

## **MANY STRINGS MAKE STRONG CHORDS**

There is a mystical bond between caring members of a family. I can look at each of my children and feel that union. It is as if we were joined by many strings of mutual love, respect, honor, and all the good times that we have had together. The more good experiences we have together, the more strings that unite.

Where two or more people are living together, their interests, opinions and liberties sometimes clash. The strings that unite are often cut by selfishness, indifference, pride, self-will and the like. Where there is not a constant tying of new strings, family members soon find themselves separated by suspicion, distrust and criticism. The gap can grow so wide that the two can become virtual enemies.

When this happens between parent and child, it is a serious crisis. Unless new strings are tied, the two will increasingly grow apart. When a youth says something like, "My parents don't understand me," or "They don't care," it is testimony of a complete cutting of all strings.

## **PAPER HEARTS**

Recently, a father told us of a victory in this area. His first-grader came home from school and became preoccupied drawing and cutting out paper hearts. The father and son were close and often did things together. Seeing the boy's smitten condition, the father lightly poked fun at his activity. The child didn't see anything amusing. He turned away and continued his labor of love. Over the next several days, the boy would conceal his endeavors from the father. The father became aware that a confidence crisis had occurred. The child was withdrawn and resisted all overtures to fellowship with his father. The strings had been cut.

If, at this point, the father had accepted this wall as just a "stage"—or worse, become irritated and contributed further to the breach—this would have been the beginning of a breach that would have grown wider with the years. But the father was wise and took positive action. After school one day, he said to his son, "Hey Jessie, you want to go out to the shop with me? We will cut out wooden hearts." Jessie reservedly looked up and seemed to be cautiously analyzing his father's intent. After a moment, his facial expressions changed to believing delight, and he said, "Sure Dad, that would be great." As they worked together creating a wooden heart to be given to Jessie's friend, the wall came down and camaraderie was restored.

It is important that sons and daughters can trust their parents with personal, intimate knowledge. If there is a barrier in this area, when the time comes that the young man needs counsel, to whom shall he go? The feelings of a child are just as important and sacred as those of an adult. Always treat your children with respect. Never ridicule, mock or laugh at your child's ideas, creations or ambitions. The trust you desire to have when they are older must be established and maintained when they are young. If you have an older child with whom you have failed in this area, it is not too late to apologize and reestablish that trust. It may take a while to earn their confidence, so get to it.

## **CUT STRINGS**

I would say that most parents have allowed the strings to be cut and have not made a responsible effort to tie new ones. It is most critical that you understand and take care in this area. When the strings are all cut, there can be no effective discipline or training. Without that mutual respect and honor, further discipline only angers and embitters the child.

I talk with many parents who have lost contact with their child. For every one string that might tie them together, there are two situations to cut it. Not only is there no longer a bond, but there is a cloud between them that obscures understanding. The parent takes the child's withdrawal and resentment as rebellion (which it is) and brings out the whip lashes of the tongue and rod. Like a wild animal the child further withdraws into his own world of suspicion and distrust. Similar to the control of a warden over his prisoners, the rod can force outward compliance, but it will not mold character or tie the strings of fellowship. The parent feels the child slipping away, sometimes into the fellowship of bad habits or undesirable company. The parent's anger or broken-heart will never stitch up the breach.

The parent who resorts to sympathy tactics: "If you loved" or "You hurt me so much," or "Why do you do this to me?" may elicit token compliance, but will only cause the youth to yearn for the day when he or she can get away and be free. Many parents have thus driven their young daughter into the arms of an unwholesome lover.

The small child is often neglected and mishandled with little concern on the part of the parent because the child doesn't possess the means to manifest his hurt. By the time the parent is forced to admit there is a problem, there is a war zone of obstacles between them. What a child is at four he will be at fourteen, only many times magnified. Your two-year-old whiner will be a twelve-year-old whiner. The intemperate five-year-old will be an intemperate fifteen-year-old.

