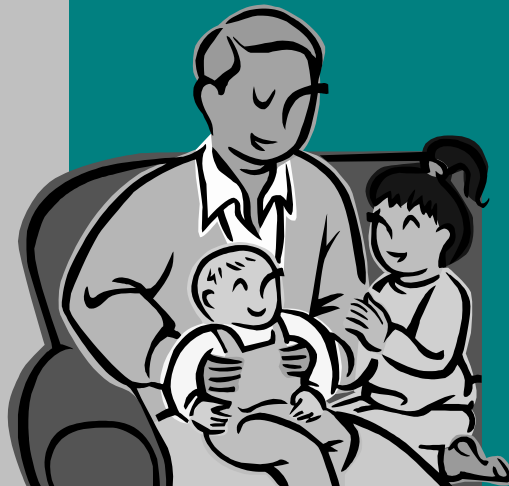


# BALANCED DISCIPLINE



What Does the Bible Say About...

- Rearing Children?
- The Responsibility of the Parents?
- Spanking?

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# Balanced Discipline

## INTRODUCTION

**I**s it possible in this day and age to teach children to obey their parents the first time the parents speak? Is it conceivable to rear children that respect authority? Can parents really produce young people who “want” to serve God? To each one of these questions I can answer a resounding—YES! Lest someone accuse me of living in a dream world out of touch with reality, let me say that with the help of God, my wife and I are doing it. Please notice that I did not say that our children are perfect, but they are not like the typical child that has to be told 3-to-6 times to do something. They are not like the majority of young people today that have no respect for authority, whether that authority is represented by parents, preachers, teachers, policemen, or whomever.

Yes, it is possible for any parent to rear obedient children. Yes, it is conceivable to rear children that respect authority. Yes, parents can produce young people who “want” to serve God. Now, before you begin to make excuses, let me say it again: **YOU CAN DO IT!**

If you will take the time to read this booklet with an open mind and a committed heart, I would like to show you what the Bible has to say about “balanced discipline.” Keep in mind that what you are about to read is not my philosophy, but God's. This booklet is not, by any means, the final authority on the subject of rearing children. I cannot guarantee any results by following this book. The Word of God is our final authority. So follow the Bible and you will not go astray!

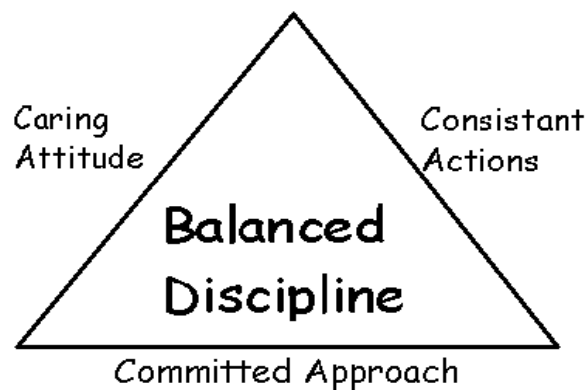
You do not have to run off to a so-called Bible book store to buy an armful of books to know how to rear children. Just reach out and take your Bible and follow along as we examine the very mind of God concerning the subject of rearing obedient, happy children.

As we begin, I want to give to you a few “ground rules,” so to speak, that will help you with this seemingly insurmountable task. The first, and most important rule, is to have A COMMITTED APPROACH. You, as a parent or future parent must be willing to obey God's Word— completely. You must say right now, “I will obey God's Word no matter what it says.” If you say that now, then God will be on your side from the very beginning. Unfortunately there is an attitude prevalent today among people that says, “First, I want God to show me what He wants me to do, and then I'll decide if I want to obey.” On the contrary, God wants us to submit to Him first and foremost, then He will graciously guide and instruct us along the way. {If you will} *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him {first}, and {then} he shall direct thy paths. **Proverbs 3:5-6**, (emphasis added).* We must place our trust in the Lord first, and then “he will direct our paths.”

