

# Forgive Them and You Will Be Set Free!

R.T. Kendall shares his personal testimony on the topic of total forgiveness that changed his life and ministry forever.

What R.T. shares around minute three will change yours.



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# **What Does God Think About Spanking Your Child?**

I heard a man of God rehearsing his upbringing when he inserted the following, evoking a hearty laugh from the audience. "People ask me in my mischievous childhood if I ever got spankings? I surprise them when I say I was never spanked. But I sure got some 'wuppins'!"

Enjoying Turner Classic movies and reruns of wholesome family shows like Andy Griffith or Lassie, I notice an occasional spanking for little children was just the norm when they persistently misbehaved. A little protoplasmic stimulation to the backside of learning got a wayward child back on track with a lesson learned.

Celebrating Mother's Day brings pleasant memories for moms

along with some persistent questions like the appropriateness of spanking in our hyper-politically correct culture.

Years ago, I authored a book now titled, *The Little Handbook of Loving Correction*. It was formerly called *God, the Rod and Your Child's Bod*, but I changed it out of cultural sensitivity.

For every wonderful mother in America struggling with this nagging issue, receive this biblically informed reassurance as a gift. May it bring peace from alignment with God's plan for raising happy, respectful and obedient children.

### **Realism in Raising Kids**

Raising children requires a realistic perspective on our inherited sinful nature and a rejection of the "inherent goodness of man." Adam rebelled and all of us have ratified that rebellion because of our inherited sin nature.

We don't have to teach children to be selfish, lie, hit their siblings, steal or pout when they don't get their way. We do have to train them to learn to control themselves and do what is pleasing to God.

Don't you just love it when parenting "experts" expound their views on TV in their world of Utopia? A couple living together with no children confidently shares their "wisdom" philosophy about raising their future children by simply reasoning with them, calmly affirming them and ignoring clear cut disobedience as "a stage they'll grow out of."

Yeah, right. Wait 'till they confront strong-willed little Grayson in all his glorious defiance one day! This is why seasoned veterans wince at this idealism and understand bumper stickers reading: "Insanity is inherited. You get it from your children."

### **Going God's Way**

Better to approach parenting God's way and embrace the truth that appears on a plaque we had in our home: "It is better to build children than to repair men."

If you permit a child to nurture destructive habits, which they will one day be forced (with greater difficulty) to break, you are living beneath the revealed will of God concerning your role as a parent.

There is a difference between abusing a child and lovingly, responsibly disciplining him. Children know the difference between an objective spanking ministered in love and a smacking springing from pent-up anger.

- "Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul" (Prov. 29:17).
- "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction will drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15).
- "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15).
- "Do not withhold correction from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death" (Prov. 23:13-14, NIV).
- "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6, MEV).

God's method for curbing harmful attitudes and nurturing healthy ones in young children is not parents going ballistic, threatening, screaming, hauling off in anger or tuning out destructive conduct, bribing with candy or by banishment to a room to brood and fester in resentment.

Loving correction, which includes spanking at times, is an expression of love. Though not literally, have you ever experienced a "spanking" from the Lord for persistent, ungodly

conduct? “My son, do not despise the discipline from the Lord, nor grow weary when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He disciplines” (Heb. 12:5-6a).

## **Loving, Legal and Logical**

Research reveals that in America up to 85% acknowledge they've used corporal punishment. Every state in America allows corporal punishment of children.

Due to disciplinary problems in schools, many are reevaluating their policies like the Arlington school district outside Memphis, Tennessee. They voted to reinstate corporal punishment saying, “Teachers need all tools possible.”

Former NBA superstar Charles Barkley has joked, “If corporal punishment is a crime, then every black parent in the South is going to be put in jail!”

## **10 Essentials of Loving Correction**

May this acrostic for CORRECTION reinforce the “basics.”

**Clarity:** Loving correction always begins by clearly defining and communicating reasonable boundaries before they are enforced.

**Obedience:** Spankings can occur if there's persistent, deliberate disobedience. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Eph. 6:1).

**Right Attitudes:** We are to “serve the Lord with gladness” (Ps. 100:2a), so persistent whining and complaining have to be addressed.

