

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 4).



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There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Ephesians 4:4-6



WE ARE SO THANKFUL that Isaac and Maggie made a special trip to Nashville all the way from China. It was fascinating to show them around the farm and introduce them to Memphis-style BBQ! Tim got a kick out of taking them to the Grand Ole Opry.

We are still amazed that for the last nine years we've actually signed contracts with a Chinese publisher for twelve of our titles.

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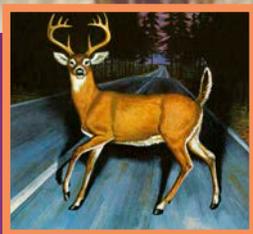
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Marriage: Sharing the Pie

(Adapted from audio)

By Michael Pearl



✓ That “caught in the headlights” look is so common for a man in the early years of married life. I entered marriage thinking I could relate to a woman as I had related to my buddies for the past 25 years.

The first lesson I learned is that women are irrational and don’t make sense most of the time. It took me years before I reconciled myself to the fact that I am not capable of understanding a woman. I can never press

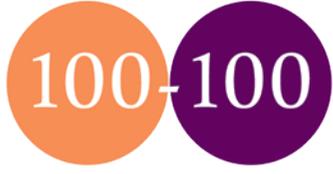
her into the mold of my logic and my nonchalant approach to issues. There are things I just don’t care about that my wife cares about deeply. She has needs I don’t have, that don’t make sense to me.

For instance, if you are a person who never has cold feet and you sleep with a partner who does, you just don't understand their need to put their cold feet on your thighs. It took me a lot of years before I learned to make sure my wife put socks on before she went to bed. Now, in our old age this issue has turned around . . . not the emotional thing but the cold feet. Now I have cold feet and she is always a furnace, which is handy. Turnabout is fair play, right?

Marriage does involve a lot of compromises. It involves a lot of "Okay, if you say so," and a lot of giving over. It's not 50-50, it is 100-100. It is one man giving 100 percent of all that he is to a lady for her sake and for her good. It is a lady giving 100 percent of all she is—her talents, gifts, and abilities—to a man for his sake and for his good.

Have you ever seen two kids trying to divide up something they both covet? When I was a kid I loved chocolate pie. There was nothing I liked better than a chocolate pie. Regretfully, my mother would usually make just one pie and it would be divided seven ways. It never did go very far, leaving me lusting after more chocolate pie.

One night when my brother and I were about eight and ten years old, Mama and Daddy went to a Bible study and left us home alone. As she walked out the door she said with a grin, "I made a chocolate pie. After you boys finish washing the dishes, you can divide the pie and eat the whole thing." The wonder of eating half a pie was intoxicating. It was a boy's dream come true. We washed the dishes with our eyes on that chocolate pie.

Marriage is not  50-50. It is  100-100

You know the Bible tells us that love believes all things (1 Corinthians 13:7). This simple statement is key in both marriage and in our relationship to God. Love doesn't keep accounts. It doesn't keep score. When we start keeping score in a relationship, we're in it for ourselves and it will never mature into something sweet. When we start keeping score, it's a game—a game where we are counting winners and losers. As long as we keep score it is not in hopes that the other person will win, but in hopes that we will win.

When we dried the last dish, I rushed over to divide the prize, since I was the elder one and obviously much more capable of determining where the middle of the pie was. My little brother was young, but when it came to chocolate pie he was very astute. He saw I was laying the knife a little to my advantage; after all, I was bigger so all things being equal my body needed a bigger piece of pie. But he would have none of it. "No, that's not right. Over this way a little bit."

I pulled the pie away, insisting,

The most important thing in a relationship is that our spouse be confident that we have their back.

“No, you are wrong.”

He yelled, “No, this way!”

But I firmly stood against him. “No, this way, this way . . .” Plop! Upside down on the floor went the chocolate pie. We both stood there looking down at that big puddle of chocolate pie on the floor, splattered everywhere. It was one of those “aha” moments in life. Or maybe you could call it an “OH NO” moment. Our opportunity for half of a pie—the first time in our life—and now it was just the dog’s dish. Come to think of it, the dog couldn’t even eat it because chocolate makes dogs sick.

I looked at him like he ruined my entire life and said, “You can have it all.”

