

What is Biblical spanking?

There are two essential practices of biblical parenting. One is positive (instructing); and one negative (correcting). As an aircraft requires two wings to keep moving forward so both instruction and correction are essential. Without the wing of parental instruction and loving affirmation, the single wing of correction by itself will exasperate a child (Eph. 6:4; col. 3:21). With only the wing of instruction and love and no wing of correction it will exasperate the parent (Prov. 29:15)! Spanking is neither the starting point nor central point of discipline. Its climate is love with verbal instruction and verbal correction. Prov. 29:15

What does biblical spanking look like? It's the parent's calm, firm response to their child's clear disobedience and disrespect by infliction of pain (spanking) in a dignified, controlled, non-abusive, consistent **manner** in the **context** of loving affirmation and clear instruction, **only after** the child has not responded to verbal correction (reproof – Prov.29: 15). Its **goal** is imparting God's wisdom into their child, **motivated** by loving concern for the child's future well-being, and **rooted** in obedience and trust in God.

What about verbal correction instead of spanking?

The Bible indicates child correction had two forms: verbal reproof and physical discipline (spanking). "The rod (spanking) and reproof (verbal correction) give wisdom. But a child left to his own way brings his mother shame" (Prov. 29:15). Verbal correction is the starting point in child correction.

1. Verbal correction is an essential part of child correction
2. Verbal correction is clear, firm yet gracious confronting of the child's disobedience or sinful attitude calling them to repent to God ~~and the parent~~.
3. Verbal correction must never morph into arguing with, pleading, berating or threatening the child. The wrong manner of verbal correction can be equally as harmful to a child as the wrong manner of spanking.
4. The "rod" (spanking) must be practiced if the child does not respond obediently to verbal correction (reproof). Prov. 29:15; 23:13-16

Why should parents spank their child?

1. God's command. Prov. 22: 15;19;18; 23:13-16
2. God's wisdom. Prov. 1:7; 2:5-7
 - a. It is God's plan rooted in His understanding of your child's sinful heart. Prov. 22: 15; 23:13-14; 29:15
 - b. It is contrary to parental intuition or cultural wisdom. Prov. 13:24; 23:13; 14:12; 12:15

3. The Child's good.

It helps not harms the child if done God's way. It assists him, not angers him. Prov. 23:13-14; 22:15

- a. It removes selfish, sinful habits. Prov. 22:15
- b. It gives the child wisdom. 29:15; 23:15 It prevents a child from growing up to be a fool.
- c. It rescues from inevitable misery later in life. Even premature death which their unbridled foolishness will cause. 23:14; 19:18

3. The Parent's love of their child. 19:18; 3:12; Heb.12:5-11

- a. Withholding correction is harmful to the child. It is often, ultimately a parent's love of self that compels them not to discipline their child. Prov. 13:24

" Thus, withholding appropriate spankings is not a sign of superior love for one's children, but rather a signal that one loves something, or someone, more than his child. Perhaps the parent loves himself (avoiding the personal pain or self-discipline that comes with disciplining his child) more than his child, or perhaps he loves the affirmation and approval of others (who may disapprove of corporal punishment) more than he desires his child's welfare." - Dr. Kenneth Kitchen, Proverbs: a Mentor commentary. pp. 296-7

- c. Withholding child spanking is detrimental to the child's well-being. Prov. 19:18

- d. Withholding correction from a child is compared to child abuse Prov. 19:18;29:15.

*"The "Do not" signals the negative command that shifts from the external act of discipline to the inward disposition . . . the imprecise antithetical parallels imply that the father's hope in discipline is to impart to his clinical offspring eternal life, the opposite of death, and that a failure to discipline the son is tantamount to participating in killing. Psychologically healthy parents do not consciously desire to kill their children. **But if they do not employ the God-given means of verbal reproof to prevent acts of folly and corporal punishment to prevent their repetition, they are in fact unwittingly party to the worst punishment, his death (5:21).**" - Dr. Bruce Waltke, The Book of Proverbs. Pg. 112.*

4. Parent's responsibility and accountability. Ephesians 6:1-2; Prov. 19:18; 29:17

5. Parent's joy. 29:15,17; 23:15-16; 10:1

When should parents spank their child?

1. When there is no response to verbal reproof. Prov. 29:15
2. Whenever there is clear disobedience to parents. Eph. 6:1; Prov. 22:15
3. Whenever there is clear disrespect for parents. Eph. 6:2-3

How should parents spank their child?

1. Carefully - timely. After other biblical means of correction fail. It's only one aspect of biblical training. Prov. 13:24; 23:13; 29:15; Eph. 6:4
2. Immediately. Prov. 13:24. Don't withhold discipline. The word diligently meant 'early' or urgent. Delaying correction until multiple threats or pleadings trains a child to delayed and conditional obedience. This sets a climate in the home of continued disharmony, agitation and frustration.
3. Lovingly. Prov. 13:24; Eph. 6:4
Not in anger. Not harshly. Not capriciously. Not vengefully.
4. Wisely. Prov. 1:8; 2:1-6; 3:1; 4:1-4, 14-15, 20-27; 29:15
In the context of careful explanation of God's wisdom and consequences.
5. Painfully. Prov. 23:13 The child must experience enough discomfort that dissuades him/her from continued disobedience.
6. Consistently. Diligently meant early and urgent. Prov. 13:24; 23:13
7. Dependently. Prov. 19:18. Parents need to trust in God as they train their child.
8. Hopefully. Dependently and hopefully relying on God to work.
Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 17

**Successful parents are focused on their faithfulness to God
not the response of their child.**