

## Follow Up from Week 11: The Rod

### Review:

1. Physical Discipline is largely rejected in our culture
  - a. There are legitimate concerns regarding abuse.
  - b. There are legitimate concerns about poor practice
2. Children are foolish from birth and if unchecked are on a path to destruction.  
Proverbs 23:13-14 — “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.”

### Honest Questions about the Rod:

1. It is important to acknowledge that many people do have honest questions about the rod.
2. Does the Bible clearly teach that the rod is an instrument of pain?
  - a. “On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.” (Proverbs 10:13)
  - b. “Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from Sheol.” (Proverbs 23:13) The LXX translates “beat” with the word *πατάσσω* (*patasso*) which clearly means to strike. “...one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and **struck** the servant...” (Matt. 26:51)
  - c. “A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the back of fools.” (Proverbs 26:3)
3. Does the Bible clearly teach the application of pain in general in respect to discipline?
  - a. 1 Kings 12:11 “My father disciplined you with whips; I will **discipline** you with scorpions.” The Hebrew word *yasar*, translated “discipline”, is translated with *μαστιγῶω* (*mastigoo*) in the LXX.
  - b. Hebrews 12:6, “For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He **scourges** every son whom He receives.” This is a quotation of Proverbs 3:12 from the LXX. The word “scourges” is the translation of *μαστιγῶω* (*mastigoo*).
  - c. Hosea 6:1, “Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.” Notice how the Lord disciplines His children.
4. Isn't this understanding of the rod a 20<sup>th</sup> century reaction to the disciplinary philosophies of people like Dr. Spock (not the same Spock of Star Trek fame)?
  - a. Ancient Egyptian proverb: “Boys have their ears on their backsides; they listen when they are beaten.”
  - b. The *Story of Ahiqar*, a 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. book of proverbs says, “If I strike you my son, you will not die.”
  - c. Charles Bridges, in his commentary on Proverbs, made the case for these “rod” passages referring to the corporal discipline of children in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was drawing presumably upon a belief that well preceded even those in the 1800s.

### We must remember the problem and the purpose (the method is **not** the end):

1. The problem is deeply seated stubbornness and self-centered rebellion.
  - a. Be careful not to implicitly deny or diminish this biblical truth.
  - b. Many approaches to discipline that deny the use of pain are oriented toward “cooperation with” the child not “contending with” the child.
2. The purpose is restoration through brokenness (Matthew 5:3, etc.).

Reasons the rod might not work:

1. Your attitude is not being shaped by love and chastened by humility.
2. You are not *expecting* obedience.
  - a. God expects us to obey.
  - b. Expectation is fundamental to consistency and to clarity.  
Your child will know when you do not expect obedience, and your follow through will demonstrate your expectations.
3. Your method is not bringing your child to brokenness.
  - a. Remember, the purpose is restoration through brokenness.
  - b. Your method is not appropriately applying pain to the child in a manner that will lead to repentance.
4. You are not reasonably consistent in your purpose and method.

A review of method:

1. Privacy
2. Clarity
  - a. As to the reason
  - b. As to the purpose (brokenness/repentance/restoration)
  - c. As to the practice (how will this be done)  
[Does your child reasonably understand what is happening and why?]
3. Communication
  - a. Of care and compassion
  - b. Of pain** [The use of a “tool” is helpful for many reasons, but the tool must be effective and safe.]
  - c. Of gospel connection
4. Consistency
  - a. Consistency in practice
  - b. Consistency in expectation (A word about repeated offenses)
  - c. Stay the course; it’s working if you are doing it correctly. Stay the course!

Is spanking the only appropriate consequence?

1. Pain is the principle because it is what strikes the heart of a child in manner conducive to brokenness.  
Is your method bringing your child to an authentic brokenness?  
How are you assessing that and what is your response when it is not there?  
[Failing to bring your child to brokenness will leave your child angry.]  
Is your method merciful in the long term or does it prolong the process?
2. Pain can be applied with other methods (though not very effectively with young children in most cases):
  - a. Children have different sensitivities (**remember** the purpose is restoration through brokenness)
  - b. Natural consequences can effectively bring pain, *especially when the issue is not defiance*.
  - c. Logical consequences can also bring pain and help an older child make connections among behaviors.  
[There must be a clear connection between the offense and the consequence (e.g. homework vs. play time).