

The following ideas are taken from an article entitled: [THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STRICT AND HARSH PARENTING](#)

Is forbidding a grammar school child from "dating," or prohibiting a girl of 9, 10, or 11 from putting on a full face of makeup austere parenting? I believe not. Austere parenting has a bad reputation in our culture and is often misunderstood. Strict house rules (by that I mean limit-setting) are often accompanied by harsh parental demeanor, but it doesn't have to be that way. **It is not house rules—which may be stricter than those of other families—that drive children toward rebellion; it is the attitude in which those rules are applied in the home.**



The idea of harsh parenting should not be linked with strict house rules but with acts of verbal or physical aggression, such as yelling, name-calling, shoving, or threatening the child. These acts move children to become more peer-oriented, transferring their affections and source of identity from their parents to their friends.

Harsh parenting may make the parents look like the enemy, pushing children to view their peers as those who care about them. **Once the parents are seen as the enemy in the eyes of the child, the child has no qualms about disregarding parental authority and disobeying house or school rules.** All this makes sense and fits the notions, experience and/or stereotypes many of us already have regarding the children of harsh parenting. The valuable distinction to make here, and one I hope is not lost, is that distinction between "austere" or "strict," vs. "harsh."

In our American culture, where liberty is often merged with licentiousness, strictness is too often fused with harshness. Parents and their methods are either "harsh" or not harsh, and in the end, all we can do is formulate our own vague prescription: "don't be harsh." Yet this does not mean becoming lax--allowing an increase in risky behavior in already troubled children.



I was a child of harsh and strict parenting, and, as a mother, I struggled not to deal with my children the same way. Most children who rebel against harsh parents are not necessarily rebelling against the strict rules. **The cure for harsh parenting, therefore, isn't permissiveness,** which is what I discovered as I matured and eventually became a mother. **Children who rebel, rebel against unkindness.**

At the heart of good parenting are characteristics like love, respect, and tenderness. The rules of the home are not what make or break childrearing; more so, it is the spirit in which parents implement those rules that makes the difference. **The antidote to harsh parenting is not permissiveness but love.**

THOUGHTS FOR PARENTS

Ferah Glott

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. 6:1-3).

Most parents consider this to be a scripture solely for children, but it does have its flip side. Yes, God has ordained that children must obey their parents, but what does this indicate about parents? It shows us that GOD is the one who has **ordained** that parents are in **authority** over their children. What are the implications of this arrangement?

By God's wisdom, you (including your authority) are necessary and good for your children. If your children had no authority over them, how would that affect them? Loving parents want what is best for their children, and do their best to give them commands that are for their spiritual and physical benefit. God showed that this is His reasoning in giving commands to His children.

- Deut 10:13—To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day **for thy good?**

We must understand the Lord has given us the "right" to command our children as their authority, but at the same time, this is also a *responsibility*, a *stewardship*. Our children do not belong to us. They may be little children for a few years, but they, just as we are, are living souls. Scripture shows us that every soul ultimately belongs to God.

- Ezek 18:4—Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

God cares for every soul. To God, we are no more "important" than those we have rule over, whether children or servants.

- Job 31:13-15—If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; 14 What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? 15 **Did not he that made me in the womb make him?** and did not one fashion us in the womb?

As parents, we are nothing more than stewards over our children for a few years, and will have to give an answer for the way we conduct this responsibility. Our dealings with them **MUST** be based on what is *good* for our children, not based on our own pleasure.

- Luke 12:42-46—And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season? 43 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and

drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

We don't have a choice; as long as we are parents, we ARE made to be in authority over our children. How will we exercise this authority? We will have to give an account for our *stewardship*.

- Heb 13:17—Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as **they that must give account**, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

For our child's good, we need to **communicate and teach** this *authority arrangement* to each of our children (best done first during a calm, loving, teachable moment, **not** in the middle of a conflict.)