**Restoration:** Embracing and reassuring a child afterwards enables us to avoid leaving them feeling guilty or rejected.

**Explanation:** Taking time to explain the offense as well as enabling the parent to calm down (if needed), makes this

essential.

**Consistency:** Loving correction requires an investment and persevering commitment. “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him dearly” (Prov. 13:24).

**Thoroughness:** Shaping the will without breaking the spirit requires being authoritative not authoritarian so the child experiences some pain, versus simple “love pats.” “Chasten your son while there is hope, and let not your soul spare for his crying” (Prov. 19:18). “Now no discipline seems to be joyful at the time, but grievous. Yet afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness in those who have been trained by it” (Heb. 12:11).

**Immediately:** With exceptions, loving correction should be given in the moment not “when daddy comes home” hours later. “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed swiftly, the heart of the sons of men is fully set to do evil” (Eccl. 8:11).

**Out of sight:** Discipline is administered in private so as to not humiliate or embarrass a child.

**Neutral Object:** Scripture states a “rod (a small, flexible branch) of correction,” not a hairbrush or the nearest object. Hands should be instruments expressing affection and tenderness; we don’t want children flinching or retreating when a hand is raised.

A closing question: “Where is the rod administered?”

God in His wisdom prepared a strategic place on the anatomy of our toddlers and children which has ample cushiony, fatty tissue and sensitive nerve endings to respond to Spirit-led stings. “Fannies” are gifts from God! In 47 years of ministry, I’ve discovered that all children come equipped with one! “On the lips of him who has understanding wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who is void of understanding”

(Prov. 10:13).

Here's the deal: Scripture tells us "reproofs of instruction are the way to life" (Prov. 6:23b). May this Mother's Day gift of God's timeless wisdom educate and encourage moms across America. God's ways are always best when carried out consistently and in faith for His glory.

Happy Mother's Day!

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## **Greg Laurie: The Bible Verse Nonbelievers Love to Misquote**

The Word of God is always relevant. Period.

As we take note of the signs of the times, and as they seem to be converging and escalating day by day right before our eyes, we might find ourselves wondering if the Bible will "keep up" with the swift march of events. Everything seems to be changing so fast—technology, the economy, the world situation, attitudes and morals—can we really expect God's Word to keep up with the curve?

Yes, we can.

More than that, we can expect it to be ahead of the curve.

God knew about what would be facing us in the 21st century before the first man and first woman drew breath in the Garden of Eden. And the Bible will continue to be a reliable handbook and guidebook for our times, no matter how quickly the world morphs and changes around us.

Every generation has its hot-button issues, and ours is no

exception.

Is the Bible up to the task of speaking to world events as well as a culture in turmoil? *Absolutely.*

Speaking of the Bible and our culture, there used to be a time in our country when the most well-known Bible passages among all people was either John 3:16 or Psalm 23.

Now, the nonbeliever's favorite verse is Matthew 7:1. Granted, they may not know that the reference is from the gospel of Matthew, or the context in which these words were spoken. They may or may not know that Jesus Himself spoke the words. They just happen to like what it says—or, at least, what they think it says.

“Judge not, lest you be judged.”

This is usually quoted about the time you say something they consider “judgmental.” (Which might be defined as an absolute opinion on any subject they disagree with. Where you would dare to say something as controversial and unkind as, “No, that’s wrong!”)

The response is usually pretty heated. “Who are *you* to judge *me*? Doesn’t the Bible say, ‘Judge not lest you be judged’?”

By the way, that verse isn’t saying we shouldn’t judge; it’s saying we shouldn’t *condemn*. And no true believer in Jesus should do that. The fact is, I think true Christians are among the most loving, the most open and the most accepting people anywhere. I find the most narrow-minded people are the ones who claim to be broad-minded.

Those who claim to be the most accepting are in reality the most unaccepting. A true Christian bases his or her ideas and opinions on a biblical worldview. Nonbelievers will also have their opinions based on a secular worldview. Ironically, they will say that they have no world view, but they really do.

They will say they are open to everything, but in reality they are quite closed.

