

THE CASE FOR SPANKING

Author Unknown

Most Americans were appalled, and rightly so, watching Madelyne Toogood beat, smack, and yank the hair of her little girl inside a vehicle parked outside a department store in Indiana in 2002. Child abuse is a prevalent problem in our world today. Why anyone would harm children, especially parents, I do not understand. After all, children are a precious gift from God (Psa. 127:3). Yet the news is replete with stories of young ones even being killed through the abuse and neglect of parents. Punishment ought to be swift and severe for anyone who brings such suffering to a child. Jesus expressed His love for little children when He said, **“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea”** (Mat. 18:6).

Since child abuse cases are on the rise, a number of misguided individuals and organizations are calling for an end to any type of physical punishment for children. We must resist these efforts and do so on Biblical grounds. Discipline is a key to the proper rearing of children. Even our Lord disciplines. **“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”** (Heb. 12:6,7).

Properly applied discipline is an expression of parental love and that love is reciprocated. **“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”** (Heb. 12:9). Often after a child has been disobedient and receives a spanking on his lower backside, he will then come back to his mom or dad and sweetly say, “I’m sorry,” as he waits for them to once again lovingly take him in their arms. Older men, particularly, reflect fondly upon their parents’ discipline, realizing such punishment was for their good.

Many young people are longing for parents to place restrictions upon them and discipline their improper behavior. However, even if such is not desired, parents must run the risk of short term rejection by their children in order to properly prepare them for life. **“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”** (Heb. 12:11).

GUIDESLINES TO FOLLOW

First, consider the reason for disciplining a child. A child should be disciplined when he does something dangerous. For example, a child who runs into the street or wanders away from parents must be reprimanded in such a way that he will never forget what he has done.

A child should be disciplined so that proper character may be developed. When a child refuses to pick up his toys, refuses to share, consistently snubs other people, and is disrespectful, that behavior must be addressed, and proper discipline applied.

As child should be disciplined when he is defiant. Back talking and refusing to do what he is told should never be tolerated by parents and should be immediately corrected.

Second, it must be understood that some forms of discipline are inappropriate. Parents saying and not doing is really not discipline at all. Counting 1, 2, 2½, and never getting to 3 is not proper discipline.

Never discipline a child when you are angry. Discipline is for the benefit of the child, not for the parent to vent frustration. Never punish a child by denigrating him or harming his physical body. Likewise, a child should not be disciplined for mistakes such as spilling his milk. That is part of the growing up process.

Third, consider what types of disciplinary procedures should be used when correcting a child. Sometimes a good scolding by word of mouth is all that is necessary. Perhaps there are times when certain privileges should be taken away (a particularly useful tool for correcting teens). Sending a child to his room for a quiet moment to reflect on his behavior may be proper discipline. However, there are occasions when a spanking on the lower backside is in order. This is scriptural and right. **“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him”** (Pro. 22:15). **“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell”** (Pro. 23:13-14).

The word *beat* in the above passage does not carry the same connotation as it does today. The Hebrew word used could mean hitting one lightly or severely. Obviously, the scripture would never condone hitting a child in such a way that irreparable harm was done. Can you imagine the One who said **“Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven”** (Mat. 19:14)., defending those who would harm children. But a spanking that stings a child’s behind will not cause lasting harm nor damage him emotionally. In fact, corporal punishment, along with other appropriate forms of discipline, will help us mold the character of our children and enable them to become proper parents, faithful Christians, and good citizens. Let us love our children enough to discipline them, regardless of what others are saying.~