

There are a number of principles that apply to administering spanking and other types of punishments.

**First, the parent should be free from anger** when punishing so that the child will see the punishment as corrective rather than vindictive and so that the punishment will not be excessive. The parent should be sure that the child knows: 1) what he has done, 2) why his behaviour was wrong, 3) that his sin is primarily against God, rather than against the parent, and 4) that his parent loves him and is acting, under God, for the child's good.

In addition: 1) the penalty should be paid expeditiously, except where restitution for property damage and so forth is involved (long groundings are poor because they leave long periods for resentment and a barrier between parent and child for long periods of time), 2) the child should be restored to full fellowship with the parent immediately after being punished, and 3) the child should receive affection from the parent immediately after being punished.

The object that is used for spanking should have a firm surface (as opposed to being padded) so that it will cause pain without an excessive impact (the hand is too soft), and lightweight so that it does not jar the child excessively (the hand is too heavy).

However, it is important to recognize that biblical nurture and admonition is not equivalent to spanking and yelling; and biblical nurture and admonition is not equivalent to yelling until angry and then spanking out of anger.

Further, biblical nurture and admonition does not mean that a child should be spanked for every kind of offense. . .

Be sure to tell your child that you thank God for sending him to be your child. Also, be sure to include compliments, praise of both the deed and the child (Matt. 25:21), good expectations, parental approval, thankfulness, rewards, and both verbal and physical expressions of affection. And, be careful--if you are not complimenting your child more than you are criticizing him, you may discourage him.

Of course spanking is biblical and an essential part of child rearing. But God has given many principles for child rearing. It would be a poor carpenter that would use only a hammer; and it is a poor parent who knows no means for structuring his children's lives other than spanking.

Even though children are individualistic, and even though they respond to various ones of the positive and negative incentives differently during different stages in their development, relatively few spankings should be required through the years if the positive and negative incentives of biblical "nurture and admonition" are used.

Also, a child may become emotionally hardened to the physical pain of too frequent spankings; but if the child rearing is really "biblical nurture and admonition," then, throughout most of his developmental years, when the child disobeys, he should experience more emotional distress from disappointing God and his parents than physical pain from occasional spankings.

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# Central Mountains Baptist Church

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### DARE I SPANK MY CHILD?

By Wendell E. Miller



Q. I know that the Bible teaches that parents should spank their children; but I heard of an instance in which the parents faced the possibility of losing .. a child because they spanked him. Also, I have read that spanking a child may cause a child to grow up to be a child abuser. Is this true? Are there any principles to follow for spanking?

A. We have all read of horrible instances of physical abuse of children; and our government is operating within its God-given responsibilities when laws are enacted and enforced to protect children from physical harm, whether inflicted by their parents or by others.

However, whenever laws are made by man and enforced by man, injustices are bound to occur. At times the guilty will go unpunished; and, at times, the innocent

will be unjustly accused, convicted and punished. ....

Now with regard to the question of whether or not spanking could cause a child to grow up to be a child abuser, it is possible that spanking a child unjustly, too hard, too often, and by an angry and unloving parent could cause the child to grow up to act the same way (anger is a learned behaviour). ...

However, a child usually knows when he is guilty, usually knows that he should be punished, and even feels a need to be punished in order to reassure him that his parents care for him. So it is not possible that spanking in love causes children to grow up to be child abusers, ...

The idea that spanking is harmful to the development of children comes from humanism and the denial by humanism of the sin nature and other Bible teaching. These humanists believe that the child will grow up to be a well-adjusted citizen if only the parents do not ruin him by interfering with his normal development.

Of course, Christian parents must include spanking as a part of biblical nurture and admonition no matter what psychologists or sociologists say. The Scriptures teach that the parent who does not spank his child hates him, but that chastening the child is an act of love (Prov. 13:24). The Bible also says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15).

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# Our Home Disciplining Children

In Hebrews 12 we find that the discipline of the Lord has three characteristics :

**1. It's motivation:** \_\_\_\_\_, verses 6-8

**(Hebrews 12:6)** "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." [paraphrase]

**(Proverbs 13:24)** "He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly."

**(Proverbs 19:18)** "Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction."

**(Proverbs 22:15)** "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him."

**(Proverbs 29:15)** "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."

**2. It's goal:** \_\_\_\_\_, verses 9-10

**(Proverbs 23:14)** "You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell."

**(Proverbs 12:15)** "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise."



**3. It's method:** \_\_\_\_\_, verse 11

**(Proverbs 23:13)** "Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die."

**(Proverbs 29:17)** "Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul."

**(Proverbs 22:6)** "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."

**(1 Samuel 15:23)** "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, ..."

