

Godly Children

(This series of lessons was compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources and many teachers over a period of thirty years. The compiler is very grateful for their wisdom.)

Introduction: 2Tim. 3:15 "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"

A. Conventional wisdom states: "If it's working so well, why does your child continue to push you to the edge?' Spanking your kids may work to suppress his or her bad behavior temporarily, but it isn't a learning type of discipline. The message they get from being spanked is 'I'm a bad kid,' which doesn't help your child figure out what he or she did wrong — or how to keep from doing it again!" (Dr. Phil... Phillip McGraw).

B. "Cons to Spanking":

1. "Long-term consequences of spanking can include increased aggressiveness, antisocial behavior, and delinquency.
2. Failure to learn right from wrong, subsequent criminal behavior, mental illness, and child or spouse abuse as adults, also possible
3. When parents model aggressive behaviors by spanking, they reinforce the idea that physical aggression is the way to get what you want.
4. Children who were spanked feel less attached to their parents and less trusting of them. The more the child was spanked, the less close the parent/child relationship."

C. "If we are ever to turn toward a kindlier society and a safer world, a revulsion against the physical punishment of children would be a good place to start."
(Dr. Benjamin Spock)

D. Conventional wisdom comes and goes with fashions and cultures.

1. Spartans and abandoning weak or disabled children
2. Greek society and placing boys under the care of pedophilic tutors
3. Cybeleans and mothers raising boys apart from fathers
4. They are gone, but the Bible is still here.
5. Sweden banned spanking in 1979. The United States is well on the way to a similar solution. Nearly all states have imposed restrictions and bans at some level.
6. And when children in history class a few hundred years from now are reading about the former United States of America, this country and its misguided morally liberal culture will only be a boring fact they have to memorize for the test, but God's word will still be around.
7. Do you believe in God? Do you believe He made you? If you believe He is wise enough to create and sustain all things, you must believe He knows what is best for you and your children.

E. Get the facts straight!

1. "Not one of the 17 causally relevant studies found predominantly detrimental outcomes if they did anything to rule out parents who used physical punishment too severely." (p. 209, Child Outcomes of Nonabusive and Customary Physical Punishment by Parents: An Updated Literature Review in Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review 2000, 3(4):199-221)

2. Anti corporal punishment statisticians do not distinguish between parents who spank their children and parents who abuse their children. They begin with the assumption that spanking is by definition child abuse. This unwarranted assumption skews the stats, as they include parents who inflict physical damage (burns, broken bones, lacerations), sexual abuse, punishment with frequency and severity, verbal abuse and abuse by neglect. When parents who spank are compared apart from these, the incidence of juvenile delinquency, emotional disorders, and adult functional disorders among their children is lower than that of the children of non-spanking parents, and considerably lower than the national norm.

3. "In published evaluations of Sweden's 1979 spanking ban, Dr. Durrant's data sources indicate an increase in physical child abuse (4.1% of Swedish parents compared to 1.9% of American parents) and of criminal assaults by juvenile delinquents since the ban (519% increase by minors under the age of 15). Although these increases cannot be proven to have been caused by the spanking ban, the increases cannot be easily explained away" (IBID)

4. Dr. Diana Baumrind: "Methodologically strong studies have not established that normative physical punishment is a causal risk factor for the detrimental child outcomes with which it may be associated; a blanket injunction against disciplinary spanking is not warranted by causally relevant scientific evidence." (University of California, Berkeley) address at the 109th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association meeting, August 24, 2001.

5. Den A. Trumbull, M.D. and S. DuBose Ravenel, M.D. (both practicing board-certified pediatricians) responded to various objections to the use of corporal punishment and offer guidelines for disciplinary spanking. They point out that many articles in this area are "merely opinion-driven editorials, reviews or commentaries, devoid of new empirical findings."

