

## **“SPARE THE ROD, SPOIL THE CHILD!”**

### **Part 1**

This statement connected with child-rearing is overused and not biblical. Did you know that? It is a default statement used to support spanking as part of the disciplinary process. In a series of articles, we will be looking at where this statement came from, what the Bible actually says and how to apply it in parenting.

#### **Where did it come from?**

In the book of Proverbs, the word “rod” is used nine times. The verses have to do with the disciplining of children by parents. Over the years, rather than a directly quoted verse from Proverbs, we have settled for a substitution of man’s word in place of God’s Word. As we look at man’s word only, many assumptions and excuses can be made by parents regarding actions they are taking or have taken with their children. This statement implies that if you do not spank your children then they will be spoiled. To spank for spanking’s sake would be an incorrect response of any parent. It would be easy to fall into that trap by making it the desire of our hearts to not have spoiled children! You can see how we need to take the council of the Word of God and actually find out what the Proverbs say concerning this issue. As we look at the Proverbs, please keep in mind that they are written not as promises but as practical wisdom to follow as we live out our lives.

**“He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.” Proverbs 13:24**

On Sunday morning, Bob mentioned the heart of murder in a child having a tantrum and that ignoring it is not an option. We are told today to ignore these issues by well-meaning doctors, but the Word of God will instruct us differently. In this particular verse is the word *careful* which in the Hebrew means “diligence, to seek early, to seek earnestly”. Following this, the word *discipline*, which means “correction”, is also used. If we apply it to the tantrum being thrown by our child, then we would seek earnestly to correct the behavior displayed from the heart of murder. In earnestly seeking to correct with diligence, we would be in the process of training right from wrong.

The important message of this verse is responsibility of parents to train through correction if necessary. We have a responsibility that we have to live up to, or else our children suffer the consequences. This responsibility is borne out of our love for our children and our desire to be obedient to God. As parents we have to take a good long look at ourselves to see if we desire what is best for our children or what is easiest for us. This is a lifelong endeavor for each of us because it displays discipline in our own lives, exactly what we are to be teaching our children. If we struggle with discipline in our own lives, we may be hesitant to expect disciplined behavior from our children.

God loves us, and He disciplines us for our good. In Hebrews 12:6a we read, “because the Lord disciplines those he loves.” If God, who is the perfect Father, disciplines His children, shouldn’t we do the same? God does not ignore our sin and hope it will go away. He convicts us of it and disciplines us for it. We suffer the consequences we have earned because of our sin. But in all of this, there is never a question of God’s goodness or His love. He has proven Himself beyond our understanding, and we can trust Him.

We have a responsibility before our Father, let’s follow through with it.