## **STRINGS LEFT UNTIED**

A mother came to us concerned for her fourteen-year-old daughter. She had been reared in a very protected environment and was outwardly obedient, but the parents felt that there was a breach in the family ties. When given a chore, the girl would obey, but with a sullen attitude. It seemed to this mother that her daughter was tolerating the family and was not at all pleased with the company. There were periods of withdrawal. She seemed to have her own little world. With no outward disobedience, there was

nothing for which to reprimand the teenager. This mother had lost fellowship with her daughter. The strings had long ago been cut. Rebuke or discipline would be fruitless, even harmful, until the strings of mutual respect and trust were tied.

### **THE THREE-YEAR-OLD TRUCKER**

As my wife sat talking, an altercation developed between the young mother's two sons, one and three years old. They both began to scream while tugging at opposite ends of the same toy truck. The mother hollered, "What is wrong with you two?" "He is trying to take my truck," cried the older of the two. "Billy, give Johnny back his truck," she yelled. After further peace-shattering threats and screams of protest, he reluctantly handed over the truck.

The younger child then defeatedly left the yard and stumbled into the house to stand beside his mother—thus punishing the other brother by the loss of his company. (It is an adult form of retribution, but children must learn it sometime.)

After the chastisement of loneliness had done its work, the older brother became repentant. Picking up his truck from the sand pile, he made his way into the house where he found the offended younger brother now sitting in his mother's lap being consoled for his losses on the battlefield. With a smile of reconciliation, he held his truck out to the younger brother. As the younger brother was about to accept the sacrificial peace offering, the mother turned to see the grinning child dribbling sand from his truck onto the floor. "Get that thing out of here!" she commanded.

Being engrossed in her company, she was not thinking of her children as human beings with complex feelings. She just saw another cleaning job to further add to her burden.

At this point a psychological transformation occurred in the child. He had just experienced a "repentance" that had cleansed him of anger and selfishness. Weighing his right to possess the truck against his brother's company, he had found that he valued his brother more. He was learning important social lessons about give-and-take. He was learning to share and how to control his possessiveness. His heart was surrendered and vulnerable. He had gone the second mile; and when he got to the end of it, he was shocked to find that no one cared. It really didn't matter. He had laid down his guns, and now he was being fired upon. If he was not going to be allowed to surrender, if they didn't care enough to accept his offering, he was not going to stand there exposed, grinning like a fool, while being unjustly blasted.

He didn't understand what all the row was about. Who could be upset about a little sand on the floor? After all, he had been playing in sand all morning—he loved it. As he studied the threatening face before him, you could see the little mental wheels turning.

Immediately the smile left and was replaced by wonder, then puzzlement, finally defiance. Suddenly, an idea came to him. It now being clear she was mad about the sand being dribbled on the floor, he raised his truck to examine it, then defiantly dumped the full contents onto the floor. To his satisfaction it worked. She came apart. She had hurt him and he had successfully retaliated. "Just look at her red face. That will teach her to attack me. Boy, I won this round."

This mother had missed the opportunity to accept the surrender of this rebel leader. Instead she had driven him back into the countryside to practice his civil dissent in defiance of the established authority. Like many rebels, he had no alternate plans for the future. He lived to be a rebel because of his hatred for the authority that he hoped to punish for perceived injustices.

Now, you may think that I am over-dramatizing the child's feelings. It is true that he could not tell you what he was thinking. Nor will he be able to understand these same feelings when at fourteen it becomes apparent he has serious problems. But, at three years old, the child's actions all demonstrate the root bitterness of a rebel.

If the parents don't change, when the boy becomes a teenager they will throw up their hands and say, "I don't understand that boy. We have raised him right, taught him right from wrong, taken him to church; and he acts like we are the enemy. We have done our best. It is up to the Good Lord now."

This mother is failing to tie strings of common respect. The seeds sown at two years of age come up at fourteen.