The second rule that must be prevalent in properly rearing children is, you must have A CARING ATTITUDE. You must season all discipline and instruction with generous amounts of love. *For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth, Proverbs 3:12.* Discipline, standards, and rules in the home that are not enforced and re-enforced with love will produce rebellious young people—guaranteed.

The third rule that you must follow if you are going to rear obedient children is, CONSISTENT ACTIONS. If you are not consistent with discipline, standards, and rules in your home, once again, your children will rebel. No one likes double standards.

We must strictly adhere to all three of these Biblical guidelines. You cannot pick and choose one over the other. They will not work individually. Think of it as a divine triangle. When the triangle is complete, there will be peace, happiness, and security in the home. When the triangle is **not** complete, you will have resentment, rebellion, and disappointment in the home.



Someone maybe thinking, "It worked for you, but how do I know it will work for me?" Just remember whose child rearing method you will be using—God's! God will never break his promises. When He says, *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Proverbs 22:6*, you can be sure He means what He says. Therefore (since it is impossible for God to break His promises), when a child goes bad, it is not God's fault; it is the parents' fault. I know that may be hard to accept, but nevertheless, it is true. When a parent says, "We trained our children in the ways of the Lord and they still turned out bad," that parent is calling God a liar. God cannot lie; therefore, the parents missed something in their children's upbringing.

I think it is high time that we stop making excuses for ourselves and others, and own up to our mistakes. Go to God and confess the fact that you have sinned by not following His commands. If you are truly repentant, He will forgive you. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, 1 John 1:9.*

Before you read any further, let me recommend that you ask God right now to help you understand and practice His biblical method of balanced discipline.

## I. COMMITTED APPROACH

I have entitled this booklet “Balanced Discipline” because the method of biblical discipline applies to the parent as well as to the child. As parents, we must be disciplined ourselves before we can properly discipline our children. Let me give you a few examples. A parent that has the philosophy of “Do as I say, not as I do” is creating confusion in the mind of his children. Children learn from actions more than they do from words. I can tell my son how to throw a football, but he will learn more about throwing if I actually take him outside and show him how to throw it. We teach by example. Let me explain. If a parent tells his children not to smoke, drink, lie, cheat, steal, etc., yet the children see him smoking, drinking, lying, cheating, stealing, etc., his inconsistent words will mean very little to his children.

Therefore, we must be disciplined ourselves if we are to properly discipline our children. How do we become disciplined? We need to be totally committed to God. Let me give you three steps that will help you to be committed to God.

### 1. SALVATION THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

The first step toward balanced discipline is the salvation of our own souls.

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, **Romans 10:9-13**.*

This step is very important because a lost person cannot understand the Word of God. That is why the philosophy of the world is diametrically opposed to the philosophy of the Word of God. The world hears about biblical discipline and cries “child abuse.” The Bible says that a person that has never been born again cannot understand the Word. *But the natural man {the unsaved person} receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, **1 Corinthians 2:14**.* Therefore, in order to properly understand biblical methods (whether those methods be about rearing children, finances, husband and wife relationships, etc.) a person must be born again.

In order to become a child of God, you must be spiritually born again. **Romans 3:23**, *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

**Romans 10:9-13**, *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, why not do it right now? Just bow your head and confess to God that you are a sinner. Then ask God to be merciful upon your sinful soul. True repentance plays an important part in salvation. **2 Corinthians 7:10**, *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of...* Just simply repeating a prayer will not save you.

Ask God to save you by the shed blood of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and ask Jesus to be your Savior. Remember, God can never break His promises, “*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” God is able! Are you?

## 2. OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Now let's look at the second step toward balanced discipline. We must totally rely on the Word of God. I cannot emphasize enough the fact that using unbiblical methods in rearing children **WILL NOT WORK!** The present day public school system is a case in point. It does not use the biblical method of discipline, and look what it has produced—disrespectful ignoramuses. Solomon was right when he said, *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death, Proverbs 14:12.*

*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame, Proverbs 29:15.*

When a person's "ways" are **not** based on biblical principles, they will always produce wreck and ruin.

