will happen if your children violate your expectations.

In Leviticus 26 the Lord is so clear to his people regarding what will happen if they obey and what will happen if they disobey. He says: *"If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain, I will grant you peace. I will look on you with favor. I will walk among you and be your God."* And then he goes on and says: *"But if you will not listen to me, if you reject my decrees, then I am going to do all these terrible things to you."*

Parents, the first lesson of discipline is you must be clear about your expectations. The rules have to be laid out with no ambiguity. If you do x, then y will occur. It is as simple as if you are not in bed by 8:30, I will not read to you tonight. If you don't put your clothes in the hamper, I will not wash them this week. If you don't take out the trash, then I am going to charge you for my services in taking out the trash and it will be deducted from your allowance. If you track in mud in the kitchen, you will have to wash the floor. Be clear in your expectations.

And be clear in your expression. So many of us send such ambiguous signals to our children. With a big smile on our face and a syrupy voice we say, "Now, honey, you know you are not supposed to hit your little baby sister" and then we laugh. God is so much fairer to us. He doesn't send ambiguous signals.

And second, we must be consistent. Be clear and consistent. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:18, *"As surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not yes and no. For the Son of God Jesus Christ who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy was not yes and no. But in him it was always yes."*

Sometimes the kids get punished when they break their curfew and sometimes they don't. Whatever you do by way of discipline, try to be consistent. If chores must be done or a deduction is taken from an allowance, it does no good one time to deduct and another time not to. Let your yes mean yes and your no mean no. Consistency, parents, should make us at times sound like a broken record. God doesn't have a problem saying the same thing to us over and over again. I don't know about you, but in my life in areas of sin, God says the same thing to me all the time. Over and over and over and over. He says, "Repent." I can argue and rationalize and think of other things, but every time I turn to God he is saying the same thing to me, repent.

Parents, let me encourage you and give you permission to sound like a broken record with your children. Especially when they try to drag you into an argument about the fairness or unfairness of one of your rules. If your children are only allowed to speak on the phone for an hour at night, then when you talk with them about that, you may only speak on the phone for an hour.

But that's unfair.

Well, it may feel that way to you, honey, but you may only speak on the phone for an hour.

But Julie's mother lets her speak on the phone for an hour and a half.

Well, Julie's mother is not your mother. You may only speak on the phone for an hour.

But I have lots of friends and I won't be able to speak to all of them in an hour.

That may be true, but you may only speak on the phone for an hour.

Do you get it? Don't get dragged into defending your rules, into reasoning with your kids about your fairness or comparing you to other parents. Other parents are always going to be more reasonable and kinder than you. Stick to the issue. Be consistent.

And be creative. You know, one of the reasons why I have a problem with the experts is that I believe they have taken away a lot of the tools that parents could use to discipline their children. As I consider God's discipline, he is so creative. Sometimes God just lets life discipline us. You know, when we run up a credit card and we are greedy and want something now, sometimes God just allows us to bear the brunt of financial problems and stress. Sometimes God just lets life discipline us.

Sometimes God lets people discipline us. He has raised up nations to discipline his children Israel.

Sometimes God lets guilt discipline us – a guilty conscience. Sometimes illness. Psalm 119 says that he chastens us on a bed of illness.

Parents, what I am saying to you are that you ought to be really creative regarding the way you discipline your kids. Think of what will work. Screaming generally doesn't. Threatening doesn't. What does? You can be smarter than your child.

You know, when we are on a long car trip, my kids like a few of your kids tend to get on each other's nerves. They will be fussing in the car, bothering each other. I have turned around and yelled at them and told them to knock it

off. They would start up again five minutes later. A few years ago, I decided that I am not going to get angry with this. Every time I have to speak to you, I am going to charge you a quarter. And then what I would do is cheer them on and say, "Please let me speak to you again because I want to take your mom out to dinner and I need your money. Go ahead." They would get so upset with me because I was cheering for them to get in a fight. It took all the fun away. Be creative.

One mother got tired of bringing her daughter's lunch to school. She went down to school the next day with a lunch, only mom was wearing her bathrobe and slippers and rollers in her hair. She knocked on her daughter's classroom door and walked in and said, "Sally, you forgot your lunch again and then walked out." That takes guts.

One dad was tired of his child's temper tantrums in the grocery store. His kid threw himself on the floor. You know what dad did? Dad threw himself on the floor next to his son and started to scream and cry. His son looked over, immediately jumped up and said, "Dad, stop it. You are embarrassing me." That's creative.

Parents, pick boring places for time outs. Don't send your kids to their rooms. They will never come out with the amount of electronic equipment they have in their rooms. Send them to the dining room. Be creative.

