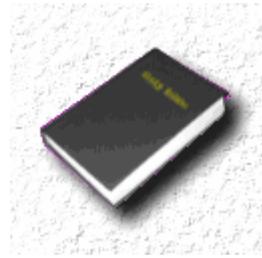


Tools for Correcting Your Child



From Shepherding A Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp (pp. 32-33): "I observe that most parents do not understand the appropriateness and necessity of being in charge in their child's life. Rather, parents take the role of advisor.... Parents must be in charge. You should do this with a benevolent and gracious manner, but you must be an authority for your children.... Our culture has reduced parenting to providing care. The child must have food, clothes, a bed and some quality time. In sharp contrast to such a weak view, God has called you to a more profound task than being a care-provider. You are called to shepherd your child in God's behalf."

In Genesis 18:19 God says of Abraham, "I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just." In the New Testament Ephesians 6:4 commands active involvement in the lives of our children: "Fathers, bring your children up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

What tools do we use to direct our children? Here are six Biblical tools. **USE THESE TOOLS AFTER YOU HAVE ALREADY DIRECTLY AND ASSERTIVELY COMMUNICATED YOUR EXPECTATIONS TO YOUR CHILD AND THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM. I repeat: communication and understanding *must* occur before the use of any of these tools. Biblical communication (see www.new-life.net/parent17.htm) cannot be overlooked.**

1. Physical Stings

- SPANKING

Spanking is considered "abuse" by many psychological experts and social workers. But a Christian's direction for parenting doesn't come from the latest psychological or social work theory. Secular theories will come and go and will even compete with one another. When God speaks, His wisdom is timeless.

Why should we spank? *Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.* Proverbs 22:15.

What does the rod of correction do for the child? *The rod of correction imparts wisdom...* Proverbs 29:15.

Can't I avoid spanking? *He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.* Proverbs 13:24.

Won't spanking seriously harm my child? *Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die.* Proverbs 23:13. (Note: in each verse, the word *rod* in Hebrew means "stick or branch from a tree.")

When should it be done? For acts of willful disobedience. Not for "mistakes" or for typical childlike behavior.

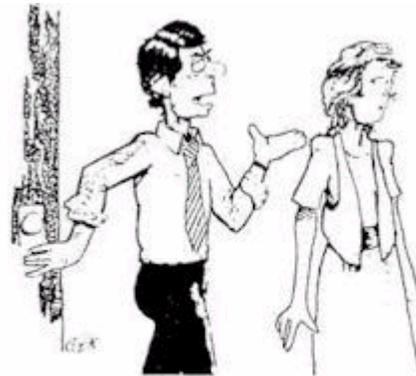
How is spanking to be done?

- Make it an "event". Do not spank your child while chasing them. Take the time to take them aside and do it right. You will end up doing it far less often by making it an event.
- Never spank in anger or to vent your frustration or for retribution (pay back). The goal is not to manipulate your children through raw displays of anger. When you are angry, what your child will learn is the fear of man, not the fear of God (James 1:19-20). Tedd Trip writes: "If you allow unholy anger to muddy the correction process, you are wrong. You need to ask for forgiveness."

Parents are God's agents of discipline. You may not try to shape the lives of your children as pleases you, but as pleases Him. We must have God's heart when we discipline. God is not angry or rejecting with His children. He cares for us, even when we sin. For more on this topic see "The Difference Between Punishment and Discipline" (www.new-life.net/discipln.htm).

- Follow a good procedure reflecting God's pattern of discipline and restoration:

1. Take your child to a private place.
2. Have him tell you specifically what he has done or failed to do. If he cannot, then you tell him and secure an acknowledgment from the child of what he has done.
3. Confess your own sins, weaknesses, or infirmities in this area. Deal with him as a fellow sinner.
4. Tell the child how many swats he will receive. (This is an important signal that you are in control of yourself.)
5. Lay your child across your lap and spank on the buttocks.
6. After you have spanked, take the child on your lap and hug him, telling him how much you love him, how much it grieves you to spank him, and how you hope that it will not be necessary again.
7. Have the child pray and ask God's forgiveness for disobeying. Also ask God for a change of heart to be different next time.
8. Remind them that God forgives them and loves them (1 John 1:9).