If you will determine in your heart to be totally committed to God's Word, then you will have all of the promises of an omnipotent God concerning rearing children at your finger tips. You must believe through faith that these promises will work. "But what if I mess up?" We will all "mess up" to some degree at one time or another. Parents are human and we do sin. Don't you think that God knows that? Here is a tremendous verse for the person who is worried about making a mistake: *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. Proverbs 16:3.* Committing everything about our lives to the Lord includes committing our child rearing to Him. "Commit" literally means "to give everything over, to roll over to." Commit your works to Him and He will help you!

As you pray to God, tell Him that you are inadequate. Ask for His help and he will always be there. Then when you do make a mistake, just remember that He is there standing with you, not as a mean ogre ready to crush you, but as a loving Father, ready and willing to help you pick up the pieces and continue on with your spiritual growth.

Years ago, when I was a teacher at a Christian school, I was asked to put up a banner with a thought provoking saying on it in the teachers' lounge. The next day I put up the banner with the following words: "God is Able! Are You?" You see, the Bible says in Philippians 4:19 that *my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* Don't you think that somewhere in God's vast riches in glory He has the wisdom to help you rear your children? Of course He does! God is able to help you rear your children. Are you able to trust Him? Do you think almighty God will fall back on his promises? Of course not! So trust in God, rely on his wisdom and his ways and he will establish your thoughts. He will fix, or direct, your thoughts in line with his thoughts.

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths, Proverbs 3:5-6.*

Remember, God's Word will never lead you astray. Have you ever been out in a thick forest at night without a flashlight? You can't see where you are going, can you? You become confused and may even become a little panicky. That is how many parents feel about rearing children. When they venture out on their own, away from the Word of God, they become confused and panicky. That is why we must go to the Bible for our light. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path, Psalms 119:105.* Don't rely on your own ways when rearing children. Go to the Word of God. It will never fail you.

Now let's look at a few of the benefits that God promises us concerning rearing children His way.

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it, **Proverbs 22:6.***

*Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD, **Psalms 128:1-4.***

*That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace: **Psalms 144:12.***

*Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate, **Psalms 127:3-5.***

You can claim all of those promises. To be sure, there is tremendous responsibility involved, but with God's help, you will see your children grow in a way that pleases Him. They will become a blessing to you and not a curse.

If it is a blessing from your children that you want, then commit yourself to the Lord. Say to yourself, "I want to be totally obedient to you, Lord. Show me from your Word what I must do, how I must act, and what I must say. I truly want to train up our children in the way they should go: so that when they are old, they will not depart from it."

God will know if you are sincere. If you are sincere, He will honor your prayer.

### **3. HEARING THE WORD OF GOD**

The third step that will help you with balanced discipline is consistent attendance in a good, local, New Testament Baptist church. There, you will find in the pastor a man of God that can help teach you what the Bible has to say about rearing children. There, you will find other parents that will be traveling down that same road of balanced discipline. It is always comforting to know that there are others close by who are willing to give biblical help, willing to share the wisdom that they have gleaned from the Word about rearing children. It is also comforting to know that there are others who have gone through the difficulties, hardship, and happiness of child rearing.

In a good local New Testament independent Baptist church the preaching is always based on the whole counsel of God. The preacher not only preaches the Word, but he practices it too. Those who shun the preaching of the Word are almost guaranteed that their methods of child rearing will fail. You see, true biblical preaching will help you understand the Scriptures. *But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching..., **Titus 1:3.***

You will only benefit from the preaching of God's Word, which, in turn, will help you to be more successful in rearing your children. Remember, in order to have balanced discipline, you must have a committed approach.