Parents have thought of dozens of ways to control the phone. Some parents have gotten call waiting. If there is another call that comes through, their children have to immediately get off the phone. Other parents set up times when their children are allowed to talk on the phone uninterrupted. Some parents have made their kids purchase another line. Stop screaming and threatening and giving yourself an ulcer. Think.

I want to add a word about spanking. So many parents wonder about the appropriateness of spanking. And, of course, as I mentioned earlier, there is a great amount of counsel out there in the market place about never spanking your child otherwise you will turn them into a violent person. Other people think that spanking is the only method of dealing with one's children.

I would take a very moderate viewpoint regarding spanking. Proverbs 13:24 speaks about not sparing the rod. *"He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently."* I think that verse and many like it gives permission to spank although discipline as we have just looked at can take a variety of forms. Now, my own viewpoint is somewhat different than James Dobson's. Dobson suggests that you never strike a child with your hand, that you always use a paddle or a wooden spoon or switch or something like that because your hand, he says, should be associated in the child's mind with love. And if you strike your child with your hand, then he is going to always fear when you pick your hand up.

I happen to disagree with that. I think that is a kind of nuance that children do not pick up on. Much like the carefulness in wording that many of the experts suggest. In every day life, in fact, children do know the difference between an open hand of affection and when they are bent over your knee for a spanking. I prefer using the hand. I am just giving you personal counsel, this is not Bible. I

prefer using in the past my hand because I believe that in fact, using an object can result in abuse. Your hand signals to your mind when you have struck your child hard. On the other hand, using a paddle does not signal to your mind when you have hit too hard. And, frankly, a wooden spoon or something else can leave welts. But if you like the wooden spoon method, that's okay.

I personally believe that spanking ought to be confined to the first decade of a child's life. That it would be extremely unusual to spank a child who was older than 10 and that one ought to not spank a baby. But wait until the child clearly understands that they are being defiant and something is dangerous so that they need a spank.

Now, I further believe that spanking ought to be confined to the child's bottom, which appears to be specially designed by God to be able to handle a bit of punishment since it tends to be padded. And one ought to strike a child so that they feel it. Again, discipline has no effect unless there is some level of pain but a child must never be abused – thrown, shaken, kicked, punched, struck in the face – never!

In our home, spanking was very infrequent and reserved for special occasions of particular defiance. By and large, Marlene and I have used most other methods of discipline far more often. But I think it is a mistake to pull spanking out of a parent's toolbox regarding the discipline of their children. And I think it is another way that parents are hamstrung by the modern experts.

Be balanced. You know, our God is wonderfully balanced in the way he deals with us. I have read to you Romans 11:22 on a number of occasions. But it says: *"Consider therefore, the kindness and the sternness of God. Sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you provided that you continue in his kindness."*

The Lord is wonderfully patient and slow to anger. But he does set limits. And he is consistent in following through with his threats. Parents, be balanced in your approach. Don't be overly harsh or overly permissive. You know, children don't learn to respect parents in a domineering home, a rigid home with a thousand rules. It is not tempered by lots of affection and lots of patience, lots of love, lots of fun. Children can grow up terribly rebellious. Ephesians 6:1 warns parents to not exasperate their children. If you go overboard with your kids, your kids will get angry.

And you know if you are overly harsh in your threats, you probably are going to threaten to do something that you will never be able to follow through on. Okay, if you are not in on time, you won't be able to go out for the rest of the summer. Or if you don't wash the car, you will never drive it again.

At the same time, over permissiveness leads to the results that I talked about before. Lack of respect for God, a lack of respect for others, a feeling in your child's heart that they are not loved, a perspective that the whole world revolves around the child. And everyone must bow down to this little tyrant's will. Children must have boundaries. They must have limits.

You know, parents, discipline does involve pain. Your children generally won't like discipline. Hebrews 12 says for the time being all discipline seems painful. If your discipline doesn't create any level of pain or depravation, it is not discipline. Be balanced. Don't be overly harsh. Don't be overly permissive.

Be prompt. Proverbs 19:18 says: *“Discipline your son for in that there is hope. Do not be a willing party to his death.”* Another version says: “Discipline your son while there is hope.”

If we wait too long in exercising discipline, it simply can be too late. Parents of younger children, now is the time to get your daughter or son to show you respect. If you can’t control a 4-year old, how will you be able to control them a decade from now when they are 14? So many parents are pulling their hair out with their teenagers, trying to get their teens to heed them now as they introduce new rules into the home and new ways of relating. In large measure, you know starting discipline with teenagers is pretty ineffective. They are already formed. They already have their opinions. Be prompt. Start early with discipline.

Finally, be discerning. Distinguish between big deals and small deals. Jesus accused the Pharisees, “You hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin – but you have neglected the weightier matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You strain out the gnat.” What are the big things? Respecting mom and dad, telling the truth, respecting other adults, honoring God sexual purity, hard work, learning to serve with out pay.