

GOD'S RENEWAL FOR HOUSEHOLDS

"Part XX: Renewing Household Families: Successful Child Rearing - Competent Child Discipline"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) When I was 5 years old and my brother was 3, we had to sit in church in front of my Uncle Dick while Mom and Dad were on deputation for the mission field. Dad had told us that if we were noisy, Uncle Dick had his permission to spank us with his huge "farmer" hands! Unknown to us, my Dad had told my Uncle what he had warned us about his huge hands, so the Uncle figured out a plan of action in case he needed to do some "corrective" activity in Church!

Well, in the service, Paul and I got to horsing around, and suddenly, the enormous, right hand of Uncle Dick appeared menacingly over the back of the pew like a first baseman's glove! We were so jarred by its appearance that we sat perfectly still the rest of the service!

Uncle Dick still loves to tell about what a "kick" he got out of our response to his hand, but some might think he was being cruel!

(2) On the April 13, 1997 television show of "20/20" hosted by Hugh Downs and Barbara Walters, I myself heard the statement that "the Bible is wrong in promoting the spanking of children." This statement is the result not only of recent secular studies, but the effect of a whole generation of Baby Boomers who were raised by Dr. Benjamin Spock's ideas! In fact, the President of the United States and his wife would agree with this conclusion by the experts on that show!

(2) However, admittedly, things have gone too far in the nation's departure from absolutes and values. I heard the television talk show hostess, Sally Jesse Raphael, on February 7, 1996 following a show in which harrowing family episodes had been revealed to her astonished audience make this statement slowly and deliberately into the camera: "A comedian always seems to be able to get a laugh these days by joking about family values. But I'm of the opinion that this country is in **desperate** need of family values of **some** sort."

Question: Should a parent discipline a child, pointing out right from wrong? If so, HOW?! After all, we can go all of the way from killing the child in child abuse as some have done to letting the child scream like a banshee in the grocery clerk's ears!

Question: My parents whipped me with a razor strap! Is that child abuse? Is it wrong to spank a child since 20/20 and the leaders of America think so?!

(We turn to the "Need" section of the sermon . . .)

Need: "As a parent, I am caught in a 'no-man's land' of confusion on the topic of child discipline! I know I should not abuse my child, but just letting him hold a screaming tantrum in the grocery cart in front of the annoyed world isn't productive, either! Any ideas?!"

- I. **There is a CONCISE format God has for godly parents to follow INSTEAD OF the WRONG model in handling children:**
 - A. **Parents** (*pateres* = both parents, not just fathers (cf. Heb. 11:23 with Ex. 2:1-15)) are to **stop** the **wrong** practice of frustrating their children to anger (*may parogidzo*), Eph. 6:4a (pres. impv. with subj. negation)!
 - B. To **do** so, they must use God's parenting method as follows (4b,c,d):
 1. They are to **nurture** their children (*ektrepho*), Ephesians 6:4b.
 2. They are to do so in **God's basic, rule-training** (*paideia*), 6:4c.
 3. They must **shift** from **basic** rules to **admonition by reason** in **later** childhood (*nouthesia*) Trench, Syn. of the N.T., p. 113 (Ep. 6:4d).
- II. **This sermon deals ONLY with BASIC, RULE-TRAINING: to give such training, parents can follow Scripture's directives as follows:**
 - A. Discipline, by definition as "training that **corrects**" (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dict.) implies a need for **uprightness** in the **parent!**
 - B. However, no parent and no child is in any way inherently upright!
 1. **All** humans have **sinned**, including **ALL PARENTS**, Rom. 3:23!
 2. That **sin** in all parents has left them inherently **depraved**, Jer. 17:9!
 3. By the same token, their precious **children** are **equally depraved!**
 - C. Thus, **all parents**, if left without God's outside help, are headed down the sin-greased slope of failed parenting, Is. 53:6; Mtt. 15:14.
 - D. Consequently, adequate **basic, rule-training** of a **CHILD** grows out of **GOD'S invasive involvement in child-rearing** as follows:
 1. **Step One** - The **parent** must view himself as inadequate to guide his child apart from Christ, and believe on Christ as Savior to be spiritually born anew and to receive the "parenting" Holy Spirit in his heart, John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:17 with John 14:16-18 NIV.
 2. **Step Two** - Then the parent must (a) confess acts of sin in his life for empowering by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God (1 Jn. 1:9), (b) rely upon the "parenting" ministry of that Spirit under Christ (Jn. 14:16-18 NIV), Gal. 5:16-23, and (c) constantly expose himself to Scripture's teaching for **accurate** insight on handling his child, esp. regarding

discipline, Dt. 17:18-20! **Thus equipped, not the PARENT, but CHRIST'S using the HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH the PARENT produces proper child-rearing!**