He looked at me with the same accusing glance. “I don’t want any pie. You can have it all.”

It was my turn to yell. “You dropped it. It was your fault.”

He said, “No, you dropped it.”

I said, “I did not! If you had just let me divide it up.”

He retorted, “It was your fault because you were cheating, trying to get a bigger portion.”

I said, “I . . .”

Marriage is kind of like chocolate pie. It is so good, but sometimes it ends up splattered on the floor. Each of us can easily see what our partner is not doing, or is doing that is not loving or kind. But seeing the lack in ourselves is not so easy. What couples need to understand is that the most important thing in a relationship is that our spouse be confident that we have their back, that we really want them to be happy and fulfilled. And when they do jerky things like spend



too much money or have bad moods or other humanly nasty things, it is not because they want to hurt us but because they have a weak moment. Generous thinking prevents us from taking offense. We all need one person who really loves us and believes the best of us. Most people come into marriage with a pile of heavy baggage, including mistrust, selfishness, and a chip on their shoulder. The fact is, we know our own heart so we assume our mate's heart is like our own. More than anything we want our fair share of the pie, and if we don't feel we are getting it we accuse, mistrust, and feel misused. Faith relationships can't be built on selfishness or accusations. Many Christian marriages are built on competition instead of benevolence.

I am not telling you that the man ought to slice the pie and you take what is left. I am telling you that when it comes time to slice the pie, ladies, you should say, "I really don't eat pie, I want you to eat all of it." And if he takes it all, then be glad he could enjoy it.

*Love is giving all,
not equally dividing.*

You men should say, "Listen, I just don't really care that much for chocolate pie. You can have the whole thing. I want to see you get to eat the whole pie." She could respond with, "I'll tell you what, Let's just eat one piece, and then we will think about eating another one, okay? Here, have a bite." "No, you take a bite."

Often, maybe even usually, one spouse has to be willing to give up a lot of pie before the other comes to see real love and begins to have faith. But that's the way a sweet marriage is built; it is the way trust is formed. Marriage is love. Love is giving all, not equally dividing.

It's a matter of seeking the good of the other person. When we come to a place where we really love our spouse and want what's best for them, then we can begin to build what I like to call a sweet faith relationship. Having someone who has total confidence in your love and forgiveness is precious, maybe the most precious thing in this world.

FAITH Relationship between God and Man

There may be only one person in this life that I have that kind of relationship with, and that's my wife. Maybe 95% with my kids; and with my best friends it's 50%. Because when you've lived as long as I have, you've had friends betray you. You've had friends doubt you. If I ever have a friend that doubts me or doubts my intentions, they're just not my friend anymore. I can't make them be my friend. I can forgive them, but I can never trust them again with anything vital. I can be acquaintances, but I can't be a close friend.

God wants you to trust him. He wants you to be a kindred spirit with whom he can share everything, someone he can trust with his heart and his reputation. In a good faith relationship there is no reserve, no doubt,



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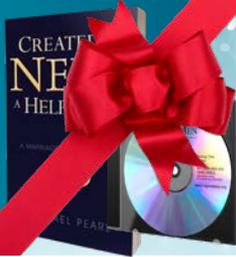
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no suspicion or criticism—just good will and complete openness. Maybe that is one of the reasons God uses the marriage relationship to illustrate his relationship to the church.

I know my wife gives me the benefit of the doubt. I know she expects me to have the best of intentions toward her. She wants to believe I care for her above and beyond all. And I know that if it appears otherwise, she's not going to believe her eyes first, she's going to imagine a scenario that assumes the best. She believes me. She chooses to have faith in me. Now, do you have anyone in your life

like that? If you do, that's a precious thing to have; just one person in your life. If you have two or three, you're a rich man to have people like that who believe in you. Henry Adams said, "One friend in a lifetime is much, two are many, three are hardly possible. Friendship needs a certain parallelism of life, a community of thought, a rivalry of aim."

God exalted Abraham by calling him a friend. "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James



2:23). Most marriages never arrive at the high level of friendship because they never care enough to give, to serve, to love unconditionally. If life has one single goal, I would say it is to have a faith relationship with God and at least one person.

