

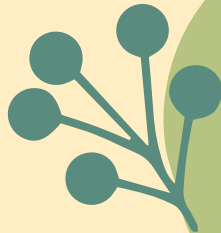
CHILDREN NEED:



**Security,
Significance,
Strength, and
Safety**



**Clearly defined
boundaries and
expectations**



**Loving training
and discipline**



**Help
understanding
and identifying
the correct
emotions**



**The knowledge and
understanding of
God**



Security, Significance, Strength, and Safety

Romans 8:38-39



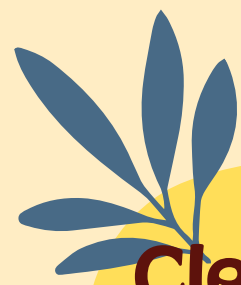
Every single child is born with three great needs. They are born needing security. Security can be defined as unconditional love and acceptance. Parents do not usually set out to reject their children. This is usually done accidentally. It can be done outright in a fit of anger or it can be done covertly when your love and approval are based upon performance, what they may attain, or become.

In addition to helping your child know they are unconditionally loved and accepted by you, you need to help them learn that they have significance. Bible verses such as 1 Corinthians 10:31 can help them understand that what they do in life matters especially when it is done to bring glory to God.

Strength is so important to your child. They will need strength of will to accomplish what God has for them. They will need strength in their emotional capacity. You can help build that strength in a practical way by monitoring what they eat and if they get enough rest and exercise but you can also help them by helping them understand and regulate their emotions.

Safety comes from obeying rules and also from the time they spend with you. Children need to know they can and should come to you with anything they face in life. The obvious thought, is those negative things that happen or times they mess up, but they also need to delight in bringing their joys to share with you. This is accomplished as you spend time valuing what they have to talk about because while it may seem small to you now, if you have not spent time talking about the small things that were big to them, they will not want to bring the big things to you. Remember children spell love: TIME.

As your child grows and matures this need for security, significance, strength, and safety will not be found primarily in you. That is why, it is of upmost importance to point them to Jesus Christ. True and lasting security, significance, and strength are found in our relationship with Christ and that is no different for your precious child. You have the wonderful honor and privilege to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.



Clearly defined boundaries and expectations

Proverbs 16:25



Children need clearly defined boundaries and expectations. Often parents make the mistake of saying things like, “Stop that.” when the child is doing five different things at the same time. No doubt this child may be wondering if the parent wants them to stop walking? stop breathing? stop thinking? It might not even cross their mind to stop hitting because they themselves, are having so much fun from their current activity.

One helpful thing is to clearly define obedience as having three main parts: obey right away, all the way, and with a good attitude. Even a toddler can be taught these three truths and taught that if one is missing they are not obeying. You can ask a child who is not obeying what part is missing as you run through the list. This can help them identify exactly what they are being asked to do and make the necessary corrections.

As children grow they can handle more instructions but often it is helpful to remember that the current number of their age is the limit of how many instructions you can give them at one time. For example, a two year old the instructions will be more simple and should only include up to two commands while a five year old might be able to handle more instructions or even the instruction of to pick up all the toys in the toy room as opposed to a toddler might need to concentrate on only picking up the blocks. Setting clear and age appropriate expectations sets the child up for success and can make obedience easier for them to understand.

