THE WAY

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FROM THE ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN

"Happy Father's Day Dad! Thanks for all the times you've disciplined me over the years. *I especially appreciate my most recent consequence, when you grounded me for a week. You're the best!"*

If I'm fortunate enough to receive a Father's Day card from one of my daughters on Sunday, I'm fairly certain that it won't contain these words. After all, what sane person enjoys being punished?

Nonetheless, contemporary parenting advice continues to highlight the importance of discipline. Children are prone to making poor choices and they need our help in correcting them. As Dr Jane Nelsen, creator of the "Positive Discipline" programme says, "true discipline guides, teaches, and invites healthy behaviour." The Bible puts it this way:

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.
- Hebrews 12:11

I love the phrase, "a harvest of righteousness and peace". Isn't that just what we want for our children? As parents, we need to remember that we are 'playing the long game' in regards to our children's development. This should encourage us to apply discipline where it is required.

To be honest, as a dad, I sometimes avoid disciplining my children. Why? I don't enjoy the negativity I'll probably get in response. Sometimes it's easier to ignore the problem and hope that my wife will step in. I need to be reminded of the benefits for them when I carry through with

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discipline.

Perhaps you are not at all reluctant to apply discipline when your child does wrong. That’s great! However, it’s worth reflecting on the reasons you are doing this. Is it because you want to train them in the right way to live? Or simply because it makes your life easier? Consider this verse from Proverbs.

The Lord disciplines those he loves,
as a father the son he delights in.
- Proverbs 3:12

God knows a thing or two about good parenting. He is a Father who delights in blessing his children. He disciplines us out of love. And we have God’s Son, Jesus, who willingly endured unjust punishment - not for His own sake, but so that we too might also become sons and daughters of the same loving Heavenly Father.

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