

## *An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)*

### **Spanking A Child Is A Carnal Act Of Pleasure**

#### **Scenario:**

You have been invited into the home of a brother and sister in Christ. They have three children that are all under the age of twelve. You are all eating a meal at the same table. During the meal, one of the children throws food at the father and laughs. The father and mother take the child out of the room. They come back moments later. They have given the child a time-out. Moments later the child runs back into the room screaming and crying. The mother hugs the child and ends the punishment. They allow the child back to the table. The child continues to misbehave. At that point, you state: *“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him”* (Proverbs 22:15).

#### **Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:**

The father gets irritated by your statement. He then responds that you should read Hebrews 12:9-10. He says: “Our child is acting out because of stress. Having company is stressful. We understand and are not going to correct something that is not under our child’s control. Spanking a child is carnal. It is only a Old Testament thing. We won’t do that to our children. It is archaic. It is carnal. It is hateful. The way we raise our children is not your business.”

#### **A Later Statement Is Made:**

The mother states: “There is an article that I am going to send you a link to. You should read it. Hitting a child is abusive. It is an old school parenting tactic that we should know better than now. Our child’s therapist agrees that timeouts and positive reinforcement are the right ways to teach a child.” You then get a text message with this link in it: <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/spanking-discipline-or-abuse/>

#### **For Discussion:** What do you see in those statements?

- It’s great to see saints being hospitable (**Matthew 25:31-46, Romans 12:13, I Timothy 5:5-10, Titus 1:8, Hebrews 13:1-2, I Peter 4:9, and III John 1:1-11**).
- A child misbehaves. Not a big surprise. They need taught (**Proverbs 22:6**).
- **Proverbs 22:15** is a very clear and concise passage. Nothing needs explained there.
- Here is a question that we will later address in my notes. Is this your business? Assuming you’re in a right place to even address this (**Matthew 7:1-5**), how could it have been done in a more expedient way? Do you know all that’s going on (**Proverbs 18:13**)? Is there a problem? Could there be more going on with this child’s behavior than meets YOUR eye?
- I spanked all three of my children. Yet, there were times wherein so-called brethren would judge my mentally retarded daughter’s behavior and our response (or in their opinion our lack of response). They did not know our circumstances. At

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times, it seemed [I say seemed] that some might have made a carnal judgment (**John 7:24**).

- This situation causes a defense to be made. Now we are getting into an error that will cause greater concerns and requires a response. Instead of just reading **Hebrews 12:9-10**, one should read more into the context. If you start at **Hebrews 11:1**, that's the greater picture. Or, even in a shorter read, start at **Hebrews 12:1** and read through **Hebrews 12:17**.
- **Hebrews 12:9** should not need explanation. Children ought to reverence [regard; respect; Strong's # 1788] their parents (**Exodus 20:12**, **Deuteronomy 27:16**, **Matthew 15:4**, and **Colossians 3:20**).
- What does this man's usage of **Hebrews 12:10** mean? There are multiple possibilities. He could mean that how he disciplines his child is up to what seems good to him. He could be misunderstanding the word "pleasure".
- What does **Hebrews 12:10** mean? Many get hung up on the translated word "pleasure". That word means: "to think; by implication, to seem (truthfully or uncertainly): — be accounted, (of own) please(-ure), be of reputation, seem (good), suppose, think, trow. to be of opinion, think, suppose; to seem, to be accounted, reputed; it seems to me; I think, judge: thus in question; it seems good to, pleased me, I determined" (Strong's # 1380). A clearer translation is: "*For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness*" (AV 1901). The Lord was NOT condemning the parental correction of a child (**Deuteronomy 8:5**).
- Why isn't this behavior under this child's control? Is something wrong with this child? We don't know. Don't assume that our brethren tell us everything going on in their lives. Some may hide in a bad way, some may just not want to burden others. For good or bad, we must understand that we may not know everything going on (**I Timothy 5:24-25**).
- Spanking a child is NOT just a carnal thing. The intent, behind proper physical punishment of a child is about the child's soul (**Proverbs 23:13-14**).
- The idea of "it's an Old Testament thing" is false too. **Ephesians 6:1-4** applies today and that context brings the "Old Testament" into this discussion (**Leviticus 19:3**, **Deuteronomy 5:16**, **Proverbs 1:8**, **Proverbs 6:20**, **Proverbs 23:22**, and **Proverbs 30:17**).
- To say that spanking a child is hateful is a sinfully ignorant statement (**Proverbs 3:12** and **Proverbs 13:24**).
- Furthermore, how many Scriptures are we to learn from (**Luke 4:4**, **Romans 15:4**, and **II Timothy 3:15-17**)?
- There is the need to rightly divide [properly handle] the Scriptures (**II Timothy 2:15** and **II Peter 3:15-18**). We have to see that the Old Law is not a binding law today (**Romans 7:1-6**, **Ephesians 2:11-17**, **Colossians 2:4-14**, and **Hebrews 9:15-10:22**).
- There are disciplinary actions of parents under the Old Law that do not apply today (**Deuteronomy 21:18-21**). We don't have elders of a city today. We don't stone people today. You can see these changes if you honestly study the word of God (i.e. **Leviticus 20:10** and **John 8:1-11**). Under the New Covenant, space for repentance needs to be given (**Luke 15:11-32**).

