

In Defense
of *Biblical*
Chastisement

by
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Historically, parents in all nations and cultures have employed what is often called corporal punishment as part of their child training methods. In the last 50 years this practice has increasingly been called into question. Some western societies are regulating it while others are making it illegal.

This trend toward the abolition of corporal punishment is paralleled by a degeneration of parent/child relationships, and by an increasing unruliness of youth. The very foundations of society have become unstable and chaotic. Never before in history have children been as disrespectful to their parents and of authority in general. It is interesting that the deterioration of discipline parallels the abandonment of traditional child training methods, including spanking.

History will show that societies did not abandon the practice of corporal punishment because it failed to bring good results, but because many parents had become ashamed of the manner

in which they applied it. Corporal punishment at the hands of an angry, intemperate parent can be cruel and abusive. We decry the fact that some people motivated by self-interest, practice corporal punishment, and no doubt this is what opponents are seeing. They assume that all spanking is violence—"hitting," as they call it. Their first argument against corporal punishment is to call it punishment. We call it chastisement or spanking. The Bible calls it the 'rod.' "*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame (Proverbs 29:15).*"

Many studies have been done on violence directed towards children. Some researchers have confirmed that abused children become abusive adults. It is understood that "hitting" a child may cause him to grow up using violence as a way of resolving conflicts. Children are very good at passing on what they have experienced at the hands of their parents. It is no wonder that many are questioning the appropriateness of corporal punishment.

As the courts rule against corporal punishment, those of us who advocate the use of it, under proper conditions, would like to vindicate our practices, to allow the courts and society to recognize the wisdom and effectiveness of our methods. We know that an objective and scientific examination of our procedure, and the results we achieve, will overwhelmingly vindicate our use of spanking.

Our defense of corporal punishment should not be construed as a defense of those who abuse this sacred duty. We believe the rod should not be used as a vent for parents' anger. There is no place for vindictiveness or aggression in training

children. The rod should not be applied at the end of an intolerance curve. The spankings we give our children do not resemble punishment. We are not angry. We don't lose control. We are not desirous to make our children suffer for their misdeeds. When the ultimate motivation is anything other than the child's good, the rod should not be used.

You must first understand our position if you would fault us.

The test as to whether or not corporal chastisement is properly exercised is in the results. If children feel or act oppressed, subdued, broken in spirit, and emotionally removed from the authority doing the spanking then something is terribly wrong. When properly administered, spanking should produce the highest fruits of love, peace, self-discipline and a bonding with the one doing the spanking. If the fruit is good, the root is good. If the fruit spoils, the tree is diseased. We are prepared to display the fruit of our methods with all confidence that by anyone's standards, children raised under loving discipline will excel in every way.

Though the application of the rod is only a small part of our technique, it is an absolutely indispensable element in the much larger process of training. To give up the use of the rod is to place us as child trainers on untenable ground and abandon the children under our care to a life of self-will and unruliness.

Three things set our training apart from all others: love, *wise reproof*, and the *rod*. Our love and reproof are not brought into question; our use of the rod is. So we offer a defense of corporal chastisement as we use it, not as may be construed.

Our goals.

Through the training we give, we expect all children under our care to excel as human beings. Our first goal is to impart emotional stability—self-confidence, humility, compassion, and self-discipline. We expect to provide such an environment that children smile their way through each day. The children we train face life with joy and confidence, a desire to learn and grow.

We believe every child can be trained to make wise choices. We do not treat bad habits as if they were diseases, impairing the child's ability to do what he ought. We do not label behavior with terms like "disorder" that validate inability. We train every child to be a winner and to overcome all obstacles, without and within.

Our technique speaks for itself. We have received into our care those who have been labeled as mentally disabled, retarded, hyperactive, attention deficit, and we have trained them to function normally—yes, even to excel—and that without the use of drugs or expensive therapy. Though most of the children placed under our care come to us disadvantaged, we are producing children who will make the best citizens and leaders of a great nation.

We will show how the rod is essential to imparting a stable personality and communicating a balanced world-view.

Understanding a child's nature.

Children come into this world with all the force of passion, but with no capacity to exercise self-restraint. Until they are three or four years old they do not even begin to have any sense of the need to control their impulses. They have no capacity to value anything other than pleasure.

They are carried from one moment to the next by their drives to seek gratification and entertainment. They can thrill at indulgence, but they cannot understand the concept of temperance. They have no social consciousness or sense of responsibility. They cannot live by principle, for they have no knowledge of the rules by which society is governed. During these early years, when children are ignorant of their duties, they are nonetheless perfecting the art of self-gratification, of which parents sometimes assist them by catering to their every whim and by excusing immature behavior. In those early years they are developing a frame of reference that will govern them when they are older.

The dilemma.

So here is the dilemma parents face: by the time children are old enough to begin to understand that some things are good and some are bad, they will have already made far-reaching commitments to self-gratification as an end. As children grow older and perceive their moral duties, they often find their duties in conflict with their habits of indulgence. When conflicts arise, children are unwilling to practice self-denial. They have been conditioned to live free of the law. When children who are raised without being compelled to duty become adults and are called upon to assume responsibility, they often turn to alcohol or drugs, for they have been conditioned to live for the moment and defy social responsibility.

The rod jars the child out of his foolishness and lust.

The Bible says, "*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (Proverbs 22:15).*" The guardian's words of rebuke are often lost in the