### **PROBLEM PARENTS**

Parent, if you are having problems with your children, just know that you are not alone. They are also having problems with their parents. One party is going to have to adjust in order to help the other. Since you are reading this book, and not the child, and since you are the more experienced of the two, and since God didn't say, "Children, train up your parents," the responsibility is completely on you.

### **CUTTING STRINGS**

I remember looking into the face of one of my boys and knowing that the strings had been cut. It was a sad thing to see him slip from the mooring and drift away. At the time I had not formulated the terminology, nor even recognized the principle; but I could see that there was a breach. A fault line was widening the gap. The fault was mine. I had pushed him too hard, demanded too much, and then been critical when he had not performed to my expectations. When, like a turtle, he withdrew into his shell, I could see that he had dismissed me. He had decided to live without me. There was too much pain in association with his father.

I didn't know how to define it, but being fully responsible for the training, I knew that it was my responsibility. I

immediately apologized, lightened up, revised my criticism, found the good in what he had done, and suggested an exciting outing. It took several days of me being sensible, fair, just, and kind to restore the strings of fellowship; but children forgive quickly and are restored if we will let them be.

## **GOD HELP THE FATHERS**

*“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).”* A father who teases his children to anger can expect them to do the same to others smaller than themselves. On more than one occasion, when scuffling with my boys, I have found myself having fun at their expense (*That was when I was bigger than they*). They remind me to play by the same rules to which they are bound.

Don’t laugh this off, fathers. If you make your little boy mad while you are having fun, you have created a bully. After all, weren’t you bullying him? The wrath you provoked in him will be stored up until he can release it on one weaker than himself. That wrath can only be put away by his forgiving you. He cannot forgive until he sees your repentance.

If the child is rooted in bitterness, you have a healing and restoration ministry ahead of you. Your heart and life must be fully surrendered to God or you are wasting your time. You will just have to try to stay out of his way. He will be rearing himself. His chances are not good, but don’t increase his bitterness by playing the hypocrite. It is hard enough to make it in this godless world when you have good support; but for a kid filled with bitterness, facing it alone, there is not much hope. Maybe the mother can make a difference. Often a boy just shuts out a father for whom he only has disdain and relates to his mother in a manner that may bring him along in an average way.

Father, if you care for your child’s soul more than your pride, then humble yourself, ask his forgiveness (even if he is just two years old). Then become a patient father and husband. Spend time with your children doing things that are creative—that give them a sense of great adventure or accomplishment. You can’t lead your child closer to God than you are yourself.

## **WHAT CAN I DO NOW?**

Tie some strings. You must be knit together with your child before you can train him. Confess your failure to God and to your child. Ask your child to forgive you for anger and indifference. At first they will suspect it is just a manipulative ploy on your part and will keep their distance; so you must begin rebuilding.

Don’t barge in and overpower them with emotion or a new philosophy. Be a friend. Do with them the things they enjoy doing. Be caring. Be more ready with your ear than you are with your mouth. Be very sensitive to their concerns. Tie strings until you have earned their respect and honor. If they sense that you like and enjoy them, they will respond in kind. When they like you, they will want to please you and will be open to your discipline.

The strongest chord of discipline is not found in the whip; rather, it is the weaving together of the strings of mutual love, respect, honor, loyalty, admiration, and caring. It is the difference in being “led by the spirit” and being “under the works of the law.” The law gives us direction, but only the spirit of grace gives us power. If you will cultivate fellowship with your child, you will have such cooperative compliance that you will forget where you last left the rod.

## **WALKING IN THE FATHER’S LIGHT**

I can remember an incident that occurred when I was only four years old. Several of us, about the same age, were walking along behind a row of houses when one of them suggested that we throw rocks at a basement window.

I can still remember my thought processes. As I considered doing it, I saw my Daddy’s face. He never told me not to break windows, but I knew he would not be pleased. I had no law to go by, but I had my father’s presence to guide me. It was not fear of punishment or scolding that motivated me. It was my fellowship with my father that I dared not jeopardize. To please him and enjoy his favor was my strongest impulse. I withdrew from the windowbreaking party and walked in my father’s light.

