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A Form of Punishment, Not Discipline

Traumatizing

Whooping can be very traumatizing for children. I remember playing Jenga with my older brother. He pulled one of the blocks and caused the tower to fall. Some of the blocks fell on my hand and I began to cry loudly while he tried to shush me. I was not even crying because I was in pain, I was crying due to the fact the tower fell down. My father (his step-father) walked in, yelling “What happened?”. I pointed to my brother and tried to get the words to come out but was too frightened to do so. My father, assuming my brother had thrown the blocks at me, picked up the blocks and began viscously throwing them at my brother. Despite me not being the person who was receiving that punishment, seeing that filled me with guilt that lasted for years, especially since I was young. I thought my brother hated me for having got him in trouble. This goes to show how traumatizing it can be when parents use fear and violence to correct their children.

“Spare the rod, Spoil the child.”



<https://www.relavate.org/the-bible-and-children/2022/7/16/what-is-the-truth-about-spare-the-rod-spoil-the-child>
https://www.reddit.com/r/Christianity/comments/8m0uwz/spare_the_rod_spoil_the_child/

“Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.” This is a Bible verse from Proverbs 13:24. Growing up in my household, I heard this verse being talked about a lot among the adults and I never dared to question the interpretation of this verse, seeing as doing so would result in me being “disrespectful”. The adults in my family would say that this verse means that if you do not whoop your child, you are spoiling them or not disciplining them, and in doing so, you are not doing a proper job as a parent. For the longest, I believed that this was the meaning of that verse as well and that in order to properly raise a child, they must be whooped when they make mistakes or do wrong, but as I

grew older and gained a better understanding of disciplining children, I began to realize how wrong that mentality is and how people have misinterpreted the meaning of Proverbs 13:24.

The Real Meaning of Proverbs 13:24



<http://www.21st-century-christianity.com/kids-mission.html>

For many centuries, the Bible has often been misinterpreted. This is due to people who just read the Bible and run with the information they see or just read it to confirm or disprove their own biases, rather than studying the Bible. In the King James Version, Proverbs 13:24 reads as follows: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." The Easy-to-Read Version translates this to simple terms as such: "If you do not correct your children, you do not love them. If you love them, you will be quick to **discipline** them." To get to the point, this verse that many parents use to defend hitting their child does not in any way, from the most complex to the simplest translation, support the whooping of children. It says to **discipline** your child, not to **punish**, which is what whoppings are. There is a big difference between discipline and punishment but people get the two confused as often as they do with fact and opinion.

The Difference Between Punishment and Discipline



<https://www.pricelessparenting.com/punishment-versus-discipline>

There is a very big difference between discipline and punishment. Discipline is the process of **guiding** a child to show them acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Whereas punishment is meant to inflict physical or emotional pain, embarrassment, and/or shame, which whoopings fall under. In her article, “The Difference Between Punishment and Discipline”, Amy Morin states, “While punishment focuses on making a child suffer for breaking the rules, discipline is about teaching him how to make a better choice next time.” I completely agree with her statement and believe that using discipline will better prepare a child for the outside world as they would gain a better understanding of skills such as responsibility, problem solving, critical thinking, empathy, sympathy, etc. Unfortunately, members of my family did not feel the same way.

“Social Justice Warrior”

After coming to fully understand the difference between punishment and discipline and then using that newfound knowledge to connect it to my prior knowledge of Proverbs 13:24, I realized that the verse is telling parents to discipline their children, not necessarily punish them. I remember having the conversation with my family like it was yesterday. I love to debate so I already had my arguments and points prepared. I was just waiting for the right moment to bring up the topic and that moment came

I was telling my mother about my day in my Early Childhood Education class and the disciplinary tactics I used to administer healthy consequences to them. My grandma who overheard this conversation made a comment saying “Whooping them would’ve said you some time.” This was the opening I was looking for to educate them on discipline and punishment. I started explaining all the things I mentioned previously, but of course, this led to a debate. The adults in my family who had children began trying to explain how whoopings are needed in disciplining a child and how some kids are very “bad” so they have to be whooped. I then argued back stating that children are just reflections of their environment so if they are “bad”, it’s because of the people they are surrounded by. This comment triggered a lot of people. They started telling me that because I didn’t have kids, that I did not know what I was talking about. One of them even called me a “Social Justice Warrior” solely because I believe little children whose brains are still developing and learning shouldn’t be beaten as a “consequence” to them making mistakes. I felt very upset afterwards because it was the first time I heavily disagreed on a topic with my family. I felt like the odd one out.

“You’ll Understand When You Have Kids of Your Own”



<https://www.dreamstime.com/happy-black-family-lying-pile-grass-outdoors-happy-black-family-lying-pile-grass-outdoors-image99965537>

After the ordeal, my mother told me, “You’ll understand when you have kids of your own.”. That stuck with me. While I cannot stop the adults in my family from hitting their children, I can take the information and knowledge I have to better myself. I am glad that I questioned this common belief within my family because now I can strive to be a future parent who uses love and patience when raising their child, rather than violence and fear. I will use discipline, not punishment, to raise my future children.