## **II. A CARING ATTITUDE**

At the beginning of this booklet I said that we must strictly adhere to three biblical guidelines. You can not pick and choose one over the other. They will not work individually (remember the divine triangle). Although one point is not more important than the others, I would like to emphasize this one: you must have A CARING ATTITUDE.

If our children know, really know, that we love them, then they will not rebel against true scriptural discipline. We must tell them that we love them. We must show them that we love them. We must have a genuine parental love. Children can detect in short order if their parents are giving them a superficial or selfish love.

The type of love that I am talking about is a God-like (αγαπε, agape) love. It is a sacrificial giving of ones self, expecting nothing in return. This type of love can only come from God. Therefore, only Christians (those who are truly born again) can exhibit or manifest this love. God has shown us the supreme example of agape love: **John 3:16**, *For God so loved (agapao) the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

God knew that many would reject His Son, yet He still “gave.” Let us, as Christians, exhibit this God-like agape love to our children. Do you frequently tell your children that you love them? The last thing that my children hear me say to them when I kiss them goodnight is, “I love you.”

Do you physically show your love to your children? I am talking about a pat on the head, a kiss on the cheek, a hug, a touch on the shoulder, letting them sit on your lap while you read to them, etc. Children need this. Now I realize that the older they get, this physical show of love will change. Let me explain. When my girls were two and three years old, they would climb up on my lap and give me a hug and a kiss. We would hug and kiss for a few moments and then they would get down and merrily go on their way. Now that they are teenagers, we still hug and kiss, but not in the same way as we did when they were little. I like to get my son in a head-lock and lightly rub my knuckles across his head.

Children not only need to hear that they are loved, they also need to be shown that they are loved. “But I’m not the hugging and kissing type.” Then you must ask God to change yourself. Remember, I’m talking about a God-given love, not the perverted love of the world.

Another form of showing your children that you love them is through corporal punishment. That is, if we truly love our children and if we are going to bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we must administer scriptural spankings.

“I could not spank my child because I love him too much.” Have you ever heard that statement before? Maybe you have said it yourself. Unfortunately, it is a statement that cannot be based on the Bible. In fact, the Bible says that a parent does **not** love his child if he does not properly spank him. (I will deal with the rod and spanking in the next section.)

Today, the philosophy of the world is “Let your children do what **they** want to do. Don’t hinder them with do’s and don’ts. And by all means, never spank a child.”

The Bible says that if we love our children, one way that we show that love is through scriptural discipline which includes properly spanking them.

*He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes,* **Proverbs 13:24.**

*For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth,* **Proverbs 3:12.**

*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,* **Hebrews 12:6.**

Please notice that love and discipline go hand-in-hand. Now I do realize that discipline does not always involve spanking. The word “discipline” itself carries a broad meaning. It involves teaching, training by example, rebuke, exhortation, corporal punishment, etc.



Therefore, if we truly love our children, then we will use all forms of discipline. BUT THE KEY IS TO USE ALL OF THESE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE SATURATED WITH LOVE.

We must lovingly teach our children. We must lovingly train, rebuke, and exhort them, and when the need arises we must lovingly spank our children.

Balanced discipline involves teaching and training through various means. We must wisely employ each of these methods. Ephesians 6:4 gives us God's balance of rearing children: *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* The word "nurture" is translated from the Greek word *paideia*. It is used six times in the New Testament and it is translated as follows; "chastening" three times, "nurture" one time, "instruction" one time, "chastisement" 1 time. It gives the idea of training by rewards and punishments.

Let me state here that the world's philosophy of bribing a child to stop throwing a tantrum is not scriptural. There is also a similar theory that says we should redirect the child's attention from his wrong action and focus it toward that which is positive. This may sound like good advise, but it is harmful in the long run. The world says that we should never say no to our child, and we should never focus on anything negative. This is totally anti-scriptural. A child that is brought up by this theory is never directly taught that there is a difference between right and wrong, between obedience and disobedience.

True biblical discipline involves nurturing, admonishing, rebuking, teaching, training, and chastising or punishment (which includes loss of privileges and/or spanking).