No, I didn't spank him. How can you spank a kid who keeps yelling . . . "Oh Lord God of Israel, have mercy on me!!!"

9. If necessary, have the child ask forgiveness of the offended party (sister, brother, etc.)

For further reading on spanking see the book *Dare to Discipline* by James Dobson.

2. Take Aways

- TIME OUT

Time-out can be effective when you stick to the following procedure:

1. Select one target behavior on which to use time-out.
2. Pick out a boring place for time-out.
3. Explain time-out to your child.
4. Wait patiently for the target behavior to occur.

TARGET BEHAVIOR OCCURS!

5. Place your child in the time-out place and use no more than 10 words and 10 seconds to get them there.
6. Get the portable timer, set the timer for the same number of minutes as the age of your child. Place it within hearing distance of your child.
7. Wait for the timer to ring--remove all attention from the child while she waits for the timer to ring.
8. Ask your child, after the timer rings, why she was sent to time-out.



- LOSS OF PRIVILEGES

Another form of take aways is the loss of privileges. This could include the removal of television, loss of use of toys, dessert, removal from family members, or removal from friends.

In God's dealings with His people, God often used loss of privileges as a motivator to obedience. There are many examples of this in the history of Israel. One example is found in Haggai's prophecy:

Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."

This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it

and be honored," says the Lord. "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands." (Haggai 1:5-11). Loss of privileges and blessing is meant to get the Jews attention and it did! See Haggai 1:13-14.

3. Logical Consequences

Logical consequences are situations engineered by us, the parent, which are logically connected to the wrong. In order for the consequence to be logical, it must somehow "fit" the offense. For example, if a child did not finish his dinner and as a parent you decide to impose the discipline of not being able to play with toys, this would be a take away, but not a logical consequence. Toys are not logically connected to dinner. However, if the discipline was that the child could not have dessert, then this becomes a logical consequence. Not finishing dinner is logically connected to not getting dessert.

When using logical consequences you should choose consequences directly related to the unacceptable behavior. For example, if your child skips a chore have her do an extra chore; don't take away TV. If she leaves a mess, have her clean two rooms; don't ground her for a week.

The real world is made up of logical consequences: If you fail to show up at work, you don't receive a paycheck. If you don't pay for your license you receive a fine. If you borrow tools from your neighbor and don't care for them, he won't loan you anything else.

This is why this tool is so powerful: it's just like the way the real world works. Here are two Biblical examples of correction by logical consequences:

- Exodus 22:1,4-9 – If a thief is caught stealing, he must pay back what he stole plus at least 100% more.
- In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, Paul gave this logical consequence: *Let him who will not work, not eat.*

Family examples of logical consequences:

- Your child is continually late for dinner. You might accept his apology on one or two occasions, but if the behavior continues, the child will have to wind up not having any dinner.
- If Sue comes home late from his friend's house, then she can't go there tomorrow.
- Your child repeatedly forgets to feed the cat. Possible logical consequence: He has to find a new home for the cat.
- "If you don't go to bed on time, your bedtime is even



earlier for the next few nights."

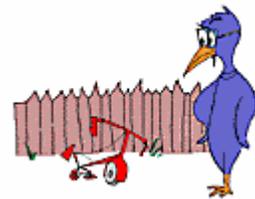
- Emphasize order and the need for order. Work comes before play; chores come before breakfast, and so on. This concept emphasizes that in God's entire kingdom, there is a need for logical order – order is important.
- Your child must say "May I please..." before they receive what they ask for. In the real world, courtesy is a prerequisite to receiving.
- Are family members leaving stuff around the house? Institute a "Saturday box." If something gets left where it shouldn't be, then it goes in the box until Saturday. If you use the Saturday box, then it has to be applied to everyone (even if dad's work project gets held 'til Saturday)!
- Jack continually brings the car back to his parents without gas. Logical consequence: Jack can pay you for gas *and* attendant fees. Or Jack doesn't get to use the car.
- Are the children fighting while the family is traveling in the car? Pull over and stop. Get out of the car and go for a short walk and allow the children to continue fighting. The key is to be calm. It is not safe to operate a motor vehicle while a fight is in progress. The fighting usually stops in a minute or less. If the fighting does not stop, simply have the courage to turn around and drive back home. If you are on your way to your child's Little League game or music lesson, all the better!
- "Tommy, would you like a tuna sandwich or peanut butter and jelly?" We give Tommy the choice and we teach him that once he makes his decision he must live with it. If Tommy decides he doesn't like his tuna sandwich – well, that's all there is for Tommy. That's the consequence. That's how real life works. In other words, we must hold him accountable for his choice.

