

Larry Tomczak: Is it Time to 'Reimagine' and Replace Spanking?

A favorite term used by "progressive" leftists is the word "reimagine." Don't be deceived, as the word is basically a euphemism to cover up tearing down and removing that which they want erased.

Here's an example: "Time to reimagine policing" means defunding police, free bail, freeing felons and replacing law-enforcement with "non-racist, compassionate social workers."

Many Marxist-leaning proponents of the new society they want to establish also call for us to reimagine the way we raise children, eliminating Scriptural practices. Reasoning with children and ignoring bad behavior are these activists' solutions for the utopian "family" (whatever form it takes) they envision for the future.

A popular film in theaters currently is "C'mon C'mon."starring Academy Award-winning actor Joaquin Phoenix. He has to care for a young boy who is "cute" but outspoken, obnoxious, manipulative, spews profanities and is encouraged to rant and scream when he's emotionally frustrated or caught running away. Critics hail the movie as a "heartwarming" story great for the holiday season, giving us a glimpse into 21st-century children.

The opportunities to learn to discern amidst offerings like this are in abundance today.

Loving Correction

Scripture tells us "The corrections of discipline are the way to life" (Prov. 6:23, NIV). We absolutely need to demonstrate

affection and affirmation regularly, but love is also expressed in another way. What we need is a clear biblical worldview on the subject of child raising so that both parent and child enjoy a positive result. The bottom line is, we need realism versus idealism 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 right in the sight of God and man.

Worldly Ways or Scriptural Standards

Don't you just love it when so-called marriage and parenting guests expound their views on TV in their world of Utopia? One celebrity woman has been divorced four times and yet goes on the circuit to promote her new book on romance and a happy marriage. Another celebrity couple who are living together with no children confidently share their "wisdom" philosophy about raising their future children by simply reasoning with them, affirming them and consistently building up their self-esteem.

Wait until these well-intentioned but way off base "experts" confront "strong-willed Grayson" in all his glorious disobedience and defiance one day. This is why seasoned veterans chuckle at this idealism and understand bumper stickers reading: "Insanity is inherited. You get it from your children."

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.

- “Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul” (Prov. 29:17, NKJV)
- “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction will drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15)
- “By mere words a servant is not disciplined, for though he understands, he will not respond” (Prov. 29:19, ESV)
- “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother” (Prov. 29:15, ESV)
- “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death” (Prov. 23:13-14, NIV)

God’s method for curbing harmful attitudes and nurturing healthy ones is not parents going ballistic, threatening, screaming, smacking in anger, tuning out destructive conduct, bribing with candy or banishment to a room to brood in resentment amidst their latest “Meltdown Madness.”

Reclaiming Not ‘Reimagining’

Research reveals that in America, up to 85% acknowledge spanking in some situations. Every state in America allows corporal punishment of children. Nineteen states employ it in the schools. Due to increased disciplinary problems in schools many are reevaluating their failing liberal policies, such as the Arlington school district outside Memphis, Tennessee, that voted to reinstate corporal punishment saying, “teachers need all tools possible.”

Prof. Robert Larzelere of Oklahoma State University, who

studied this subject for decades, states: "Backup spanking done calmly and in a consistent manner with defiant 2-to 6 year-olds, backing up milder forms of discipline like timeouts, is shown to be effective at changing behavior."

Marjorie Gunnoe at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, states from her research that "children spanked in a calm, consistent manner have better outcomes than children who have never been spanked."

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

An Acrostic Aid: .

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

O. OBEDIENCE: Spankings can occur if "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Eph. 6:1, NIV) is violated.

R. RIGHT ATTITUDES: We are to "serve the Lord with gladness" (, ESV), so persistent whining and complaining has to be addressed.

R. RESTORATION: Embracing and reassuring a child afterward enables us to avoid leaving them feeling guilty or rejected.

E. EXPLANATION: Taking time to explain the offense as well as enabling the parent to calm down (if needed) makes this essential.

C. CONSISTENCY: Loving correction requires an investment and persevering commitment ... "he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" (, ESV).

T. THOROUGHNESS: Shaping the will without breaking the spirit

requires being authoritative not authoritarian so the child experiences some pain versus simple “love pats.” “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant...” (Heb. 12:11).

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

O. OUT-OF-SIGHT: Discipline is administered in private so as not to embarrass a child.

N. NEUTRAL OBJECT: Scripture advises a “rod” (a small, flexible branch) for correction.

Question: “Where is the rod administered?”

God in His wisdom prepared a strategic place on the anatomy of our small children which has ample cushiony tissue and sensitive nerve endings to respond to Spirit-led stimulation. This “seat of learning” is located at the base of the back, above the thighs, located directly on the bottom of every child

In 50 years of child-rearing and family counseling, 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 lacks sense” (Prov. 10:13, ESV).

Here’s the Deal: We don’t need to “reimagine” how to train our small children but respect God’s way which is always best.
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