My father was not perfect. He wasn’t even the best of Christians, but I was not yet aware of that at four or even ten years of age. To me, he was law and grace. As I grew older, I slowly (sometime with a jolt) came to see him as just another struggling member of the human race. Still, I never outgrew that desire to please him.

But, as my confidence in him waned, my confidence in God grew. With the eventual transfer of my faith to God (as it should be), I found myself still motivated not by the law and a fear of hell, but by the face of my Heavenly Father. Today, I have a double lighted path.

Parent, above all, you must cultivate that kind of a relationship with your child. It is a painful thing to sin against your best buddy. If you can maintain this bond with your child you will never have a problem child.

## **SEEING GOD IN DADDY AND MAMMA**

When the child is young, the parents are the only “god” he knows. As he awakens to Divine realities, it is through his earthly father that he understands his heavenly Father. Fathers (and mothers also), you are the window through which your young child understands God. A child learns of the character of God through observing the parents. The parents do not have to be perfect, just a

mini-caricature representing a balance of God's personality. All that God is in infiniteness, the parents should display in the finite. The parents need not be all-powerful, just the child's source of strength. The parents do not have to be all-wise, just wise enough to guide the child and warrant admiration. The parents need not be sinless, just demonstrate a commitment to the good and holy. As the child sees the parents' humble dependence on and love for God, because he loves and respects his parents, he will love and honor the one the parents love.

As the child relates to the figurehead of authority (his parents), in like manner he will later be prone to relate to God. If, when the parents say, "No," they do not mean "No," then the "*thou shalt not*" of God will not be taken seriously either. Children with cruel fathers usually mature with a foreboding of their heavenly Father. Those disciplined to lovingly obey their earthly fathers are more ready to obey their heavenly Father.

## YOU CAN TIE STRINGS

If you feel the strings are cut, you will want to tie new ones.

Here are just a few suggestions on tying strings:

- First and foremost, look at your child with pleasure and smile.
- Enjoy their company and demonstrate it by inviting them to go with you when there is no reason but their presence. For the young, look at pictures or read a book together.
- Sit on the floor and play. Tumble and roll, laugh and tickle.
- Take them on outings of adventure, excitement and "danger."
- A ten minute trip to the tree-house to see their creations.
- Let them lead you out to the swing to show off their latest stunt.
- Make a kite or build a bird house together.
- Mother, teach your children to do everything that must be done in the house. Make it all a fun experience. Don't use the very young as slave labor, they will experience burnout. Let them bake cookies at three years old. When you are sewing, let the young ones sit on the floor and cut out doll clothes. When you are painting, let them make a few swipes.
- Fathers, by their participation, let the boys feel they are the protectors and providers of the house. If they can walk, they can carry in groceries or bring in firewood. Brag on their achievements.

The idea is for them to feel that they are very special to you, and to know that you find great satisfaction and delight in sharing with them. If you order your life so your children feel needed, they will desire to walk in harmony with you.

## "I LOVE MY BABY TOO MUCH TO SPANK HIM"

I observed a child possessed of continual discontent. His mother was vainly trying to elicit obedience to a simple command. He was miserable, constantly complaining, whining and angry. The mother, made miserable by the little tyrant's rebellious antics, was ill-tempered toward him. But she continued to plead with him as if she were trying to remember what it was she heard about "positive affirmation" and not "stifling his personal expression."

As an objective observer, concerned for the child's happiness and well being, I said to the mother, "Why don't you give him a spanking and make him happy?" The shocked mother, replied, "Oh, he will grow out of it. It's just a stage he is going through."

If she truly believes this is an inevitable, natural stage (a condition for which little Johnny is not responsible), why does she sometimes become enraged, demanding a different conduct or attitude? The mother, while excusing him and maintaining a "patient" vigil for the "stage" to run its course, and in spite of her verbalized philosophy, does blame the child. Down inside, she knows he should be—could be—decidedly different. His attitude problem is heightened by the criticism and rejection he feels from a disapproving mother and from the public.