Here is a little quiz taken from the state of Washington foster parents training web site (<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training/index.htm>):

Choose a response to each situation below using logical consequences when appropriate.

1. Situation: Victor leaves his tricycle outside.

- A. You leave the tricycle outside and tell Victor, "If you leave your bike out it will rust or be stolen."
- B. You put the tricycle in the garage.
- C. You tell Victor, "If you don't bring that tricycle in, you will not be allowed to use it tomorrow."



2. Situation: Gabriel refuses to wear a coat outside even though it is cold and rainy.

- A. You say, "Don't be ridiculous!" and put the coat on him.
- B. You say, "If you won't put your coat on, you will have to play indoors."
- C. You allow him to go outside without his coat.

3. Situation: Kim leaves food in her room.

- A. You make her eat the moldy old food.
- B. You don't interfere.
- C. You say, "If you do not throw away that food by dinnertime, you will not be getting any dessert."

4. Situation: Shantelle forgets to take the garbage out.

- A. You tell her she must take it to the dump and pay the fee herself.
- B. You take it out and don't say anything to her.
- C. You say, "You never do any work around here and I'm sick and tired of it! You're grounded for a week."

An excellent resource on this tool is *Parenting With Love and Logic* by Foster Cline and Jim Fay. Also see the book *Making Children Mind Without Losing Yours* by Dr. Kevin Leman. Logical consequences can also be spelled out ahead of time in a contract. See our web page entitled "Family Contracts: A Practical Way to Provide Healthy Boundaries" (www.new-life.net/parent12.htm).

4. Allow Natural Consequences

Natural consequences are those things that happen in response to your child's behavior without parental involvement. You do not actually deliver a natural consequence yourself. Natural consequences are situations imposed by God, by society, by another person, or brought about by the universal law of sowing & reaping. Parents will often step in and not allow the discipline of natural consequences. When that happens we give our children a false picture of the real world. Sometimes we even get in the way of God!

Biblical examples of correction by natural consequences:

- Hebrews 12:5-11 – God Himself disciplines our children. Parent, allow God's discipline and don't get in the way.
- Romans 13:1-4 – Government is God's minister to punish the wrongdoer. Allow the sword of government to fall upon your children and don't get in the way.
- Galatians 6:7-8 – God has established in the universe the principle that we shall reap what we sow. Many parents shelter their children from the effects of their sowing. Allow reaping (natural consequences) in the life of your child.

Family examples of natural consequences:

- Your child gets an allowance and chooses spends it all. Now she wants a loan (or a gift). Say, "No. Welcome to the real world of financial management."



Farmer **sowing** wheat in Kunduz

- Katie has money burning a hole in her pocket. She wants to buy a toy. You point out how fragile the toy is, but you allow Katie to make her own decision. On the way to the car, the toy drops and breaks. What do you do?

Absolutely nothing! Don't give her more money. Don't lecture. Don't buy her something else. Allow her to learn from reality.

- Your child has a run in with law enforcement. Stand by them. Be supportive, but don't protect them from non-life threatening consequences of civil authority.

- John stays up late and is late for school He feels tired the next day, the teacher is angry, and makes him stay after school.



- Stop reminding and coaxing your children.

Let your children know that you are going to tell them things only once. Let them suffer the consequences of forgetting. You will not nag or repeat things over and over.

- Jane refuses to wear mittens. Her hands get cold.
- Ted refuses to eat dinner. He feels hungry.
- Mike leaves toys out in the rain. The toys rust or are stolen.

If you interfere with a natural consequence, it will not work. For example, by fixing a later meal after your child refuses to eat dinner, you will stop the natural consequence of hunger. You are actually encouraging the unacceptable behavior by responding with special attention.

