

# 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!