

THE IMPORTANCE OF MORAL DISCIPLINE

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INTRODUCTION:

By “moral discipline,” It means self-discipline based on moral standards. Moral discipline is the consistent exercise of an individual to choose the right because it is right, even when it is hard to do so. It rejects the self-absorbed life in favor of developing character worthy of respect and true greatness through Christ-like service (**Mark 10:42-45**). The root of the word *discipline* is shared by the word disciple, suggesting to the mind the fact that conformity to the example and teachings of Jesus Christ is the ideal discipline, coupled with His grace, forms a virtuous and morally excellent person.

Jesus’s own moral discipline was rooted in His discipleship to the Father. To His disciples He explained, “My food is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (**John 4:34**). By this same pattern, our moral discipline is rooted in loyalty and devotion to the Father and the Son. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that provides the moral certainty upon which moral discipline rests.

THE STARTING POINT OF MORAL DISCIPLINE:

Early in the parenting process, most God-fearing parents recognize that they must limit their Children activities and teach them to control their behaviors. Discipline should begin the moment an infant asserts a determination to choose his own ways. This may be termed an unconscious education. This is the most critical point in the development of any Child that need to be checked and corrected to keep the Child on the right path. (**2Tim. 1:5, Prov. 11:14, Prov. 22:6**). Children have the tendency to manipulate their parents to have their will, if parents are not firm to drive conformance on what they want. If this situation is allowed to go on as a routine and the Child grows to some years, it become his standard and parents are made to fit into his schedules (**1Tim. 3:1-4**). That marks the failure of the parents in bringing up their Children to acceptable moral standard. Honestly, this will give the parents some amount of disrespect in their circle of friends.

PROPER DISCIPLINE LEADS TO SUCCESSFUL LIFE:

Growing up, Children need serious discipline by parents to be successful and useful in the society. Discipline has to do with soundness of mind or self-control. (**Job 36:10-12**). A morally disciplined Child will always be obedient to instructions whether Christian or not. We must admit that not all Christians are morally up-right. We see such behavior’s plays out when we attend some

ceremonies either marriage or burials. Starting from our take-off from the meeting place, Children will jump into the bus to take seat when adults who are either their parents or those old enough to be their parents are yet to be seated. **(Eph. 6:1-3)**. Respect is reciprocal, whatever you sow, that you will reap **(Gal. 6:7)**. A morally sound Individual will give preference to senior ones anywhere before taking available place in the vehicle or any seating arena especially among Christians. In addition, a morally disciplined person will not stretch hand towards a senior person for hand shake in African culture. This we see playing out in the brotherhood because we are Christians. Christianity does not throw our Customs and traditions over board that are not against the scripture. A Child who does not have that moral discipline to respect parents at home will not respect their elders outside. Such behavior incurs a curse. **(2Kings 2:23-24)**. You cannot give what you don't have. Consequently, serious consideration should be given to the following points:

- Christian parents must remember Children are a gift from God **(Ps 127:3)**.
- We should limit our Children to the numbers we can provide for.
- We must provide them food, education, clothes and shelter **(1Tim. 5:8)**.
- We must provide them proper moral discipline and spiritual guidance **(Eph. 6:4)**.
- We must give them proper discipline **(Heb. 12:7-11, Prov. 13:24)**.
- We owe them proper Christian example to follow **(Prov. 20:7, 1Cort. 11:1, Deut. 32:7)**. **Bring them to all Church worship, teach them Bible at home. Teach them to pray and Christian virtues.**

PRE-MARITAL MORAL DISCIPLINE:

In the Nigerian society, we see many people handling marriage with levity. Therefore, we should not be surprised to see the many unhappy consequences that attend carelessness in the marriage institution. The beginning of this levity in marriage matters is in our concept or definition of marriage. Marriage is a serious business for two serious minded individuals, who are committed to make marriage work for life. **(1cort. 7:1-5)**.

From Bible viewpoint, marriage is not living together, or cohabitation when a boy and girl live in the same apartment as lovers. If they are not disciplined to know the sinfulness in this relationship by their parents, they may not know they are offending God. This is common trap for young people who are away from home. In due course, babies are born illegitimately without regular marriage. There is no honor in such relationship and God cannot be pleased also **(Heb. 13:4)**. It takes morally disciplined persons to avoid fornication for proper marriage to be constituted to the joy of their various families and the household of faith. **(Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:3-6, Mal. 2:14)**.

MORALITY IN THE MARIMONIAL HOME:

When we agree to be partners for life, the rest will proceed in harmony with a lot of caution. Conversation should flow freely. We should know the other's thoughts at a glance, even across a crowded room. We fill our homes with peace and harmony, and we anticipate spending time together. We will enjoy one another's company over anyone else because we have become best friends.

Disagreement will not diminish or destroy a relationship grounded in God. Even when we do not agree, we work through it without hurting one another. **We must choose words carefully**, so that we do not hurt one another, because we can never unsay words once we say them. Apologies are sometimes necessary, but they only medicate useless wounds. "I'm sorry" cannot erase the hurts or scars of severe, accusing, thoughtless words. Marriage is the only honorable way for a man and a woman to live together and share the bed without interference from third parties and for lifetime. **(Heb. 13:4)**. The couple must not give room for divorce and remarriage except adultery **(Matt. 19:4-6, 9 & Mal. 2:16)**.

The morally disciplined man should display these qualities in the matrimonial home:

- ✚ Love your wife as Christ loved the Church **(Eph. 5:25, 28-29)**.
- ✚ Leave your father and mother and cleave to your wife **(Eph. 5:31)**
- ✚ Be not bitter against your wife **(Col. 3:19)**
- ✚ Honor the woman as a weaker vessel **(1Pet. 3:7)**.
- ✚ Recognize her as a joint heir of grace **(1Pet. 3:7)**
- ✚ Dwell with your wife according to knowledge **(1Pet. 3:7)**.
- ✚ Provide for her **(1Tim. 5:8)**
- ✚ Be loyal to her; do not turn aside to another woman, **(Mal. 2:15b, 1Thes. 4:3-7)**.

The morally disciplined wife should display these qualities in the home also:

- ✚ Be in subjection to your own husband **(Eph. 5:22)**.
- ✚ Recognize him as the head of the family **(Eph. 5: 23)**
- ✚ Love your husband **(Tit. 2:3-5)**
- ✚ Keep the home and Children in proper order. **(Tit. 2:3-5)**
- ✚ Render to the husband his due **(1cort. 7:2-5)**
- ✚ Be a virtuous woman **(Prov. 31: 10-31)**
- ✚ Be loyal to your husband, do not turn to another man **(1Thes. 4:3-7)**

The genuinely married couples must take their various families as part of their concerns. The man who is the husband has become a son in the wife's family, same way the woman who is the wife becomes a daughter in the husband's family. If couples display this behavior rightly, there will be flow of happiness in both families and the couples benefits more. This can only happen if our Children are morally upright from their family background. **(1Tim. 5:4,16)**

CONCLUSION:

Society is filled up with attitudes and philosophies that when accepted, contributes to an age characterized by too many unsuccessful morals that affects the world today. Since people are inclined to imbibe attitudes and philosophies prevalent in their environment, the trend towards more unsuccessful moral build-up will continue unless a conscious effort is made to reverse the trend. A dependable standard or guide is needed, and the bible qualifies as the needed textbook. **(Phil.4:8)**