We have progressed to the place where a discussion of the use of the rod is in order. Let's talk about spankings—sometimes called "whippings." "*He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24).*" This seems to go exactly opposite to the feelings of many parents and educators. The passage clearly states that a failure to apply the rod is due to the parents' hating the child. "No!" cries the mother, "I love my child too much to spank him." The parent who responds thus does not understand: 1) the authority of God's word, 2) the nature of love, 3) his (or her) own feelings, 4) the character of God, or, 5) the needs of the child.

## **1. UNDERSTANDING THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD**

The wise God who said: *"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not... (Mark 10:14),* "also said:

*"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying (Prov. 19:18)."*

*"He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24)."*

*"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (Prov. 22:15)."*

*"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die, Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Prov. 23:13-14)."*

*"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame (Prov. 29:15)."*

*"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul (Prov. 29:17)."*

## **2. UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF LOVE:**

You may have strong feelings that prevent you from spanking your child, but it is not love. The God who made little children, and therefore knows what is best for them, has told parents employ the rod in training up a child. To refrain from doing so, based on a claim of love, is an indictment on God himself. Your actions assume either God does not desire what is best for your child or you know better than He.

Parent, you need to know the difference between true love and sentiment. Natural human sentiment—often taken to be love—can be harmful if not submitted to wisdom. Love is not sentiment. [That is, love is not the deep feelings we often have in association with those close to us. Such feelings can, and often are, self serving.

Love is not an emotion at all. Love, in the purest sense, is goodwill toward and good doing for your fellowman. True love is disinterested. That is, there is no thought of personal return nor of personal loss in the act of loving.

## **I UNDERSTANDING ONE'S OWN FEELINGS**

An emotionally weak mother often looks to her child's clinging dependence for her own self-fulfillment. She finds a deep need met within herself as she constantly dotes over the infant's every want. Her consuming passion for the child, which she takes to be love, is too sacred to jeopardize. Her insecurity causes her to consider only what she perceives to be her loss in the act of spanking. She is afraid to do anything that might cause the children to reject her. If such is the case, she is not loving the child, she is loving herself. Her own feelings take precedence over the child's needs.

The pitiful look of betrayal in his poor little eyes just breaks her suffering heart. It would hurt her too much to obey God in training up her child. Because of her fear of personal emotional suffering, she neglects the rod. *"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24)."*

In her own need, she is so naive as to believe that her "sweet" child will grow out of it and be a wonderful person. She thinks, "Just give him a little more time; he doesn't understand yet."

To set aside one's own feelings for the purpose of objectively regarding the good of the child is the only true love. If a mother should smother her baby while kissing him, she has not loved him.

Her own anger may cause her not to trust her motives in corporal punishment. See chapter 3, PARENTAL ANGER. Then again, this distrust of the rod may go back to the memory of a tyrannical, unreasonable father. She may have vowed, "I will never be like my father. I will love my children. They will not fear me the way I feared my father." The father not only hurt her, he is now hurting her children by causing her to react in the opposite extreme.

Sometimes images from the past cause a mother to have deep foreboding every time the father spans the children. Mothers who have been conditioned to associate anger with discipline impute a motive of anger to anyone who is spanking a child. The child perceives the protectiveness of the mother and will whine for her when the father attempts to discipline. Her lack of commitment to the father's discipline prevents it from being effective and causes deviousness in the child. It is time to stop reacting to the past and start acting as God and sound reason dictate.

Some parents fail to use the rod because of peer pressure. They may be in disagreement with their own parents about child training. The modern parent is bombarded with propaganda, supposedly based on the latest psychological research, which villainizes Biblically based child rearing. The parents are shamed and caused to look over their shoulder before applying discipline.

## **4. UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTER OF GOD**

The parent who excuses himself from using the rod based on an excuse of loving the child too much does not well understand the character and methods of God toward His own people.