Remember, if you are going to love your children with a Godly love, you can only do it God's way with God's help. Ask Him to help you train up your *child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Proverbs 22:6.* Then go out and manifest your love to them, verbally and physically. If you haven't been doing it, it may seem awkward at first, but with God's help you can do it! Balance your discipline with love.

### III. CONSISTENT ACTIONS

I knew a youth director years ago who had a hard time controlling the young people in his youth group. As I observed him, I noticed that he was not consistent with anything. Whether it was rules or standards, it made no difference; there was no consistency. One day he would act like a marine drill sergeant. The next time he would behave like some care-free hippie.

There was no wonder in my mind why these young people were so unruly. They never knew what to expect from their youth director. One week they could get away with anything. The next week they were "railed" about why they should obey rules and standards.

These young people were thinking: "If he's not consistent with the enforcement of these rules and standards, why should we be consistent about obeying?"

What is the moral of this story? Inconsistency breeds rebellion. Therefore, as parents, we must be consistent with rules and standards. More important, we must be consistent with the enforcement of these rules and standards. Remember to be consistent. When a parent is not consistent with punishment, he is indirectly teaching his child that it is all right to disobey authority. The child will become bold with his disobedience. He is thinking, "As long as I don't get caught, I can do what I want."

Let me give you three things that will help you remain consistent in rearing godly children. **(1) We must remain consistent with our standards.** By that I mean we must base all of our standards and rules on something that will never change. We all need guidelines to live

by, and it helps if those guidelines are founded on unchangeable principles. Therefore our standards of child rearing must be based on biblical truths. The Bible is God's mind about everything. It is our absolute. It never changes! *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven, **Psalms 119:89.***

*Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever, **Psalms 119:160.***

*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled, **Matthew 5:18.***

**(2) We must remain consistent in our stand.** Once we take our stand on the Word of God, we should never change.

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord, **1 Corinthians 15:58.***

I have watched parent after parent begin to rear their children God's way and then gradually drop their standards one by one until they were right back where they started. Why do parents drop their standards? Peer pressure, their parents, apathy, etc.? It truly is hard work to rear children God's way, but it is most definitely worth it! So hold your ground. Take a loving stand and God will help you.

**(3) We must remain consistent in our sentencing.** This applies to the type of rewards and punishment that are given out to your children. One of the most frustrating experiences for children is to find out that their parents are partial. As a parent it is damaging to your authority to show favoritism. *For there is no respect of persons with God, **Romans 2:11.*** If God treats everyone the same, shouldn't we? Remember; always be consistent with your sentencing, that is, administering punishment and rewards.

Now let me give you some practical applications of what we have looked at so far. This is where the "rubber meets the road." We must now put into action what we have been talking about. *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves, **James 1:22.***

Many people have what they call a "life's verse." I have one myself. It's Romans 1:16. But I also have many other verses that I have claimed. I believe that we should base everything that we do on God's Word. For example, I have a pastoral verse, a preaching verse, and a parental verse. My parental verse is **Deuteronomy 6:5-9:** *And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

Please notice (in these verses) the divine triangle that we talked about earlier in this booklet. Verses five and six cover the "committed approach" and "a caring attitude." I don't want to be redundant, but I do want to point out one little word in verse five. It is the word "all." If we are going to see the Lord bless in the area of rearing children, we must not hold anything back from God. He must have everything about us: our heart, our soul, and our might. Hold back in one area, and you will be forfeiting a portion of God's blessing in your life.

In verses seven through nine we see the "consistent actions." God tells us when we are to train our children, *"shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."* This covers every waking hour.

Whenever our children are around us, we should be teaching and disciplining them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Ephesians 6:4.*

Before we go any further, you must realize that in order for discipline to work effectively both the husband and wife must agree that they will act as one. For example, if mother tells Suzy that she is not to eat that donut before dinner, father should not contradict the first command. If mother says no and father says yes, then their parental authority has been subconsciously damaged in the mind of the child.

