

# THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

## SPARE THE ROD OR GO TO JAIL?

Current law in California permits parents to spank their children "unless the degree of force is excessive or not appropriate for the child's age" ("Calif. Lawmaker..." 2007). Earlier this month, however, California State Assembly Democrat Sally Lieber indicated that she will introduce a new bill that would make "spanking, hitting, and slapping a child under 4 years old a misdemeanor," in which "[a]dults could face up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine" (Calif. Lawmaker..." 2007). According to Lieber, the bill will be broad enough so that "**any** striking of a child, **any** corporal punishment, smacking, hitting, punching, **any** of that" will be prohibited (Zapler, 2007, emphasis added). Although some doubt whether the legislature will ever pass the bill, the Associated Press indicated that Governor Schwarzenegger "may be receptive to it" ("Calif. Lawmaker..." 2007).

Efforts to protect children from legitimate child abuse are to be commended. Every year, thousands of children are abused or neglected by their parents. Without question, parents who burn, electrocute, strangle, viciously beat, torture, or kill their children should suffer the highest penalty possible for their ungodly actions (cf. Romans 13:4). Such treatment of children reveals a lack of emotional control and an inability to distinguish between rational correction that leads to increased wisdom (Proverbs 29:15; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21) and actual child abuse.

Attempting to eradicate all forms of corporal punishment for children under the age of four, however, is extremely foolish. Simply because **some** parents disregard the health of their children and demonstrate a lack of emotional control in their handling of them, does not mean that **all** spanking should be banned. Will lawmakers propose a ban on all pharmaceutical drugs because hundreds of thousands of people abuse them? Will Lieber propose that the use of paints, glues, and various cleaning supplies indoors should be illegal because some misuse these products as inhalants? Where will it end? Truly, the abuse of a thing is not a valid argument against the legitimate use of it.

The decision our forefathers made to spank their children was not because they were not creative enough to think of other forms of punishment. Many of our predecessors were very intelligent men and women who incorporated a variety of disciplinary methods for children (e.g., standing in the corner, grounding, going to bed without supper, surrendering a toy, etc.). But one corrective measure that was highly effective then, and still is today, when done properly, is corporal punishment. It can and should be carried out calmly, rationally, promptly, and effectively.

*"He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly"* (Proverbs 13:24).

*"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him"* (Proverbs 22:15).

*"The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother"* (Proverbs 29:15).

[For a more in-depth discussion on the subject of corporal punishment, see, "Children and the Rod of Correction" - <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2305>]  
-Eric Lyons

### DID YOU KNOW

The colonial legislature of Massachusetts passed a law in 1642 directing town officials to determine whether children were being trained "in learning and labor and other employments profitable to the Commonwealth," and if they were being instructed "To read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of the country," violators were subject to fines?

**FAITHLESS, WORKLESS, SALVATION-LESS**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. \_\_\_\_\_ Faith

Notes:

II. \_\_\_\_\_ Faith

Notes:

III. \_\_\_\_\_ Faith

Notes:

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT**

Know why the gasoline prices are alarming? We're not used to them. They're going up every week, almost daily. Wait until they level off and stay put for a while. Perhaps a year or two from now it will be no "big deal" to pay \$5.00 per gallon for gasoline.

What's true with the gasoline prices is also true with the price of sin. What once was considered "unthinkable" is now no "big deal." Divorce. Living together before marriage. Lying. Adultery. Abortion. Homosexuality. We've gotten use to them. They're not frowned upon as they once were.

Satan has done a number on us. He is the father of all lies (John 8:44). His primary tool is deception. NO wonder God warns us over and over: "Be not deceived."

A man is deceived when he thinks that sinners will be saved (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

A man is deceived when he thinks that bad company is good for him (I Corinthians 15:33).

A man is deceived when he thinks he can sow one thing and reap another (Galatians 6:7-8).

A man is deceived when he thinks he can just listen to the word and please God (James 1:22).

Brethren, don't be deceived!

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE TEACHERS OF MY CHILDREN**

*"And they shall all be taught of God..."* (John 6:45).

Two or three times a week I trust you with my most prized jewels, and those two or three times a week, you live up to the trust and return them to me—though not quite the same. Somehow you manage to take them and gradually, week by week, polish them to make them shine a little more than I sometimes think possible. You are patient and wise enough to see the potential for riches in what others may see as only rough ore.