They **must** have the understanding that our authority is not based on the fact that we're taller or meaner or stronger than the child. It is because **God**, our Creator and Owner, has given us these roles, and responsibilities.

When a child obeys his mother or father, he is ultimately obeying God. If he *dis*-obeys his parents, he is disobeying God. That is scary.

When I, the mother, instruct and punish and train my child, I am obeying God just as the child is obeying God. I do not have a choice about whether to spank my child when he disobeys. I MUST obey God, out of both fear and love for Him *and* love for my child. It is utterly **essential** that this principle be taught to our children at a very young age.

When a child is **taught** the idea of authority, he then is equipped to cooperate. Until he is taught, it must seem entirely arbitrary that we think we have the right to "hit" (spank) him, but *he* doesn't have the right to hit *us*. Would it be any wonder a child would only respond in *anger and rebellion* to being spanked? That makes no sense until the foundation of God's teaching on authority is laid.

- 1 Sam 8:4-7—Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. 6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.
- Eph 6:1-7—Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 **Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:**
- Num 16:28—And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for *I have not done them* of mine own mind.

The **first** order of business, in bringing up a child in the way he should go, is **teaching** him what God's will is. How can a child know what to do without being taught first? What does God say about teaching our children?

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9—Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: 5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.
- Ephesians 6:4—And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- Colossians 3:20-21—Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.
- Prov 23:13-14—Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. 14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.
- Prov 19:18—Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.
- 2 Tim 3:15—And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- 2 Tim 1:5—When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

The authority has to **follow a pattern the child can count on** (consistency). If the rules are only enforced sometimes, or even too slowly, the child is always going to test, "Let's see if I get away with it this time." This is simply human nature. Think policemen – if tickets are arbitrary or inconsistent in an area, everybody speeds there. If a particular area has the reputation for speed limits being strictly enforced, folks obey the law!

- Eccl 8:11—Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.
- Rom 12:6-8—Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; **he that ruleth, with diligence;** he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

This requires **diligence** and **faithfulness** on the part of the authority. In order to be effective, authority should be feared to a certain extent, **until** obedience out of love overcomes that fear. Then fear is no longer necessary.

Should we feel apologetic for enforcing the rules? Does a policeman apologize for handing out a ticket?

Does a policeman have to shout and get mad when he hands out a ticket? Should a parent need to get mad to discipline a child? Which is more effective, anger or consistencies in enforcement with clear instructions about the rules?

If the police only enforce the rules part time, what does that do? If a parent only enforces the rules some of the time, what would that do?

- Eph 6:1-12—Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him. 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

Notice some things about these verses:

Our children are commanded to honor us. Can we affect how easy or difficult it is for them to obey this command of God?

- Prov 15:1—A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.
- 2 Tim 2:24-25—And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;
- Gal 5:22-23—But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
- Eccl 7:9—Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.
- Jas 3:16-17—For where envying (zelos – heat) and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.
- Heb 12:5-11—And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when

thou art rebuked of him: 6 **For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.** 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

- Jer 30:11—For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.
- 2 Sam 7:14-15—**I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:** 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee.
- Luke 12:47-48—And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.
- John 19:11—Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Rebellion is the main thing we must punish—always, every time, without fail, and it deserves the greatest punishment.

Being a kid (doing dumb, careless or impetuous things without thinking, like stepping in dog potty) does **not** need corporal punishment; it needs verbal correction. Children are not born with intuition or adult inhibitions. We need to *instruct* them in those things—lovingly.

Is it best for a parent to correct a child in anger?

- As ye would therefore that men should do unto you, do ye also even so unto them (Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:31).

Correct with measure; **be certain the punishment fits the crime.** Correct consistently, lovingly, gently, firmly, with **measure**, without resorting to threatening! Carefully choose your battles for your child's good and your own ability to enforce your rules. Too many rules will be too hard to enforce and most certainly frustrating to the child. Do not provoke your child to wrath **lest they be discouraged.** If your discipline takes the spirit out of your child so they don't care anymore, have you succeeded or failed in your aim?