6. "If spanking conveys the message to the child that violence is permissible to resolve conflicts, the same could be said of other forms of discipline. Thus, putting a child in time-out would convey the message that it is permissible to restrict the liberty of a person who displeases one. Likewise, fines would convey the idea that it is ok to take something away from another person when one was unhappy with them, etc. There is a difference between a responsible adult authority legitimately punishing wrongdoing and individuals indiscriminately beating up those who frustrate them. Children are capable of understanding this difference in context." (David Benatar, Corporal Punishment. Social Theory & Practice, Summer 1998, Vol. 24 Issue 2, p.237)

F. Old formula for children who misbehave in worship, re-stated by Gary Ogden... "After trying briefly to get things under control (emphasis on briefly), then here is what you do:

1. Take them out.
2. Wear them out.
3. Bring them right back in.

"Well, you say, suppose that does not work? Then the next thing you do is:

1. Take them out.
2. Wear them out.
3. Bring them right back in.

"Repeat as often as necessary."

I. CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS

A. The value of obedience

1. It is well-pleasing to the Lord, since it is what He did - Luke 2:51-52
 - a. If it was proper for the Son of God to be subject to human parents, then it is eminently proper for you to be subject to your own parents.
2. It confers an important promise - Eph. 6:1-3
 - a. God knew children needed a system of reward and punishment in order to learn right from wrong. Reasoning is not enough.

B. The seriousness of rebellion

1. God viewed lack of obedience in the Old Testament on par with witchcraft and idolatry - 1Sam 15:22-23
 - a. The punishment in some cases for rebellious children was death Deut. 21:18-21
2. Therefore, rebelliousness is not to be taken lightly by parents
 - a. It is not just a stage they go through; some never leave it

II. INSPIRED WISDOM IN THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

A. Proper discipline is an expression of genuine love - Prov. 13:24

B. Proper discipline has proper objectives

1. To remove foolishness from the child - Prov. 22:15
2. To save the soul of the child - Prov. 23:13-14
3. To impart wisdom and to avoid shame - Prov. 29:15

C. Proper discipline has its rewards - Prov. 29:17

1. A child who will love you and live in such a way as to bring you delight and peace of mind for their future well being

D. Proper application of corporal punishment - Prov. 19:18

1. To be applied before the situation gets out of hand, while there is hope for improvement
2. To be applied under controlled circumstances; do not put it off until you strike in anger
3. Corporal punishment should never be an expression of parental frustration; rather, a controlled method to discourage bad behavior

E. Proper understanding of a familiar verse - Prov. 22:6

1. This occasionally leads to the common interpretation in which a child's future depends entirely on his training, especially in spiritual matters
 - a. I.e., if the child is brought up right by godly parents, the child must turn out all right
 - b. So if a child is not a faithful Christian, it must always be due to a failure of the parents
 - c. This view suggests "environmental predestination" or "behavioral determinism" (shades of B. F. Skinner in Walden II)
2. Flaws with this reasoning:
 - a. Does not account for influence of the world around him
 - b. Does not acknowledge the child's free will
 - c. Incorrectly credits parents whose children do well

- d. Does not explain why children of bad parents sometimes do well
- e. Indicts God who often loses His children to the world

III. THE DUTY OF FATHERS

- A. Fathers are charged both negatively and positively - Eph. 6:4
 - 1. Don't provoke children to wrath (i.e., discipline without love)
 - 2. Do bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (i.e., discipline tempered with love)
- B. In the world, people usually fall into two wrong extremes of child raising:
 - 1. Discipline without love (physical child abuse)
 - 2. Love without discipline (spiritual child abuse)
 - 3. And both of them are sins
- C. But when fathers properly administer both love and discipline, they show how God raises His own children in His family - Heb. 12:5-11

Conclusion:

- A. We want to leave a legacy in this world. Children raised in the Lord are the greatest legacy we could possibly leave behind.
 - 1. Gen. 18:17-19
- B. Are you going to trust the shifting, changing fashions of contemporary philosophy in raising children?
 - 1. Or are you going to trust God who has given you the children?
 - 2. Psalm 127:3-5