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- There is room for discussion on minding one's own business (**II Thessalonians 3:11** and **I Peter 4:15**) in this case. A man is head over his own house as Christ is the church. Discipline of this child is part of his responsibility (**Ephesians 5:22-6:4**). This is used even when judging the qualifications of an elder (**I Timothy 3:4-5**).
- Disciplinary measures God desires (**Proverbs 19:18**, **Proverbs 23:13-14**, **Proverbs 29:15**, and **Proverbs 29:17**).
- One cannot ignore instruction (**Deuteronomy 4:9**, **Deuteronomy 11:18-19**, and **Proverbs 4:1-5**).
- Using the Lord as our example (**Ephesians 5:1**), proper correction is an act of love (**Revelation 3:19**). It does have to be measured though.
- The later statement, made by the wife/mother, blows this up more. It is outright false on every level. First off, to turn to a worldly source for parenting instead of the word of God is an error (**Psalms 33:11**, **Proverbs 19:21**, **Isaiah 8:19-20**, **Isaiah 30:1**, and **I Corinthians 1:18-3:19**).
- I would comment on the child having a therapist, but again we do not have enough information (**Proverbs 18:13**). The child could have a physical disability, that has nothing to do with parenting. However, as the Scriptures in my previous point address, to listen to a person of the world over the word of God is SINFUL!
- It must be taken into account that this couple is actually teaching a false doctrine. Where is this situation headed now? That cannot be overlooked (**Romans 16:17-18**, **Galatians 5:7-9**, **Ephesians 5:6-11**, **Colossians 2:4-23**, **I Timothy 1:3-7**, **Titus 1:10-14**, **II John 1:6-11**, and **Revelation 2:14-16**).
- If there was a genuine concern and the desire was a **Galatians 6:1-2** goal, what could have been done differently? Could you have addressed this, after the matter, with the man who is responsible for the discipline of his children (**Ephesians 6:4**)? Where are they on their spiritual journey and could that matter (**I Corinthians 3:1-3** and **Hebrews 5:8-14**)?
- Regarding the wife/mother, could it have been handled in a way wherein older sisters in Christ are asked to be involved (**Titus 2:3-5**)?
- This whole situation is unfortunately, at the stage it ended, more than just a parental correction discussion. It will take hard work to resolve in a Scripturally unified manner (**Ephesians 4:1-3**). If it cannot be Scripturally resolved, congregational action will have to be taken (**II Thessalonians 3:6; 14-15**). While poor judgment may have been used, the sinful actions that came forth cannot be ignored.