- Jer. 10:24-25—O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing. 25 Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.

Angry parents do not generate respect; they generate anger and rebellion in their children. A raised voice is only effective for a limited time. If a child **always** hears shouting, he becomes impervious to it, and it is no longer effective. Also, if children only hear shouting, they lose the desire to please.

Should every misdemeanor receive the same punishment? No, intentional wrong should receive the strongest punishment. Accidental or ignorant wrong (even if the child "should have known better," should receive lesser punishment.

- Luke 12:47-48—And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.
- John 19:10-11—Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.
- Matt 23:14—Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Hard punishment may be administered for mistreatment of others, or correction for ignoring someone else's need: **Why?** Our aim in training is to instill the fear of the Lord in our child, and teach him God's judgments. His training is not for our convenience or for this world! It is to teach *spiritual* concepts. Hard punishment should be reserved for things like lying or stealing, once clear instruction is given.

- Prov 19:17—He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.
- Prov 22:22-23—Rob not the poor, because he *is* poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: 23 For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.
- Prov 28:27—He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.
- Prov 29:7—The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: *but* the wicked regardeth not to know *it*.
- Prov 21:13—Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

- Isa. 10:1-3—Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness *which* they have prescribed; 2 To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and *that* they may rob the fatherless! 3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation *which* shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

What is the AIM of discipline?

Short term, discipline is meant to teach humility and obedience to authority, and is good for a child's *life* (1 Tim. 3:4-5; Rom. 13:1-2; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; 1 Cor. 11:3; 2 Cor. 10:8).

- Isaiah 10:20—And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.
- Ahab humbled himself (to an extent) and returned, and the Lord rewarded him even for partial obedience (1 Kings 21:27-29), to **encourage** him to do more! We want to give our children **courage** to try to please us by appreciating whatever we can about them and their (occasionally pitiful) efforts.
- The nation of Israel obeyed God feignedly, and even though He knew it, he rewarded those surface efforts (Jer. 3:10).
- The opposite of humility is a stiff neck and proud heart (Zech. 7:11-12; Jer. 7:25-28; Jer. 17:23; Deut. 31:27; Psa. 101:5).
- Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23) – but **do we elicit rebellion by harshness or unreasonableness?**

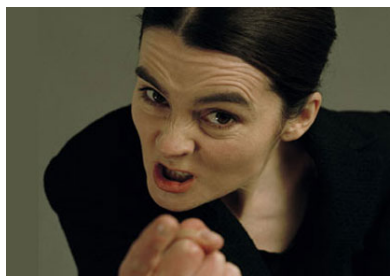
Long term, discipline is for the salvation of our child's soul.

Threatening:

- Eph 6:9—And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing **threatening**: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

G547 ἀπειλή *apeilē ap-i-lay'* From G546; a *menace*, **To** make a show of intention to harm – faces, body posture, etc.

Does shouting, screaming, slapping, glaring or threatening show good will or love?



Pay attention to your child; know what is going on, and what he needs; however, I am not talking about being hovering helicopter parents.



- Heb 10:24—And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

- Prov 27:23-27—**Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.** 24 For riches *are* not for ever: and doth the crown *endure* to every generation? 25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered. 26 The lambs *are* for thy clothing, and the goats *are* the price of the field. 27 And *thou shalt have*

goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and *for* the maintenance for thy maidens.

- Prov 29:15—The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

The REWARDS:

- Prov 29:17—Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Pay attention to your child – to know what is going on, and what he/she needs.

- Heb 10:24—And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
- Prov 27:23-27—Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, *and* look well to thy herds. 24 For riches *are* not for ever: and doth the crown *endure* to every generation? 25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered. 26 The lambs *are* for thy clothing, and the goats *are* the price of the field. 27 And *thou shalt have* goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and *for* the maintenance for thy maidens.
- Prov 29:15—The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.
- Prov 29:17—Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.