Parents need to work together. Therefore it is important that you sit down and map out your method of child rearing. Remember to base all of your guidelines, rules, and standards on the Bible. Keep your rules simple and brief. This is where you will need to ask God to show you what guidelines, rules, and standards will best suit your household. Start with some basic rules that teach obedience to your authority. (For example: obeying on the first voice command.)

It is of vital importance that your children learn to obey you on the first call. Inconsistency will produce rebellious children. Let me tell you about an experience I witnessed some time ago. I'm sure that you will be able to relate to same kind of scenario while standing at the checkout counter in a store. I saw a mother with two children. It all began when her two or three year old picked up a candy bar from the rack. The mother told the child to put it back—the child didn't. "If you don't put that candy bar back, you're going to be in trouble," she said. Then a few seconds later I heard, "I told you put that candy bar back." Another few seconds passed... "You're going to be sorry when you get home if you don't put that candy bar back." I remember hearing the mother make that statement four or five times, and then, frustrated, she came over to her child, took the candy bar, and put it back on the shelf herself. That was when the real battle started. The child began to throw a temper tantrum. She picked up the kicking and screaming child, rolled her eyes at me and with a frustrated look sighed this typical excuse, "He's very tired."

She was making an excuse for not properly training her child. She was teaching her children that they do not need to obey mom when mom speaks. Indirectly she was also training her child to throw a tantrum. "How do you train a child to throw tantrums?" you ask. Remember, I stated that you need to be consistent with your discipline. This mother had not properly taught her child to obey on the first command. If she had, the child would have obediently put the candy bar back the first time that she spoke. "But I can't spank my child in the store," you say. If you properly train your child at home, then he will not embarrass you out in public.

I cannot count the times that my wife and I have been complimented by strangers on how well our four children behave in public. We began to train them consistently at a very early age, and we did it at home. Let me give you some very basic principles that we used in disciplining our children.

- Whenever possible, discipline immediately.
- Let the punishment fit the offence.
- Always be consistent.
- Never discipline out of reaction.

Now let me briefly explain each point. Whenever it is possible, discipline your child immediately. I say "when possible" because you may be someplace where you cannot properly spank the child. If that is the case, explain to the child that he has disobeyed and assure him that

he will be spanked (if the offence warrants a spanking) when you get home or when you can find a private place to spank him. (I do not recommend spanking a child in the car.)

It is very important that you fit the punishment to the offence. First time offences may not require a spanking. For example, if I have not told my children that they cannot use my computer without permission, I would not punish them if I found them using it. Once I have explained the rules to each of them, they are now without excuse.

Now let's talk about the type of punishment. The first time I found one of my children using my computer without permission (after I explained the guidelines to them), I would take away his computer privileges for a week. The next time I found out that he was on the computer without permission, I would give him a spanking and also would take away their computer privileges for a week. After a few spankings and loss of privileges he would soon get the idea that Dad means business.

Someone may be thinking, "When should I spank, and when should I use another form of punishment?" You will have to use your own judgment. Just remember to be consistent. If you have told them that they will receive a certain type of punishment for doing a particular thing, then when they do the particular thing, always give them the foretold punishment.

It is also important that we never discipline out of reaction. For example; you are edgy or upset about something. Your child may be doing something that is not wrong but very annoying to you under the circumstances. Then when he does do something wrong, it "puts you over the edge" and you over react in your punishment. The best thing to do is take care of your problem first, and then administer the punishment.

### **What does the Bible say about corporal punishment (spanking)?**

Now let's look at what the Bible has to say about corporal punishment. As you read the verses below, you will notice that eight of them use the word "rod." A rod is a stick or switch used for discipline. The diameter or thickness of the rod can be anywhere from the size of your little finger to your thumb. A small stick (or switch, as we used to call it) is very effective when spanking. It inflicts physical pain and does not permanently mark the child's body. It will definitely leave an impression on the child's mind, but that is the purpose of the spanking. A proper spanking will serve as a deterrent toward further disobedience.

