



OCT 7, 2014

## CLEAR LIMITS, HEALTHY DISCIPLINE

*Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.                      Jeremiah 29:11*

**SPEAKING!  
COACHING!  
TEACHING!**

Fall and winter programing? This is the perfect opportunity to call or email Marilyn

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### "SPARE THE ROD"

#### IT MIGHT NOT MEAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TOLD!

Given some very high profile cases of child abuse in the news recently, many done in the name of discipline and being a good parent, we have heard some invoke what they take to be the biblical teaching about "spare the rod, spoil the child."

Indeed, shepherds used the rod, but never to hit or hurt the sheep. The rod was used to...

#### WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED BOUNDARIES AND LIMITS?

No one is born knowing appropriate boundaries or limits. As parents, we need to give kids age-appropriate limits to keep them safe, to keep them moral, to teach both respect and self-respect, to help them become the person others will love and respect, and to give them a future with hope! This is a child of God you are raising.

#### WHAT BOUNDARIES DOES YOUR CHILD NEED NOW?

Learn what is age-appropriate, what is part of the culture where you live, and what makes your child

one that other kids like and that parents want their kids to know and befriend. Now, you need to dare to be the parent your child needs you to be. Love your child enough to run the risk your child will not be your best friend today! Yes, that means making unpopular decisions.

#### AND HERE IS WHAT KIDS NEED:

- Make it clear exactly what the rules are and what behavior you expect. Link them to your values.
- Let your child know ahead the consequences of not complying.
- Don't threaten, without follow through ... yes, every single time. Mean what you say.

\* **Lead the way.** Sheep were short and nearsighted. The shepherd walked ahead, holding the rod aloft, so sheep could see and follow.

\* **Create safe boundaries.** Sheep weren't that bright and had a propensity for going over the side of a cliff. The shepherd used the rod to keep that from happening.

\* **Hold predators at bay.** Although the rod was not used to hit sheep, it was used to threaten and hit the wolves and mountain lions, who meant to harm the sheep.

\* **Special Care.** At the end of the day, as sheep entered the sheepfold, the shepherd used the rod to separate the wool on sheep and lambs, looking for any signs of injury and culling those in need of special care.

- Make it clear what is non-negotiable. Let "yes" mean "yes" and "no" mean "no."
- Don't change your mind when your child whines or persists or throws a tantrum in public.
- Stay calm and kind, but firm.
- Listen to your child.
- Help kids be successful in their "work," which is school. Teach study habits. Limit screen time. Don't do the work for them. Celebrate effort and improvement, as well as accomplishments.
- Protect enough time for adequate sleep, which is so vitally important to everything else in life.

#### WAYS TO DISCIPLINE THAT REALLY WORK:

- Redirect... especially useful for your littlest kids.
- Say, "I love you too much to let you ..."
- Model the behaviors and values you want. That makes it contagious.
- Communicate your expectations, describing it behaviorally.
- Teach the behavior you want, explaining "why" as well as "what."
- Catch them doing it right (or better) and affirm them. (*What gets attention gets repeated!*)

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Do you have parents who need to hear about Christian parenting that offers alternatives to hitting children?

Invite Marilyn!

[EMAIL](#)

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#### FOR CHURCH PROFESSIONALS

Love kids enough to give them clear boundaries. Be a faith parent; don't try to win a popularity contest. They need you to be a good, healthy adult, who is their role model.

Read the column for parents and harvest what applies to you! Love them enough to help them do what is right, recover when they do wrong, and become the child God created them to be.

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