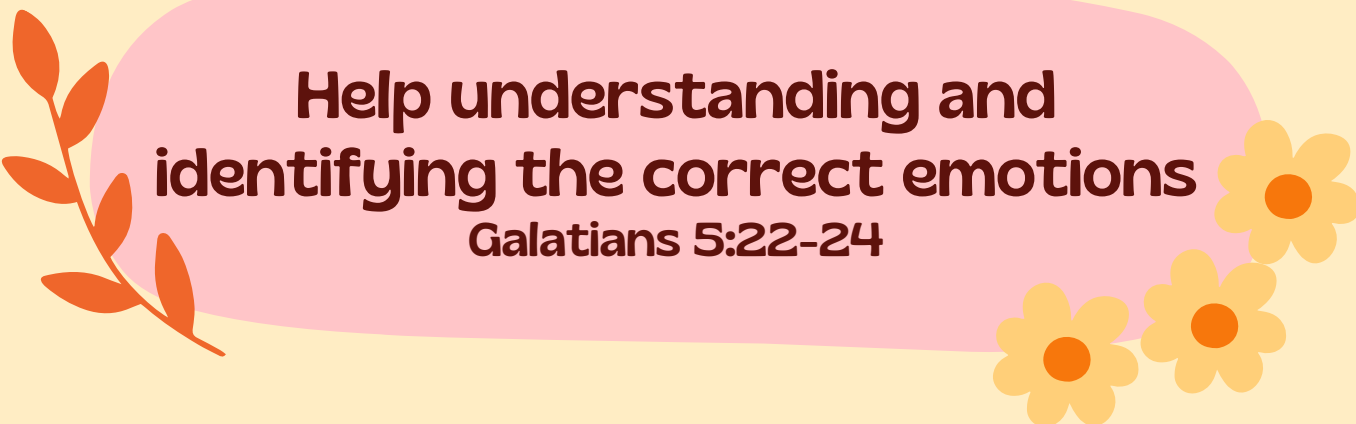


Loving training and discipline

Proverbs 22:6

Rules and regulations without a relationship lead to ruin and rebellion. Children need consistent and loving discipline. This must come from a place of maturity in the adult. One good thing to remember is the word RARE. As an adult you need to Remain relational even if problems occur. The second letter A stands for Acting the same. Do your children know which version of you is going to show up? If they mess up are they going to get an angry parent or a parent who shows unconditional love and acceptance while maintaining the boundaries of good discipline? The next R stands for Returning to joy. How long it takes you to return to joy when something upsetting happens shows your level of maturity. Children often need help returning to joy and seek an outside force. Christ wants to help you return to joy quickly. Joy is not to be confused with happiness. It is a calm consistent response that has a ready smile. The last letter E stands for Enduring hardness well. As an adult you must be able to do this. None of this is possible apart from Christ.

When you are able to be RARE in your relationships you will better handle the times your child needs discipline. Training is another aspect to consider when raising your children. As parents your experience has prepared you with the ability to look back and see what your child will need to be successful in their own life. Training is to be utilized at every stage of your child's life because it will be the tool you used to prepare them for what is coming next. When a baby grows, one of the first things you prepare them for is to walk and that is done through training. As they grow you teach them how to feed themselves because we all realize how weird it would be to have a capable forty year old adult still being spoon fed to get their daily nutrients. There are many things you need to prepare your children to face. This is done with prayerful consideration and the ability to look forward and anticipate their future needs.



Help understanding and identifying the correct emotions

Galatians 5:22-24

Children often do not know what to think. A very simple illustration of this is when a mother overreacts in panic if her child falls down. The child will often respond in fear that is both unfounded and borrowed from the mother's heightened emotions. A better response would be to take a quick assessment of the child and if you are able to ascertain there was no damage done, then in a calm and assured way tell the child that they are brave. This response will help a child know how to feel about a situation. Children respond to our emotions. It is important to have correct ones to mirror to them.

In addition, they have big feelings. As a parent, it is good to take time to note that what your child is facing might be the first time they have ever faced it before. They may feel anxious or excited. Sometimes they feel anxious about the wrong things and excited about something you wish they were anxious about. Helping them understand and identify the correct emotions happens as soon as they can start recognizing your smile. It does not end once they have entered elementary school.

Teenagers are prime examples of people need help to identify correct emotions and thinking about a situation as well as help identifying what they are feeling. This may mean being willing to stay up late with them, take a walk, or a drive with them. When a child has to face you and talk out their feelings that can sometimes be overwhelming. One practical thing you can do is take a walk or a drive with your child and let them talk. Make sure your devices are put away and the child knows they are going to get your full and undivided attention.

Taking time when they are young to help them identify and understand their emotions is a skill they will continue to develop the rest of their life but if the foundation is set early the benefits will be felt to a greater degree.



The knowledge and understanding of God

Deuteronomy 6:1-6

One of the greatest privileges you have as parents is to take the eternal truths of God's Word and apply them to the heart and lives of your children. Deuteronomy 6:1-6 teaches us that this is a casual, yet very intentional endeavor. You must be intentional when your children are young to pray with them and point them to Jesus. This is not just done as we pray before meals but when they face difficulties we can model for our children how to pray to God. You are to be well-versed and constantly growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior so you might be able to pass those truths to your children.

2 Timothy 3:15 gives an example of how Timothy's mother and grandmother taught the Bible to him and the result can be found in 2 Timothy 1:5; he had an unfeigned, authentic faith. He was not like the generation in Judges 2:10 that did not know God or His works. You will never be able to prepare your children for everything they will face in life because you cannot know the future but you can and should point them to the One who does know what they will face and not only that, He will be able to meet every one of their needs along the way.

God loves your child more than you could fathom and even more than you do. He loves them with an everlasting, unchanging love. He wants to walk with your children and guide them. He has a plan for your child that far exceeds what you could dare to dream for them. He must be an integral part of their lives if they will have what they need for what they will face in life.

Your child has universal needs that can only be met in their relationship with Jesus Christ. As you set clearly defined boundaries with loving training and discipline you will provide a safe environment for your child to learn and grow and become who God intends for your child to become. This is all facilitated through the knowledge and understanding of who God is, who your child belongs to, and who they are (or will be) in Christ. Remember God gave those children to you and you are the very best person to be able to help them in this stage of life.