



Home : Sermons : June 10, 2007

Child-rearing: The Loving Rod (*Prov 23:13-14*)

Introduction – This is an extremely important issue for us to consider in the life of the covenant community, not only because of the very practical instruction for parents but because of the pervasive, politically-correct attack that is coming upon us from the world and from within the church.

The Westminster Confession of Faith teaches, *“The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men (2 Tim 3:15-17; Gal 1:8-9; 2 Thess 2:2).”*

The medical, scientific, and academic communities can be a great blessing to us and they have certainly served mankind well in countless ways. We should be very thankful for them and for many of the advances they have provided for the general welfare. However, they must not become idols. They and their teachings must always fall under the authority of the Word of God.

Use of the Rod: The Loving Choice (*Prov 23:13-14*) – This proverb is given to parents who love their children. The command comes to tender parents who are tempted to withhold such correction. The encouragement is that he will not die (which tells you something about the kind of discipline which is being administered). It is very clear that the scriptures require spanking. But that requirement comes with a great promise for covenant homes. Forget the studies; God says that His way is effective. In fact, *Prov 20:30* teaches us, contrary to the studies, that “blows...cleanse away evil.” Biblical discipline is a large part of true cheerfulness in the Christian home.

Evidence of Love (*Prov 3:11-12*) – Not only is this true; this is instruction for your child. Tell them of your love for them and quote these verses as proof.

The Opposite of Love (*Prov 13:24*) – If you do not spank your little ones, you hate them.

Now is the Time for Hope (*Prov 19:18, 22:15*) – There should be much hope in God’s efficacious ways as you bring discipline to bear.

In Context of the Whole Series – These instructions are not being given to the general public. They are being given to those who live in covenant with and submission to God. They are given to those who are believing the promises for their children, so the discipline is in a context of holy confidence. They are given to those who are applying the rod by faith and not according to works, so they are not strict behaviorists. They are given to those who have a home with filled tanks, so that there is a real warm fellowship where children wish to return. They are given to those who know the hand of the Lord’s discipline themselves (*Heb 12:3-11*), so they are seeking to imitate their heavenly Father as parents.

Who Is Qualified (*Gal 6:1-2*) – All Christians must apply these verses when they seek to correct someone and so it follows that parents in particular must do so. If you are not correcting in a spirit of gentleness, you are not qualified. This means that you may not administer discipline out of anger, embarrassment, revenge or any such outburst. The motivation for giving a spanking is love with humility, seeking to be a neighbor to a fellow brother or sister. Discipline is not something you do that “*awful little child*,” but rather to a fellow heir who needs you to come alongside and walk with him or her through this trial.

In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen (*Eph 6:1-4*) – I want to emphasize the phrases, “in the Lord” in v1 and “of the Lord” in v4 at this time. Correction, admonition, and discipline should come in the name of the Lord and in the context of our children having been called by God to follow Him. This means that we must bring the Word of God to bear when we discipline. If they have disobeyed (*Eph 6:1*), if they have lied (*Prov 6:16-19*), if they have grumbled (*Phil 2:14*), if they have envied (*Eph 5:3*), if filthy talk (*Eph 5:4*), God’s name, God’s Word, and God’s displeasure are to be made known, much more so than yours.

The Father Loves You – and therefore, He disciplines His children. And when those children are little and under your care; He has commanded you, parents, to use the rod. The children need to be told this over and over.

The Son Has Redeemed You – and, as Matthew Henry’s father was known to say, they are to be “grabbed by their baptism.” If your child has been baptized, then do this. Remind them that Jesus has bought them with a price and they are no longer their own. Remember, the goal is not for your children to behave, but to be holy.

The Spirit is at Work in You – and therefore, remind them that God is using this discipline, not to punish them, but rather to instruct them and train them to fear the Lord, to understand that sin brings pain. Thank God with them for revealing their sin and for drawing them by His Spirit to Himself in this. You are believing, as you go through the liturgy of spanking that God is at work by His Word and Spirit. Tell your children this over and over.

Amen – The Word of God requires this kind of discipline in this kind of atmosphere. The Word of God promises that He will use this as a means of sanctification of your children. And many, many people will testify to you that, having loved their children in this context with the rod, the fruit of the Spirit was manifest more and more in their lives.

Dave Hatcher – June 11th, 2007