Here is another quiz taken from the state of Washington foster parents training web site:

Choose a response to each situation below using natural consequences when appropriate.

1. Situation: Victor leaves his tricycle outside.

- A. You leave the tricycle outside and tell Victor, "If you leave your tricycle out it will rust or be stolen."
- B. You put the tricycle in the garage.
- C. You tell Victor, "If you don't bring that tricycle in, I'm going to be very unhappy with you."

2. Situation: Gabriel (age 13) refuses to wear a coat outside even though it is cold and rainy.

- A. You say "Don't be ridiculous!" and put the coat on him.
- B. You slap him and yell, "I'm tired of arguing with you over every little thing! Put that coat on now!"

C. You allow him to go outside without his coat.

3. Situation: Shantelle refuses to do her homework.

A. You send her to bed without dinner.

B. You don't interfere.

C. You say, "Let me help you with that. It looks pretty hard, but I bet we can figure it out."

4. Situation: Seven year old Kim is using a sharp axe to build a "fort."

A. You let her continue.

B. You scream, "Kim! Put that down immediately!" and spank her.

C. You scream, "Kim! Put that down immediately!" then explain the danger and offer to help her find a safer way to build the fort.

If you use natural or logical consequences with your child, be willing to explain things, but don't go over and over the ground rules and don't give a lot of warnings or extra chances. One of your key goals is to teach your child that consequences in life are real and that someone isn't going to always save them from the consequences of their bad choices or their disobedience. (Of course, we are not talking about salvation in Christ, but the effect of day-to-day choices which are unwise or violate God's commandments.)

5. Positive Reinforcement

Our Father reinforces and rewards good behavior. Here are just a few of the Scriptures that talk about God rewarding His children:

- *The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.* Psalm 18:20.
- *He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded.* Proverbs 13:13.
- *Do your giving in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.* Matthew 6:4. (Likewise prayer and fasting is rewarded by God – Matthew 6:6,18.)
- *For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.* Matthew 16:27.

Here are some parental actions which reinforce good behavior:

- **Tangible Rewards:**
Compensation, extra privileges, higher positions of responsibility, material gifts, special times with parents or friends.
- **Praise:**
Cheers.



"You are awesome."

"Your performance brought joy to everyone's heart."

"That was very helpful. I'll bet God smiled when he saw your kindness."

"Well done, good and faithful child!"

- Hugs and (Appropriate) Touches of Affection
- Thumbs-up Signs, Smiles, and a Beaming Parental Face

6. Ignore the Behavior (Extinction)

Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. Proverbs 26:4.

Extinction means simply ignoring the behavior. There are certain behaviors that our children pick up, because they receive attention from that behavior – even if the attention they receive is negative. Use this tool for red herring, manipulative, or attention getting behaviors, such as debating, whining, or tantrums.

Here is an example of extinction. Not every parent will agree with using this method in this circumstance, but it is food for thought. This comes from Kevin Leman's book, *Making Child Mind Without Losing Yours*:



"If you're mine, get into the bathtub. If you're someone else's, go home."

Sometimes the best way to handle fighting is to give the children what they say they want. If they want to fight, let them fight. But as the parent, you have the right to say where the children can fight and under what conditions. If the children start fighting, guide or carry them to a room elsewhere in the house. Give them instructions to continue fighting until they have worked out their problem. Leave them to their "fight."

In most cases, when you give children permission to fight, they won't. Fighting for the most part is designed to get the parents needlessly involved in their hassles. The sooner the parents learn to stay out of their children's hassles the sooner they will teach their children greater responsibility and accountability.

Many school teachers give both children boxing gloves, take away their audience, put them in a gym, and tell them to go ahead and box it out. But in these situations the children seldom fight either. Take away the audience and the fight usually stops. There are exceptions, of course, and you need to step in when there are life threatening circumstances.

Well, there you have it! Six tools to use in your arsenal of parenting. God has not limited us to one tool. He has given us a number of creative methods of correcting our children's behavior. Use them wisely. Use them with grace and love and they will prove effective. Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul. Proverbs 29:17.