

1. Encourage or correct?

Principle – Our children, like everyone else in the Body of Christ, need an appropriate balance of encouragement and correction towards righteous living.

Key Scripture:

Titus 2:15 These, then, are the things you should teach. **Encourage** and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, **rebuke** and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, **encourage** the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged

Comment

The pattern of Scripture is a balance of encouragement and correction. These or similar sentiments often occur in the same sentence. The concept is closely related to that of truth and grace – as best illustrated in the story of Jesus' encounter with those wishing to stone the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11). She had broken the law and the prescribed penalty was death. Jesus challenged her accusers with their own level of sinfulness and their own unworthiness to carry out the execution. Jesus then dismissed her with the comment that he did not condemn her but he did challenge to leave her life of sin.

Application in daily life??

- ♦ Our parenting needs to reflect a similar balance between giving our children a knowledge of God's standards while at the same time acknowledging that we do not always live to that standard ourselves.
- ♦ Continual correction without the balance of loving-encouragement leads to a sense of condemnation.
- ♦ Conversely, always trying to encourage our children without an appropriate level of correction, does not train their consciences, spoils them, and suggests that "anything goes".
- ♦ Tell our children that this is a life-long process. Jesus understands the struggle between doing what we know God wants and what the "flesh" wants to do – we can ask Him for help.

Our example?? Do we teach our children God's standards for living and encourage them to live to them whilst acknowledging that we too often fall short of those same standards.