

Discipline: Engaging the heart

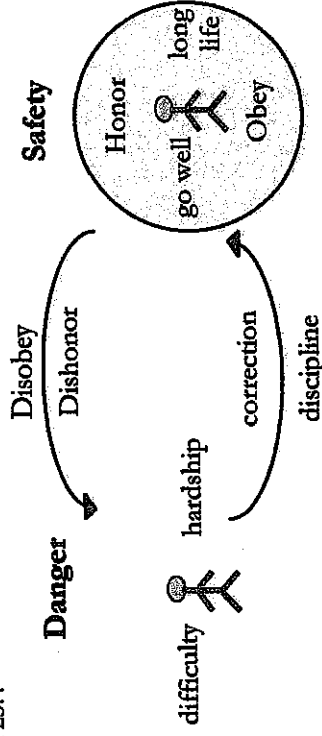
*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

Psalm 23:4

The Circle of Blessing: Shepherding a Child's Heart, Ted Tripp

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

Ephes. 6:1-3



The Rod: In scripture (Ps. 89:30-34; Prov. 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14; Num. 21:4-8; Ezek. 20:33-44; John 2:12-17; Luke 1:5-25, 2:57-80; Acts 9:1-19) The Lord's judgment of his people often accompanied by intense, swift hardship brought on as a direct consequence of wrong-doing (disobedience, rebellion, willful distrust, etc.); for the sake of correction and restoration; clearly signals "you don't want to go this way".

The Rod in miniature: Spanking

The rod is a parent, in faith toward God and faithfulness toward his/her children, undertaking the responsibility of careful, timely, measured and controlled use of physical punishment to underscore the importance of obeying God, thus rescuing the child from continuing in his foolishness until death. ~ T Tripp, p. 108

WHAT IT IS . . .

- done in context of loving relationship, as an expression of love and commitment (Hebrews 12, Psalm 89: 30-34, Prov. 13:24)
- motivated by desire to save child from greater pain/suffering later (Prov. 23:13-14)
- embedded within full-orbed communication with child

WHAT IT IS NOT . . .

- not the right to unbridled temper
- not the right to hit our children whenever we wish
- not venting of frustration

- not retribution
- not associated with anger

When: Between 1-5-ish years of age;

- in response to clear disobedience to a directive that's been heard and is within their ability to understand.
- Dancing on the edge of disobedience: excuse, delay, and complaint. Doesn't reflect a heart that is running *from* evil, but rather *toward* it.

How:

1. **A private place** - protects child's dignity; gives you chance to check your own heart
2. **Clarify offense** - tell what child has done or failed to do
3. **Secure acknowledgement** from the child of wrong done, if able
4. **Restate purpose of spanking** - to restore child to place in which God has promised blessing (submission to parental authority): "It's not safe for you to not listen to Mommy. I love you and so what I tell you to do is for your own good. When you refuse to listen, then I need to help you know how serious this is, and choose better."
5. **Communicate number of swats** - reassures child of that you are in control of yourself
6. **Remove pants/diaper, and lay over lap to administer spanking** - with hand; needs to hurt to be effective
7. **Take up on lap and give hug, expressing love** - demonstrates restoration of relationship
If restoration isn't happening:
 - check your own heart: may need to ask for forgiveness for something mishandled in process
 - check child's heart: if hard, unrepentant heart, may need to spank again.
 - check consistency: may have been neglecting heart issue for too long, or too sporadically
 - accept that this may take time and can't be forced
8. **Consider with the child if there is anyone else s/he needs to be reconciled with** (God, sibling, friend, etc.)
9. **Pray with child**

Cautions:

- may be used too rigidly or exclusively, without compassionately entering into our child's struggle against sin.
- may not be in a place to engage in this in a healthy manner because of own anger level
- not everything is disobedience. Possible underlying factors: physical limits, immaturity in self-expression/self knowledge, fear/anxiety, etc.

Parenting Panel questions:

1. How do I handle when my child disrespects me (talking back, hitting, etc.)? (Valerie)
2. How do I handle sibling conflict (hitting, fighting, etc.)? How do I teach empathy and kindness, beyond modeling it? (Kristin)
3. What forms of discipline are to be used as children age? How does grace factor in with discipline? (Barb)
4. How do I communicate with extended family (Grandparents) about how we discipline? (Tracy)
5. How do I build consistency with my husband around discipline? How do we strengthen our marriage w/ such focus on kids? (Kristin)