

Philosophy of the Rod

THE TEACHING ROD

The growth of a child under the tutorship of the parents is time spent in God's moral workshop being fitted for heavenly citizenship. As the child develops, the parents should accurately recapitulate the moral government of our Holy God. The rod is the parents' main tangible aid to bring the child to understand the judgment of God—and eventually the grace of God.

To the small child, the father and mother are the guardians of all law, the protectors of truth and the dispensers of punishment and reward. The parents are a window through which the child gets his first impressions of the foundation principles of Divine government. If you make rules and do not respect them enough to enforce them, you will be making a statement about law in general. Your responses to transgressions are stage-playing the responses of God. By application of the rod they will understand their accountability to God. Unless all transgression, rebellion and meanness of spirit be treated as God treats sin, the child's world view will be false.

The military uses real bullets in training the men to avoid enemy fire. Replacing the rod with hollow threats would be to your children like replacing live bullets with firecrackers. It would get the mien killed later on.

Therefore, the proper use of the rod is indispensable to a complete world view, for the rod completes the concept of law and accountability. If temporal authorities do not honor the law enough enforce it with punishments, how could the child believe the great eternal authority will be any different?

THE FEAR OF GOD

A child must take seriously the moral law. *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10)."* In defining the root of sin, Paul said, *"There is no fear of God before their eyes (Rom.3: 18)"* The proper use of the rod teaches a wholesome fear. Do not fall victim to the modern rewriting of "fear" as "respect." For Jesus said, *"But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea I say unto you, Fear him (Luke 12:5)."* The Scripture makes a distinction between honor, love, and fear: *"Honour all men. Love the brotherhood Fear God Honour the king (1 Pet. 2:17)."*

Though we don't have *"the spirit of fear,"* we who understand eternity fear to be in opposition to the *"Avenger"* of all evil. Remember, you are preparing your child for real living in a real world and to face a real God in a real judgment of real accountability to a reward in a real eternity. This is no game; the rewards are great, the loss too horrible for a parent not to make this top priority.

UNDERSTANDING GRACE

The end a Christian has in view is not just submission to the rule of law, but that the child should understand the grace of God. Only through the naked sword of the law do we understand grace. White is invisible until it is placed against a dark backdrop. The law is *"our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ (Gal. 3:24)."* God could not show Himself on Mount Calvary until He first showed Himself on Mount Sinai.

By strictly enforcing the rules of the household through legislation, accountability and punishment, you not only teach them to fear and respect the Lawgiver, but you create opportunities to demonstrate grace. What a sacred responsibility!

Having clarified some important issues on the application and philosophy of the rod, let us return to our discussion on training.