I know you spend much unnoticed time in preparation to teach my children about Jesus. I've seen the literally hundreds of objects they bring home to remind them of your object lessons. You always win when I prematurely suggest discarding certain Bible class memorabilia. Much of it has a lot of your TLC, not to mention time and creativity behind it.

I saw a note one of you wrote to one of my children, challenging her to be a great Christian leader and example you expect her to be. You even promised to pray for my daughter and reminded her that you are always there if she needs to talk.

Thank you for the time, the love, the prayers, the expectations, and the support you devote to my children. And thank you for being a constant reflection of Jesus. The notice. And when they do, so do I.

Please resist the temptation to feel unappreciated. You're not only appreciated but needed—and not just by my children but by me. And please don't underestimate your influence or your teaching role on them or me as a parent. My children echo much of what you teach them, probably more than you think they hear. In fact, they remember some of your stories and illustrations long after they are promoted to another class.

As a Bible class teacher, you give my children Christ and yourself. You can't give a greater gift. I can't give you enough thanks.

*"...I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up..."* (Acts 20:32).

*-Author Unknown*

**DANIEL TRIED AND AS GOLD**

It was a cruel and evil plot of wickedness and deceit. Here was an innocent, godly man potentially about to suffer for the stinging jealousy of comparatively few detractors. He had been endeared by all those whom he served, yet those of equal power could not stand that he, a Jew, held similar authority as they. The result of such bitter envy and hatred was that *"...they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions"* (Daniel 6:16a).

Throughout his life, Daniel had been known for his potential, dedication, wisdom, ability, and commitment. It was for that reason that when Darius came to power in Persia, seeing the need to delegate oversight of the kingdom to one hundred twenty princes who would serve under three presidents, it was Daniel whom he chose first. *"Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm"* (Daniel 6:3). His faithfulness characterized him as a leader among leaders of which so many became jealous. And his faith made him the target of what would prove to be both clever and deceitful.

Knowing they could not find legitimate fault in him concerning his leadership of the kingdom, Daniel's opponents turned their attention to his observance of the law of God. *"Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree"* (Daniel 6:6-9). The plan began with a lie (not all presidents had been consulted because Daniel had not) and ended with an injustice. And stuck in the middle of it all was Daniel.

After Daniel heard of this decree, signed ignorantly by Darius, he, without hesitation, continued with his daily regiment of prayer and supplication to the Most High God. Upon his capture for such he, in accordance to the unchangeable law, was indeed cast forth into that den of lions, with full expectation by his captors that on the morrow he would be nothing more than lion's dung. But the morning came, Darius sped to the den and cried out unto Daniel with wearisome hope, *"O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"* (Daniel 6:20b). Without a moment's pause the band of eerie silence was broken and in declaration of the power of Jehovah, Daniel's voice rang out with life: *"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt"* (Daniel 6:22). How could Daniel (at this point in excess of 80 years old) have escaped such a formidable foe as those fierce beasts? Only by the power of God.

The beasts inhabiting the den that afternoon would not have been well fed, tame creatures who enjoyed a visit from above occasionally. But rather they would have been fierce and hungry beasts who likely would not usually let their prey even hit the ground before ripping it to shreds. With these facts in mind, what is the likelihood that Daniel, without God's aid, could have survived not just a few moments, but the entire night? It was practically impossible. But with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

Occasionally life seems to get the best of us. For unjust and unstated reasons sometimes we become the target of attack. Through those periods of life it might feel as though we have been cast forth unto the lions who soon shall do nothing more than finish the job previously started of ruining and completing our lives. But in those times there is always One to whom we can turn and One in whom we can place our trust. Paul affirmed in Philipians 4:13, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Like Paul, we can confidently affirm that through Christ all things are possible.

Daniel's extended visit into the den of lions was a giant test of faith. Would God truly deliver him as he hoped or allow him to perish at the hands of unruly and unjust heathens? Daniel, like Job, was tried and came forth as gold (Job 23:10). There are multiple times in life when our faith has been and will be tested. Will we lose our faith or allow those times to strengthen us (James 1:2-3) and reaffirm those things already trusted? Will we be tried and come forth as gold? His escape was attributed to that which shall be our only mode of deliverance, for it was said of Daniel that *"no matter of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God"* (Daniel 6:23b).

-Andy Brewer