

Discipline – the Other Kind

Proverbs 1:1-3 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: ... for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life...

My desk is messy, two or three days worth of socks are on the floor, and I have always held to the philosophy of why make your bed if you're just going to sleep in it the next night anyway? Not a real profound philosophy to live by, but it has some merits. In fact, for a brief while in college I considered going to seminary, but I heard that the institution I was considering made the students make their beds. "That's not in the Bible," I rebelled. I quickly came to the conclusion that they (whoever "they" are) were a bunch legalistic prudes. I shook my fist at the system and continued taking business classes, where my bed-making habits were left unchecked.

All that to say that I am not a type-A personality. I'm more of a B-. Of course I've matured over time, and I see a little wisdom in structure and discipline. I think it is good to clean your desk, pick up your socks, and make your bed. And I freely admit that not all seminary professors and students are prudes. (Although the above verse makes being a prude not sound so bad after all!) But never-the-less, I still live a little on the six-month-old-French-fries-all-over-the-floor-of-the-car side of things.

Let me be clear here. I am a firm believer in structure. Just because I am not a type-A personality does not give me the right to be undisciplined. Certainly being undisciplined is part of my personality, but that is not an excuse. I am still called to be disciplined.

Someone's personality might make him have the tendency to be unloving, grouchy, agitated, impatient, unkind, or any other number of things. But he is still called to have a life that demonstrates love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and the rest of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). **Personality does not release us from being who God has called us to be.**

This may not be the most accurate translation in the world, but it is, at the very least, a great quote to think about:

"An undisciplined, self-willed life is puny." - Proverbs 15:32a (The Message)

For you to be the parent you need to be, you need to be disciplined. You need to use your time well, and you need structure. The things that matter the most must get done, and they must get done regularly.

For your child to be the young woman she is going to be, she will also need self-discipline. She will need to be able to tell herself "no", and to force herself to do what is right even when she doesn't want to. She will need some structure to help her prioritize what is important. That is what we all need, and our kids will respond well to our training if we model it for them.

I wasn't kidding about my desk, socks, and bed. I have never cared much about those things, and I still don't. But I do care about involvement in church, spending time in God's Word, memorization, prayer, and time management. I cannot afford to let my life run its own course. I've got to manage it. Otherwise, time will slip by and all I will be left with is a mound of regrets. As a Christian and a parent, I must be disciplined and I must teach that to my kids as well.