There is a current thought pattern that has edged into the Christian's thinking. It goes something like this: "Since God is love, He is not discriminating, demanding, vindictive, or vengeful." Essentially, they view the love of God as incompatible with the justice of God. It seems to them that He must be either one or the other. There is a vague, undefined sense that God was once vengeful, but is now passive, tolerant and ecumenical—the Universal Father. God is stripped of His balanced personality and defined in a non-threatening way. Heaven is well received; hell is suspect. *"Judge not,* "the most popular verse in the Bible, is quoted as if

God Himself could no longer discriminate between right and wrong. As much as God is love, so much is he holy, just, judgment and truth. It is out of His love of righteousness that He is coming in *'flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Thes. 1:8)*. "To choose one side of God's character as a model for our actions, while rejecting the other, can hardly be called virtue.

## GOD SPANKS HIS CHILDREN

Those who out of a magnanimous sense of righteousness choose not to use the rod are, by inference, condemning God. *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers then are ye bastards, and not sons (Heb. 12:6-8)."*

Then it says He chastens us *'for our own profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness (Heb. 12:10)*." A most profound statement! God does not have any sons who escape chastisement— *"all are partakers."* And, did He stop loving those whom he chastened? Quite the contrary, love was His motivation for the "spanking." Only through chastisement, could His sons fully partake of His holiness. He does it *'for our own profit.*" *No chastising for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous... (Heb. 12:11)*." God's chastisement is a painful "whipping." Our *'fathers of the flesh... chastened us after their own pleasure... (12. 9, 10)*." The Scripture not only condones physical "scourging," but promotes it as a means to holiness—when ministered for the son's "profit."

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The chastisement is represented as a sure sign of love: *'for whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.*" If there is no chastisement, it is not only an indication of not being loved, but of being a "bastard" So we see that out of the very love of God springs chastisement. Thus, our original passage in *Prov. 13.24, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."*

If God's love is expressed by the "whippings" He gives, then can we not love our children enough to chasten them unto holiness? I have heard a rebellious teenager say, "If they only loved me enough to whip me."

Recently, a mother told us that after cracking down on her children with a consistent use of the rod, one child thanked God for making his Mama sweeter. The increased spankings had reduced disobedience, causing the child to be more in harmony with his mother. He interpreted this to be a sweeter mother.

## 5. UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD

The very nature of the child makes the rod an indispensable element in child training and discipline. We will summarize the previous comments on the nature of a child (chapter 2) and then draw some important practical applications.

**SUMMARY:** *"They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies (Psalm 58. 3).*" The infant, through natural drives for food, cuddling and bodily comfort, soon learns that by falsely representing his need he can gain excessive indulgences. But due to his immature reasoning faculties, God does not count the lie as sin. *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17). Sin is not imputed where there is no law. (Rom. 5:13).*" The infant, not knowing *"good and evil (Deut. 1:39),"* is not held responsible for his lack of conformity to the law. Nevertheless, infants do lie. And, children issue forth with a multitude of other selfishly motivated thoughts and acts that will, upon their coming to the *"knowledge of good and evil,"* constitute a *"body of sin."* Though they are not now to blame, there will come a time when, through the development of the understanding, the conscience will be awakened, and for these things they will be counted blameworthy.

Your child is in a body of infirm flesh. The God-given drives toward the fulfillment of bodily needs and appetites form a constant and incessant occasion to lusts. The drive itself is not sin. Lust of the flesh is natural (*Deut. 12:15*). But when one is *"drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,"* and the lust conceives with opportunity, *"... it bringeth forth sin (James 1:14,15)."*

You cannot prevent your children from the life of testing that this body of flesh (skin, blood and bones, with all its passions and needs) will bring. But you can train them in the disciplines necessary to not be given over to a selfishly indulgent life. The rod is your divine enforcer. *"The rod and reproof give wisdom... (Prov 29:15)."*

Understand, we are not suggesting that a child can be trained into the Christian experience, only that the mind and body should be developed to its highest possible natural discipline. This cannot do other than aid the Spirit in convicting them of sin, causing them to realize their need for a Savior. We are talking about the lawful use of the law.

