

# Biblical Parenting – 11 Corrective Discipline

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## 1) Discipline

Education with teeth in it.

Two aspects of discipline:

### 1. Verbal correction

Prov 29:15. *The rod and reproof give wisdom ...*

However, as Tedd Tripp rightly observes: *A young child does not give proper weight to words alone. His attention is secured when those words are punctuated by a sound spanking (Shepherding a Child's Heart, 171).*

Therefore, there is also a legitimate, carefully controlled *physical* aspect to the godly discipline mentioned in Ephesians 6:4.

For older children (teens and pre-teens), verbal correction should be enough; however, it might need to be accompanied by loss of privileges, extra work around the house, and so on, in the replacement of a spanking.

### 2. Physical correction (a hiding)

Prov 29:15. *The rod and reproof give wisdom ...*

Prov 13:24. *He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.*

A hiding teaches children the important principle that *disobedience hurts*. It hurts now, and if you ignore God, it will hurt even more later in life and in eternity.

You're teaching the child that it is not safe to disobey

Galatians 6:7. *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*

## Typical excuses for not applying biblical discipline:

### 1. *There's a better way.*

Response: Disciplining is a matter of *obedience*, not selecting from a smorgasbord of alternative options.

Prov 3:11-12

God's plan for parents is modelled on the way He Himself disciplines His children.

2. *It's not loving.*

Response:

Prov 3:12. *For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.*

Prov 13:24. *He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.*

3. *It's too cruel.*

Response: Prov 23:13-14

A biblical hiding is *merciful*:

The discipline is over quickly and love can be reaffirmed immediately.

4. *It's not worth the effort.*

Response:

Hebrews 12:11. *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

Proverbs 29:15 Proverbs 29:15 literally calls this child *the one who is let loose*. A child with no boundaries or restraints, who fears no painful, biblical consequences, brings public disgrace to his parents—and more importantly—to God.

Parents need to set legitimate limits or boundaries and enforce them with a biblical hiding so that their children can learn wise character and conduct.

Proverbs 29:17

Well-disciplined children are a joy to be around; poorly disciplined children are not.

Parents who seek peace and rest by *not* disciplining their children are actually dooming themselves to the opposite. There is no peace or stability in a home without discipline. There is yelling, defiance, arguing, disobedience, tension, and frustration.

Unruly children are a comfort no one.

### **Worldly alternatives to biblical discipline:**

- Bribery: *If you come with Mommy, I'll give you a sweetie.*
- Emotional manipulation by making threats you have no intention of keeping: *If you don't come with Mommy, I'll leave you at the park all night or Daddy won't like you if you don't do what I say.*

- Time outs: Removing the rod from the rod—instruction *without* teeth.
- Contracts: *If you obey me, I'll do something in return.* Children should obey simply because it is right, not as a tit-for-tat exchange (Eph 6:1).
- Extended anger: *Don't talk to me. I'm still angry at you for what you did this morning.*
- Punishments that punish the parent more than the child: *You can't play outside for a week!*

Summary:

### Five proverbial principles for physical discipline:

#### 1) Start early—as soon as there is wilful rebellion (Proverbs 19:18).

Some parents worry about spanking their child in his or her first three or four years of life—as if it might somehow warp or emotionally deform the child. God takes just the opposite view. He encourages parents not to wait until their son or daughter's sin habits are ingrained.

Why let a child build up three years of entrenched sin habits before you start correcting him?

#### 2) Do not discipline in anger (Proverbs 19:18).

*The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.* James 1:20

Comment: Discipline is *instruction*, not *revenge*; therefore, it should never be done in anger. Tedd

If you get angry when your child disobeys, you must stop, pray, regain control, and then give your child a legitimate biblical hiding.

Note: Children will sin; therefore, parents don't need to react with shock, embarrassment, and anger when they do.

Children usually learn bit by bit, not all at once, and they will need instruction repeated many times over months and even years, including the physical aspect of instruction each time they disobey.

**3) Be consistent—requiring first-time obedience (Proverbs 13:24).** For discipline to be successful it must be swift, fair, and *certain*.

Ecclesiastes 8:11. *Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.*

The Hebrew word *diligently* in Proverbs 13:24 was related to the word for *morning* or *dawn*. Parents are to be eager—up with the dawn—to rightly discipline their children, understanding discipline as a rescue mission.

- Biblical discipline is *consistent*—given the first time (and every time) a child is bad.  
Exception:

Public places where the parents might be accused of child abuse. Consistency at other times will keep this exception from being a problem.

#### **4) Verbal instruction should accompany every hiding (Proverbs 29:15).**

The verbal instruction of a hiding should include:

- what the child did wrong
- how he can do the right thing next time  
The goal is not merely punishment; it is *correction*.
- his need for God's forgiveness
- a gracious confirmation of your love

Qualifier: Sometimes parents who have had read material that (rightly) emphasises shepherding a child's heart might have unrealistic expectations about the discussions they will have with their children during the verbal correction aspect of a hiding.

Small children often lack the intellectual development and self-reflection skills necessary to respond helpfully to "heart-shepherding" questions.

Three helpful questions:

- What were you feeling?
- Did what you did or said make the situation better?
- In what other ways could you have acted or spoken?

#### **5) Discipline attitudes not just actions (Proverbs 22:15).**

The goal is not merely to divest the child of ungodly actions, it's to get the foolishness out of his or her heart. Therefore, biblical discipline majors on *attitudes* as much—or more—than actions.

Never let your child do the right thing with a wrong attitude. When you discipline *attitudes*, you'll find that the sinful *actions* dry up too.

#### **Other guidelines for hidings:**

➤ Whenever he is present, Dad should be the one primarily responsible for discipline.  
Eph 6:4. *Fathers ... bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

1 Tim 3:4. of elders: *He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity*

Principle:

Whenever he is present, Dad should be the one primarily responsible for discipline.

Note: Most wives would love for their husbands to take a greater lead in disciplining the children.  
Husbands: that's a biblical longing.

Since, in most cases, Mom is at home with the children all day, she will do a lot—even the majority—of the disciplining. But if the kids are unruly, the responsibility to bring them into line is Dad's, and as a rule, he should take the lead whenever he is present.

- Reasons that spanking does not work:
  - lack of consistency
  - lack of persistence
  - lack of self-restraint (i.e., anger)
  - lack of effectiveness (i.e., not hard enough)
- For what should a child be disciplined?
  - Wilful rebellion of all kinds, including sinful actions and sinful attitudes (even if masked by external obedience)
    - Picking up your toys with an angry heart is no more obedience than refusing to pick up your toys altogether.
  - Repeated "forgetfulness" that is really a form of passive rebellion.
  - For "hearing problems"—when a child continually uses the excuse *I didn't hear you*.
  - *not* for childishness
  - *not* for being unable to do tasks beyond their abilities
  - *not* for accidents
  - *not* before the parent has all the facts.
- A hiding should be an *event*.

Life is stopped. You go to a specific place. Instruction is given. The hiding is administered. Love is affirmed. Life starts again.