For those of you who do not believe in spanking and are still reading this book, I want you to think about something for a moment. First of all, why do we have so many young people who do not respect authority? I remember back in the '50s and early '60s when young people had respect for all kinds of authority. Then a damaging philosophy sprang up in the '60s. This philosophy taught that it was wrong to spank a child. What did this philosophy produce? Spoiled brats of all ages.

Secondly, why not listen to what God has to say about spanking? If you reject spanking, then you are rejecting God's Word. In order to properly rear children, we must use corporal punishment.

Now, let's go to the Word of God.

**Proverbs 10:13** *In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a **rod** is for the back of him that is void of understanding.*

I would not recommend striking a small child on the back. God has created a place on a child's anatomy for spanking—it's his seat.

**Proverbs 13:24:** *He that spareth his **rod** hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*

Notice what God says about those who do not believe in spanking their children. God says that they really hate their children. Therefore when we properly spank our children, we are showing our love to them.

**Proverbs 22:15:** *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the **rod** of correction shall drive it far from him.*

**Proverbs 23:13:** *Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the **rod**, he shall not die.*

**Proverbs 23:14:** *Thou shalt beat him with the **rod**, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.*

**Proverbs 26:3:** *A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a **rod** for the fool's back.*

**Proverbs 29:15:** *The **rod** and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*

Mark it down, God's Word is never wrong. If you do not properly spank your child, he will eventually bring you shame.

**Proverbs 20:30:** *The **blueness of a wound** cleanseth away evil: so do **stripes** the inward parts of the belly.*

Sometimes a spanking may cause a bruise (that is what "blueness of a wound" means). "Stripes" gives the idea of welts. Bruises and welts will disappear, but I can guarantee that the reason for the spanking will linger and they will be less likely to disobey again.

**Psalms 23:4:** *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy **rod** and thy staff they comfort me.*

**Hebrews 12:5-12:** *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 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? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 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.*

**Revelation 3:19:** *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

The Bible is very specific about spanking. Let me say at this time that I am not going to argue whether it is right or wrong to spank a child. Anyone who has studied the Bible knows that God sanctions spanking. I would also like to say that proper spanking is not child abuse. **I AM MOST DEFINITELY AGAINST CHILD ABUSE. IT IS WRONG AND THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR IT.** Physical child abuse is beating, slapping and knocking around a child. There is a big difference between proper spanking and beating, slapping, and knocking around a child.

Now let me explain how we used corporal punishment in our home. I want to stress the fact that what I am about to give you is an example. I am not saying that you must follow this example word for word. Study God's Word, then pray over it. Ask God to show you what He wants you to do.

I will use my son David as the example. When he was seven years old we gave him the rules about crossing the street by himself (stop and look both ways, listen, etc.). We also told him the punishment if he did not obey which was a spanking. Not long after that time, we saw him running across the street without looking. I confronted David with his disobedience by asking him if he had run across the street without looking. When he admitted to it, I told him to go to his bedroom and think about what he had done. After a few minutes I came into his room with “the paddle.” I asked him once again what he had done. I asked him if he disobeyed and he said, “yes.” Then I asked him to repeat the punishment for crossing the street without looking. He answered tearfully with, “a spanking.”

I asked him why he was getting this spanking, and he replied, “Because I disobeyed Daddy.” That was the right answer. The punishment was not for crossing the street, but for disobeying a rule. Then I did something very important, I told him that I had to spank him because I loved him. Proverbs 13:24: *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*

I asked him to bend over the edge of the bed, and then I took aim with the paddle and paddled him. (I took aim because I didn’t want to miss. Missing could cause physical damage). I do not remember the number of swats I gave him as that is not important. We would spank our children until their will was broken. This “breaking of the will” was different with each child. I will say more about this later.