## NEGATIVE FEELINGS

Understanding the development of a child helps us to understand his needs.

Self-indulgence and an unruly spirit will produce emotional dissatisfaction. An undisciplined child will be insecure. Lack of

self-control produces anger. A failure to get one's own way causes self-pity. Unfulfilled lust results in restless agitation. Feelings of being treated unfairly precipitate bitterness. Because of this, both the child and the adult have an innate need to be governed. Otherwise, purposelessness and lack of identity result. *"A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame (Prov. 9:15)."*

As a child develops in his sense of "oughtness," any violation of his own standards produces guilt. Guilt is involuntary self-accusation. It is the soul knowing itself and not liking what it sees. The smallest child who knows he has failed in doing what he ought suffers guilt. Although the child's soulful faculties are not yet completely operative, nonetheless, a child who violates his budding conscience becomes burdened with guilt and self-loathing. A child who is so burdened will only become more vile when lectured, shamed, ridiculed, deprived of some privilege, made to go to his room, made to sit in the corner, given a painless whipping or a jerking around accompanied by threats. This actually provokes the child to anger. The parent, by these responses, has magnified the problem. The child may be induced through one of these measures to yield temporary compliance, but his heart of uncleanness is confirmed in its evil.

## SELF-LOATHING CLARIFIED

For clarification, I will give my definition of "self-loathing." In the extraordinary ignorance of modern psychology, there exists the assumption that man's major problem is "not loving himself" This comes from a failure to understand the association of the emotion of self-loathing, which comes from guilt, with the supreme motivation of self-love.

By creation, we naturally love ourselves. We think in terms of what will benefit us. *"For no man ever yet hateth his flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it (Eph 5:29)."*

By nature, every human values righteousness and expects it of himself. To not live up to your own standards is to experience self-condemnation (conscience) and to suffer the pains of guilt. The human spirit, given by God, comes equipped with a permanent, resident, divine judge (the conscience).

The higher one values his own good (loves himself) the greater his own despising (which is guilt) when he fails to achieve his goals of right doing. The subsequent self-loathing is nothing but self-rebuke for failure to benefit the person he loves the most— HIMSELF.

A child or adult who is self-loathing is, due to his self-accusing conscience, hating his own particular state or lot— precisely because of self-love. The more one loves himself, the deeper the self-loathing. If one truly hated himself, he would find great satisfaction in the negative things that come upon him. When a child is self-loathing, he is damning himself for known violations of conscience and failure to live up to his own standards.

Again, the guilt demonstrates that by nature the child innately knows he deserves punishment for his moral failure.

Therefore, toward understanding the nature of a child, a knowledge of the presence of guilt is essential in the application of chastisement. A spanking (whipping, paddling, switching, belting) is indispensable to the removal of guilt in your child. His very science (nature) demands punishment.

Most psychological problems are rooted in guilt. Guilt only occurs where one honestly judges himself to be worthy of blame. One may inappropriately be convinced of blame, but the guilt is nonetheless self-incrimination.

Parents who try to shame or humiliate their children into It behavior will see the power of a guilty conscience to curb some actions. But obedience thus rendered will only deepen the false guilt, ting the child further out of touch with true repentance and healing.

Guilt is never, in itself, restorative. That is, it does not tend toward less blameworthy actions. On the contrary, the guilty soul is a slave to every temptation. Guilt puts one out of touch with the normal restraining factors. The despair of guilt abolishes motivation toward right doing. The anguish of failure lowers expectations. Guilt lowers self-esteem to the point where one does not expect to do other than fail. This reality has caused the modern psychologists to view guilt itself as the culprit. To address the guilt is like dealing with the pain of a toothache, but not the tooth.

