



**Clanking Chains: Consistency of Benevolence & Severity Builds Trust; Parental Failure Does Not Justify Guilt or Implacability; Rationale: Heb 12:9-10; Eph. 4:32**

5. The desire to follow-up is universal. The degree to which follow-up occurs is dependent upon the parents' consistency in establishing policy and its enforcement.  
  
If you do not establish policy you cannot enforce it. As you parent a child and situations arise that you are unprepared to manage, determine right then to establish a policy by which you can deal with it in the future.
6. A child learns to trust his parents' leadership if they do the same thing every time. He will come to trust them by becoming confident they will always do what they say. He is persuaded by a system that rewards good behavior and disciplines poor behavior.
7. This consistency causes him to rely on his parents' leadership as a sure road to reward and blessing. As a result he develops a willingness to obey because he is persuaded it is to his advantage.
8. At first the system of benevolence supported by severity develops enforced humility in the child's soul. As the child matures and learns the advantages of obedience, enforced humility transforms into genuine humility.
9. When he is old enough to understand the gospel and is among those who respond positively, he will be prepared to rely on the Word of God for direction throughout life.
10. His genuine humility will facilitate his understanding and execution of the divine mandates which, he will quickly learn, results in even greater rewards and blessings.
11. Thus, when the benevolence-severity system is executed with consistency, the child builds trust in his soul for his parents and, when saved, for Christ, for the Father, and for the Scripture.
12. The consistency concept is emphasized by Roberts in:

**Roberts, *From My Hands to Yours*, 27:**

Trust is established by working around horses in an utterly predictable manner. The way in which I move ... and the messages I give all imply that I am trustworthy. In building this trust I obtain the horse's cooperation.

When a horse refuses to load in a trailer or bucks his rider off, it means that he is resisting the goals of his rider or handler. At that point, one no longer shares trust and a common aim. It becomes a mutiny. The horse is saying, "I no longer trust you."

Trust in any partnership is based on the premise, "I believe in you and I am prepared to trust you." When you have proven to the animal that your actions are inappropriate, you are opening the door to a breakdown of trust.

Fear generally stems from a lack of understanding. The horse has no desire to hurt anyone or anything. Circumstances may cause the horse to react in a way that frightens a person. The answer is to understand their reactions to circumstances. The more knowledgeable you become about the nature of horses, the more trust you will have. The less you know or want to know about horses, the more fearful and therefore distrustful you will be.



Those who fear often presuppose that the only way to overcome this fear is to cause a greater fear in the object found frightening. This method can never result in true trust. If we seek to rule through fear, we do it at the expense of trust.

- 13) One of the ramifications of our study on benevolence and severity is that too many of us in the rearing of our children have used severity as the primary function of parental authority instead of benevolence.
- 14) Unfortunately, this has caused two problems to emerge: (1) anger and bitterness accompanied by fear on the part of children and (2) tyranny and brutality imposed by unchecked severity on the part of parents.
- 15) It is right for parents to go through a process of *metanoēō* when mistakes and errors are discovered. It is right for them to “own up” but wrong to become neutralized by guilt and remorse. Instead they should metaphorically “go to the wall” by means of rebound.
- 16) It is wrong for children to assume superiority and license from discernment gathered from our study. It is wrong for children to disobey or become implacable because of a perceived advantage. Two wrongs do not make a right.
- 17) I draw the attention of both parents and children to the central passage we have been noting for several weeks. These two verses are yet to be covered in our study but they are pertinent for the moment:

**Hebrews 12:9** - Another point: We had our human parents for corrective discipline, and we respected them. Therefore, to a greater degree you will become subordinate to the Father of our spirits and continue living [ the spiritual life ].

**Hebrews 12:10** - For they [ **earthly fathers—parents** ] on the one hand disciplined us for a short time [ **during our childhood** ] according to what seemed best to them [ **according to their own wisdom** ]. But He [ **God the Father** ] on the other hand disciplines us for our profit that we may receive a share of His holiness [ **blessing from the justice of God as a reward for experiential sanctification** ].

- 18) We will examine these verses in more detail later, but the crux is this: (1) during childhood, parents discipline their children according to what seems best to them at the time based on the wisdom they possess. (2) Children are to respect their parents regardless of presumed misapplications of severity. (3) If a child can respect his parents even though on occasion their discipline is inappropriately severe, then how much more will they respect their heavenly Father whose discipline is not only perfect but intended to lead them to a lifestyle that results in blessing and reward?
- 19) If at some point it is discerned by either parents or children, or both, that the execution of parental discipline has been harsh, unfair, or misapplied, what is to be done about it? An excellent commentary by Colonel Thieme provides valuable guidance to everyone involved:

**Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Christian Suffering*. 2d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1997), 23:**

There is no pat solution by which the Christian resolves his human relationships, but certain biblical principles must guide his thinking and application.



Responsibility to people we have harmed lies between two extremes that we must avoid. We must not be insensitive, nor should we allow ourselves to be enslaved by anyone's implacability. In other words, we are not to ignore the just cause of anyone who suffers because of our decisions, but neither should we be motivated by fear or a guilt complex. Between these two erroneous extremes lies our responsibility.

If the suffering we cause can be alleviated, we should go to the extent that justice, sensitivity, and common sense dictate in easing the situation. Often the problem is complex. Usually both parties in any dispute are guilty to some degree.

Some "solutions" would only aggravate the problem. We should be thoughtful and generous and should walk the extra mile, but when nothing more can be done, we must leave the situation in the Lord's hands for solution as we press on in our Christian lives. No matter whose volition originally causes the suffering, each person is ultimately responsible for applying Bible doctrine to his own life.

Above all else, the believer must live his life as unto the Lord, not as unto people. This is not to be construed as ignoring the human dimension of the problem, but application of the law of volitional responsibility does not mortgage the believer's future to pay for his past failures. Instead, the plan of God demands the virtues of humility, personal love for God, and impersonal love toward other people.

20) What have we learned from Ephesians 6:4? Let me remind you:

**Ephesians 6:4** - Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger [ παροργίζω, *parorgizō*: to incite to motivational anger ]; but bring them up [ ἐκτρέφω, *ektrephō*: nourish them to maturity ] in the discipline [ παιδεία, *paideia*: correction and punishment ] and instruction [ νοῦθεσία, *nouthesia*: teachings, warnings, repetitions, influences, and soothings ] of the Lord.