After the spanking, he was crying. I stood him up and let him cry for a few moments. Then I explained again why he got the spanking. I would always make sure that he answered specifically. If a child does not answer specifically, then he has missed the point of the spanking.

When David answered me, “Because I disobeyed Daddy,” I told him again that I loved him and then I scooped him up in my arms and we hugged and kissed each other. (This may seem like a very cold and calculated ordeal, but believe me, it was very hard on me each time I spanked my children.) After he calmed down, we both sat on the bed and prayed. He would ask God to help him obey his daddy and mommy, and I would ask God to help him to be a good boy and help me be the right kind of daddy.

This basic scenario took place a number of times with each of our four children. We began spanking each child when we saw deliberate disobedience. For example, when they were old enough to reach up and grab things they were not suppose to grab, we would tell them, “NO! do not touch that.” If they would touch it, my wife or I would go over to them, tell them no, and then swat them on their well padded bottom. Sometimes this must be done many times. Eventually their quick little minds would realize, “Every time I touch that green thingy I get a whop. So if I don’t want to get whopped, I better not touch that green thingy.”

Remember, you are teaching your child to obey authority. If you start as soon as you see deliberate disobedience, then their spankings will begin to diminish as they get older.

Proper spankings will also eliminate the “throwing of fits.” You’ve all seen a child lay on the floor screaming and kicking. We never allowed our children to “throw a fit.” If they would throw a fit during a spanking, then they would get another spanking for the tantrum. I remember older parents saying, “You just wait until your children reach the terrible two’s.” Well, I’m still waiting. They never went through it. We just did not allow them to throw a tantrum.

Believe me, it is hard work. But the rewards are sweet, obedient children. **Proverbs 23:24-25:** *The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child*

*shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.*

Each child is different and you will need to slightly alter your method of discipline to fit the child. For example, one of our children only needed a few swats before his will was broken. While another one needed a few more swats. If you know your child, you will be able to detect the difference between a I-don't-like-this-cry and a truly repentant I-am-really-sorry-cry. When you see that repentant cry then you know his will has been broken.

It is very important that you stop the individual spanking after you see that his will is broken because if you continue to swat him, you could be in danger of breaking their spirit. **Proverbs 18:14** *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?*

Once his will has been broken, you will be the authority in the house. But if you never break his will, he will control the house hold. A child who has never had his will broken becomes a selfish child, and he will be throwing tantrums for the rest of his life. Yes, I have seen 30 and 40-year-olds, throw tantrums if they don't get their way. They don't get down on the floor to kick and scream, but they still yell and scream.

Just remember God's Words in **Proverbs 19:18**, *Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.*

For the first year or two it may seem like you are spanking your child every day. Just be consistent. Then one day you will notice that you haven't had to spank him for quite a while. It will be worth it in the long run. Believe it or not, we have two lovely, obedient teenagers. With the Lord's help, we reared them that way. What a joy our children are to my wife and me. If I had to do it all over again, I would do it the same way!

## CONCLUSION

Fathers, it is your responsibility to rear your children. You and you alone will answer to God for your methods or lack of methods. If you have shirked your God-given duty, then own up to it. Ask God to forgive your disobedience, and then ask Him to help you as you regain your rightful place as leader in rearing your children.

As you read this booklet, it could be that you are a frustrated wife and mother that has been saddled with the responsibility of rearing your children alone. Just pray and ask God to point out your husband's duty. God will do a much better job of convicting him than you. To be sure, it is the ideal situation if both the husband and wife are all going in the same direction. But if only one of you are willing to follow God, He will honor that person's efforts.

It could also be that you are a single parent. Take heart, God will help you too! Just submit your will to His and totally obey his Word.

I would not pretend or imply that this booklet is an exhaustive study on the subject of rearing children. I do trust that it has been a help. Remember, the ultimate resource book about child rearing is the Word of God. Read It. Study It. Trust It. Obey It! GOD WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN!



Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

Psalms 128:1-4





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