

Lesson 10: Disciplinarian

For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.

--Hebrews 12:6

The “experts” don’t like spanking. Educators, social service agencies, and medical authorities like the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association deplore corporal punishment. They call it ineffective discipline that could be replaced by other methods.

Now, I’m not a whole-hearted spanking advocate. When our children were growing up, my wife and I discovered a swift switch on the legs made a potent attention-getter. But the technique isn’t as important as the implementation. Given the murderous violence that erupted in our schools in recent years, it appears that when corporal punishment was banned, authorities tossed out discipline with it.

But it’s not just schools that overlook this necessary part of a healthy life. That is one reason Dr. James Dobson wrote the popular book, *Dare to Discipline*. It says something about our society when it takes daring for parents to discipline their children. Above all else, it suggests they are somehow intimidated from performing this parental responsibility.

Given the scary possibility that a mere swat on your child’s behind can result in a state worker showing up on your doorstep, I think that is true. I find it absurd to think of facing child abuse charges and possible imprisonment for carrying out a basic parental responsibility.

However, the problem is even more fundamental. For years, American parents have neglected the discipline of their children for fear of somehow losing their love or warping their personalities. But the Bible tells us that good training is an essential part of raising children. Without discipline, they run amok and reap a bitter harvest later in life.

This trend toward the suppression of discipline stems partly from the fact that some parents discipline in anger. That often leads to severe reactions and injures a child, both

physically and emotionally. But such out-of-balance behavior is not a reason to discard discipline. Such parents need better training themselves.

God assuredly frowns on any discipline administered selfishly, cruelly, or injuriously. Still, He never intended for parents to abandon discipline in raising their children. He, Himself, disciplines His own children.

As you look into His Word, consider the benefits of good discipline for training, correction, and guidance. Then thank the Father for not letting us wander off in any direction we feel like going.

Deeper Study

1. Hebrews 12:4-11 contains one of the best passages regarding discipline in the Bible. Read these verses and write out what thoughts speak to you from each one.

Verse 4 _____

Verse 5 _____

Verse 6 _____

Verse 7 _____

Verse 8 _____

Verse 9 _____

Verse 10 _____

Verse 11 _____

2. What do the following Old Testament verses reveal about God's motives and purposes for disciplining His children?

Job 5:17: Behold, how happy is the man whom God reprove, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

Proverbs 3:11-12: My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord, or loathe His reproof, for whom the Lord loves He reprove, even as a father, the son in whom he delights.

Proverbs 29:15: The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

3. What memories do you have of childhood discipline? How has that affected your outlook on this subject?

4. Can you conceive of a loving Father wanting to discipline you? Explain your answer.

5. Review the Scriptures used in this lesson. Write out several benefits of discipline and how they apply to your life.