Those who suffer the consequential guilt of their misdeeds often seen inflicting pain or suffering upon themselves. This self abuse is an unconscious attempt to "pay the fiddler." The unwritten common-law of retribution pervades all of man's thinking. Regardless of the age, religion or lack thereof, education, or philosophy, all intuitively know that wrongdoing deserves and can expect punishment. This law is assumed even by those who give their life to denying it. With the first awakenings of consciousness, a child understands this to be the case. It remains a basic presupposition of life.

The guilt burdened soul cries out for the lashes and nails of justice. Your child cannot yet understand that the Creator has been lashed and nailed in his place. Only the rod of correction can preserve his soul until the day of moral dawning. That is why the soul of man never rests until the conscience has been pacified by a confidence that all indebtedness is paid. *"The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil. so do stripes the inward parts of the belly (Prov. 20. 30)."* *"Inward parts of the belly"* is a description of the physical sensations associated with guilt.

Stripes (*"scourgeth" Heb. 12:6*) are said to be to the soul what the healing blood flow is to a wound. A child properly and timely spanked is healed in the soul and restored to wholeness of spirit. A child can be turned back from the road to hell through proper spankings. *"Withhold not correction from the child. for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him*

*with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Prov. 23:13,14)."*

Father, as high priest of the family you can reconcile your child to newness of life. Guilt gives Satan a just calling card and a door of access to your child. In accompaniment with teaching, the properly administered spanking is restorative as nothing else can be.

### **COMFORTING ROD**

Do you comfort your children with a rod? If you have not seen the rod as a comfort to your child, you have missed its purpose. *"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me (Psalm 23:4). I will chasten him with the rod... (2 Sam. 7:14). Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes (Psalm 89. 32)."*

David, who experienced the rod of God's correction and was chastened for transgression, found comfort in the Divine discipline. He was comforted by the rod. It assured him of God's control, concern, love, and commitment. Children need to know that someone is in control.

*"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying (Prov. 19:18)."* Proper use of the rod gives new hope to a rebellious child. The exhortation is to not let their crying cause you to lighten up on the intensity or duration of the spanking. A parent's emotions can stand in the way of a thorough cleansing.

An unchastened child is not only restless and irritable in his own spirit, but causes the whole house to be in turmoil. *"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul (Prov. 29:17)."*

### **THERE WAS A MIRACLE HERE TONIGHT**

Recently, a young couple with five children came to us for advice. The wife had become unresponsive to her husband and irritable with their three children under five. "I sometimes feel like I am going crazy. I don't want to have any more children," she blurted out.

They stayed in our home for a couple of days submitting to scrutiny. After a little instruction, they went home and gave it a try. Two weeks later they were in a church meeting where I was speaking. Their children all sat on the bench with them, never making a stir. Afterward, the father, eyes filled with wonder, exclaimed, "There was a miracle here tonight and no one seemed to notice." As I was looking around for discarded crutches, he continued, "A whole service and not a peep! I can't believe it!" A little training and a little discipline, and the children gave them "rest" and "delight." Furthermore, the children were obviously happier. The Mother later said, "Now, I think I would like to have more children."

### **THE MAGIC WAND**

Don't think of the rod as a weapon of defense or a show of force; think of the rod as a "magic wand." The first time parents see its restorative powers they are amazed. Picture a child of any age who is miserable, complaining, a bully to the other kids. When you look at him, all you can see is the inside of a bottom lip. Every device has failed to bring relief. The kid feels that he is living in foreign, occupied territory. He is obviously plotting the day of throwing off the yoke. Bribed, threatened or swatted, he only gets worse. Fail to use the rod on this child, and you are creating a "Nazi." I still marvel at the power of the little rod. After a short explanation about bad attitudes and the need to love, patiently and calmly apply the rod to his back-side. Somehow, after eight or ten licks, the poison is transformed into gushing love and contentment. The world becomes a beautiful place. A brand new child emerges. It makes an adult stare at the rod in wonder, trying to see what magic is contained therein.















