

God's Wisdom in Authority for Children

(The Protective Beauty of Authority as God Designed)

Chapter 4: You're In Charge (Shepherding a Child's Heart)¹

Main Idea: God designed authority not as a weapon to control, but as a shelter to protect. Parents are called to exercise ambassadorial authority—not their own—so their children learn to joyfully live under God's good rule.

Opening Scriptures: (1) **Romans 14:7–9** — *We live for the Lord.* (2) **Ephesians 6:1–4** — *Obedience and training in the Lord.* (3) **Proverbs 13:24** — *Loving discipline brings life.* (4) **Hebrews 12:5–11** — *God disciplines us for our good.*

1. The Struggle and the Story

"There is no more important heart issue for every child ever born than the issue of authority." — *Paul Tripp*

Discussion: (1) What emotions rise in you as you hear stories of children who reject authority? (2) How do you relate to that struggle in your home?

2. Authority as God's Design

A. God's Good Design

- God is the source of all authority (Romans 13:1).
- Parents represent God's authority.
- You are an ambassador—not the king.

"As a parent, you have authority because God calls you to be an authority in your child's life... You act at His command." — *Tedd Tripp*

B. Authority Is God's Plan for Flourishing

- Built into creation: family, church, and society (Gen. 1–2).
- Children thrive under wise authority; chaos grows under autonomy.

"Freedom is not found in autonomy; it is found in obedience." — *Tedd Tripp (Psalm 119:44–45)*

"Parents, be thoroughly determined that your child will obey you even though it may cause you much trouble and cost them not a few tears." — *J.C. Ryle*

C. Distortions of Authority

- Two primary distortions of Biblical Authority are:
 - o Authoritarianism
 - o Permissiveness

"A parent who's always yielding to their child... inverts God's appointed order." — *J.C. Ryle*

¹ Other sources for this lesson include: (1) *Instructing a Child's Heart* (Tedd Tripp); *Parenting* (Paul Tripp); *Duties of Parents* (JC Ryle).

3. The Heart Problem: Self-Rule

- Every child is born a self-appointed little sovereign.
- Resistance to authority = rejection of God's rule.

"It is God who is not being obeyed when you are disobeyed." — *Tedd Tripp*

"Children cannot learn too soon that this is a world in which we are not intended to rule." — *J.C. Ryle*

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:15 — We live for Him who died for us.

4. Exercising Ambassadorial Authority

- **Patient** — Slow to anger (Psalm 103:8)
- **Purposeful** — Toward holiness (Heb. 12:10)
- **Protective** — Safe boundaries (Psalm 23:4)
- **Consistent** — Faithful, not moody (James 1:17)

"You and your child are in the same boat... both under God's authority." — *Tedd Tripp*

5. The Practice of Heart-Level Discipline

A. Fight Early, Fight Small

- "Teach your children that God loves them so much that He gave them parents to be kind authorities." — *Tedd Tripp*
- "Obedience is not the enemy of joy—but the path to it." — *J.C. Ryle*

B. Discipline + Instruction = Heart Work

- Never discipline without biblical instruction.
- Discipline reveals the heart's relationship to God.

"Correction is not displaying your anger... It is reminding them that their sinful behavior offends God." — *Tedd Tripp*

C. Consistency Reflects God's Character

- Consistency brings security.
- Inconsistency clouds the picture of God's steady grace.

6. The Parent's Heart and Hope

- We resist God's will like our children resist ours.
- God's authority is redemptive—He disciplines in love.

"You have no choice. You must engage your children. You are acting in obedience to God." — *Tedd Tripp*

"If we love our children, then let obedience be an expectation continually before their eyes." — *J.C. Ryle*

Summary Takeaways

- Authority is God's gift and design.
- Every child resists it by nature.
- Parents represent God's rule, not their own.
- Gospel parenting aims for *heart change*, not behavior control.
- Both parents and children need grace to live under God's rule.