*Everyone has a right to their opinion today except the one with the biblical worldview. They would rather we just went away quietly and didn't express our opinion at all.*

For example, a typical statement of a person with a non-biblical worldview might be, "All religions essentially teach the same thing."

Actually, they don't. A person who says that reveals his or her complete ignorance of the matter.

There is a living God, and He had revealed Himself in Scripture. As Christians, therefore, we believe we have absolute truth from God, and we develop our worldview from what the Bible teaches. Period.

We do not seek to conform and accommodate the unchanging truths of Scripture to our changing culture, but rather seek to change our culture to conform to what the Bible teaches.

✘ *Adapted from Signs of the Times by Greg Laurie, copyright 2018, published by Charisma House. The author opens the Scriptures and addresses hot-button issues that point to what's coming in these last days. To help you prepare, click on this link to order your copy.*

### **Prayer Power for the Week of May 5, 2019**

This week, heed the Lord's admonition to pray for His soon coming, more laborers for the harvest, worldwide revival and a renewed outpouring of His Spirit in our nation and around the world. Continue to pray for the president and those in leadership with him who are responsible for decisions that affect all of us. Remember Israel, the persecuted church and our allies. Read: John 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

*For more from Greg Laurie, listen to the podcasts included with this article!*

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# Rachel Held Evans, a Leading Figure on the Christian Left, Dies at 37

Rachel Held Evans, a leading figure in progressive Christianity, died Saturday. She was 37.

“This entire experience is surreal. I keep hoping it’s a nightmare from which I’ll awake. I feel like I’m telling someone else’s story. I cannot express how much the support means to me and our kids. To everyone who has prayed, called, texted, driven, flown, given of themselves physically and financially to help ease this burden: Thank you. We are privileged. Rachel’s presence in this world was a gift to us all and her work will long survive her,” says her husband, Daniel.

Evans was hospitalized last month for an infection. Doctors kept her in a medically induced coma to prevent seizures for weeks.

“Rachel was slowly weaned from the coma medication. Her seizures returned but at a reduced rate. There were periods of time where she didn’t have seizures at all. Rachel did not return to an alert state during this process. The hospital team worked to diagnose the primary cause of her seizures and proactively treated for some known possible causes for which diagnostics were not immediately available due to physical limitations,” Daniel says on the health update blog.

“Early Thursday morning, May 2, Rachel experienced sudden and extreme changes in her vitals. The team at the hospital discovered extensive swelling of her brain and took emergency

action to stabilize her. The team worked until Friday afternoon to the best of their ability to save her. This swelling event caused severe damage and ultimately was not survivable," Daniel says.

According to Religion News Service:

*Evans is best known for her popular blog and best-selling books, including New York Times best-seller A Year of Biblical Womanhood, Searching for Sunday and, most recently, Inspired. She also served on President Barack Obama's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.*

*In her books and blog posts, she wrote openly about her faith journey, which led her from Bryan College – a conservative evangelical school known for promoting belief in a literal, six-day creation – to the mainline Episcopal Church. Along the way, she chronicled her faith, doubt, honest questions and evolving beliefs with a sense of humor.*

*That didn't come without controversy, including pushback from more conservative Christians over "A Year of Biblical Womanhood," which celebrated an egalitarian view of women's roles in both marriage and the church.*

Evans inspired Christian leaders across denominations. Here's how many are reacting in the wake of her death:

*Sobbing over @rachelheldevans' death. My heart is broken for Dan and the children and for all of you who loved her so so much. I will spend the time I've been daily praying for her praying for all of you.*

*– Beth Moore (@BethMooreLPM) May 4, 2019*

*Tremendous grief: My dear friend @rachelheldevans has died. My heart is shattered. She helped so many of us better*

*recognize how expansive God's love is. I am the writer I am, the speaker I am, the person I am, because of her generosity.*

*– Jeff Chu (@jeffchu) May 4, 2019*

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*I can't believe it. Rachel, thank you for your heart. Thank you for your courage, your wit, and your grace. Thank you for being my friend. I miss you terribly.*

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*– Helen Lee (@HelenLeeBooks) May 4, 2019*

**Please pray for Evans' husband and children.**

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# **Prophetic Dream: God's Glory Will Be Your Rear Guard**

In March 2019, I dream