3. Step Three - In this condition, the parent can effectively follow Scripture's lead on basic, rule-training of the child as follows:
 - a. **Like GOD does with the PARENT**, the parent *in turn* starts to relate to his child with **unconditional love**, Jn. 3:16; Tit. 2:4.
 - b. **Like GOD does with the PARENT**, the parent **reveals to the child the correct and incorrect paths he will face along with their consequences and urges ONLY CORRECT action**, Gen. 2:16-17. (The parent must evaluate the child's ability to heed a given rule before making it. For example, a wise mother doesn't order her toddler not to fuss out of hunger in the store during his mealtime without providing a snack if she must shop then! **God** does this with **adults**, 1 Cor. 10:13; Ps. 103:13-18).
 - c. **Like GOD does with the PARENT**, the parent **consistently, correctively PUNISHES** the sinning child, Gen. 3:6-19. The use of the **spanking** as discipline for a child is **commanded** in Proverbs 13:24, so we fully **support** the practice! Yet, for a spanking to be corrective, (a) it must be done **whenever** a clear rule has been spurned; (b) it must be done with a **minimum** of pain needed to get the point across, Lam. 3:22-23; (c) it must be done in private so the child can focus on the sin without the issue being clouded by public humiliation; (d) it must be done soon after the sin to avoid confusing the point to be learned; (e) it must be done with the emotional self-control on the parent's part via the Holy Spirit 's governing to avoid abusing or frustrating or under-disciplining the child, Ep. 6:4b (f) and it must be followed by reaffirmed love from the parent so that the child is **encouraged to correct** his way! (cf. 2 Cor. 2:6-11 NIV)
4. Step Four - If the child **obeys** a rule, or **especially** if he **overcomes** a past failure to **heed** it, the parent should express **warm approval** as incentive for the child to **CONTINUE** in that path. Note how **God** does this in principle with **adults** in Dt. 29:24-28 with 30:1-9!
5. Step Five - If the **PARENT** learns that he has **erred** in any way in disciplining a child, he should **confess** it to God **and** the **CHILD**. This avoids frustrating the child, and teaches him that obedience is ultimately unto the **perfect HEAVENLY Father**. This act guides the child to follow **GOD** as does the **parent**!

Lesson Application: Successfully disciplining a child in basic rules can be done well for sure ONLY by a righteous GOD! Thus, the parent must get right with GOD to be USED as God's agent via His Spirit Who indwells the parent to disciple the child for good results!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon . . .)

One of the godly young men who were missionary martyrs at the hands of the stone age tribe, the Auca Indians was Jim Eliot. Jim was an absolutely outstanding young man who had a deep love for the Lord and had trained himself well in everything in life.

His now well known author and then wife, Elizabeth Eliot wrote about how his parents properly reared Jim in the book, Shadow of the Almighty: The Life And Testimony Of Jim Eliot, p. 26. There were five major points on child-rearing that are worthy of note:

- (a) All spankings were done in **private**.
- (b) Small matters of mischief were sometimes overlooked or spoken to depending on the nature of what was involved. However, **once** the parents made a **rule** or an **issue** out of something ahead of time, they always carried through by enforcing that rule or issue with the spanking as they felt empty threats were ruinous to developing a sense of justice in their children.
- (c) At the age of 14, the children were all told by the parents that they were responsible to **God** for their actions, and that **God** would deal with them! Incidentally, by then the children all knew the Lord as their personal Savior!
- (d) Also, every child was responsible to do a couple hours of chores about the home to teach responsibility!

With these guidelines, the bulk of which appear in the points in the message we have just covered, a young man was raised who became a missionary MARTYR! In his martyrdom, though he had the weapon at hand to have protected his life, Jim chose not to use it, but to be defenseless and to be slain by an Aucan spear lest the Aucas get a distorted view of the love of God and the Gospel of Grace Jim had struggled so to communicate to them! As a result, many Aucas know Christ as their Savior today! Thus, Jim 's clear thinking of "justice" instilled in him by his godly parental upbringing as it related to discipline has born great eternal fruits!

If we let the LORD work through us as did Jim Eliot's very godly parents who raised him this way in Portland, Oregon, we also will be effective seeing our children function for God's glory!