God wants us to trust that he loves us above and beyond all things. And when bad things happen, like they did in the life of Job, we will give God the benefit of the doubt, believing *“that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28).

God wants us to trust that he loves us above and beyond all things.

We don't get bitter at life's circumstance, depressed, or lose confidence

in his loving care because we can trust that HE loves us and seeks our best. He is our closest friend.

God created us for the express purpose of becoming family (Ephesians 1). He desires communion, a relationship of oneness. Jesus prayed that *“they may be one, even as we are one”* (John 17:22). So this oneness is what Jesus came to establish. It is not just to cause us to stop sinning. So much of religion is focused on just trying to keep the law, or do good things, or keep the Sabbath, tithe, go to church, confess your sins, or read your Bible. That's pitiful religion. It is all shallow compared to cultivating a faith relationship with the Heavenly Father. What God is looking for is a relationship of faith. He wants you to come to a place like Job did when he heard that all his earthly treasures were stolen or destroyed leaving him suddenly with nothing, and yes, even when his entire family was killed: he fell on his face and worshipped God. Job knew God loved and cared for him. That faith relationship he shared with God was the most precious thing in his life—above his wealth, health, wife, and children. Job knew he had a friend in God, that God had good will toward him, and that he had a purpose even when it was not apparent and seemed to contradict the circumstances. That is what a faith relationship looks like. Expect the best from God. Expect the best from your spouse. Be the best friend to God and everyone else, and you will be a rich person indeed. ■

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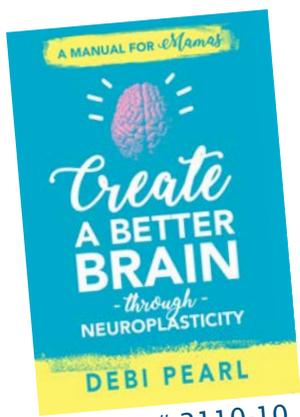
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Gentle Parenting?

— Part 1 —

By Michael Pearl

I have lived to see it all. First there was Authoritarian Parenting, then Uninvolved Parenting, Permissive Parenting, Train Up a Child Parenting, then along came Free-range, Attachment, Helicopter, and other popular parenting methods. Now the craze is Gentle Parenting.

We parents care deeply for our

children and want the best for them, so we continue trying to perfect the art of child rearing. The high failure rate keeps bringing us back to the drawing board, forsaking or refining the former practice for something we hope is better. Sometimes it's better, sometimes not. But there is nothing new under the sun.

What Is Gentle Parenting?

The Gentle Parenting movement has been around long enough that it means different things to different people, but the single unifying characteristic is “no punishment” (as they call it)—not ever, not for any reason. That includes no time outs, no stern rebukes, no authoritative rule, etc. There have always been problems with some parents harshly punishing their children, so I can understand the swing of the social pendulum. In 1979 Sweden outlawed all forms of corporal chastisement, and child abuse skyrocketed. When harshness is in the heart of parents it finds abusive expressions, even under a “no hitting” mandate.

I can understand the swing of the social pendulum.

If all we do is read the Gentle Parenting blogs and mom-writers, we find most of their practical suggestions to be a restatement of the things I and other Christian writers have said for hundreds of years. Gentleness is essential. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, a Christian virtue. It is unthinkable that one could successfully parent without it. I will let the advocates of Gentle Parenting speak for themselves.

Gentle Parenting Described

Sarah Ockwell-Smith outlines the concept in her blog “What Is Gentle Parenting?” as having four pillars:

empathy, respect, understanding, and boundaries.¹ With regard to respect she says:

“Respecting your child as much as you would respect an adult. For some reason in our society we afford children little respect. We constantly tell them what to do, what they like and dislike and perhaps worst of all the constant ‘be quiet’ commands. We don’t really ‘hear’ them enough. Why did he hit the other child? Why did she bite? Why did he kick? Why doesn’t she want to go to bed? Why doesn’t he want to eat? Why doesn’t she want to go swimming today? Children are real people—just like us. If we want them to respect us, then we need to respect them.”

That sounds great. I think it may be a paraphrase of something I wrote 25 years ago. She goes on:

“Gentle parenting also requires parental self-control, because you have to take a step back, think and ask, ‘What is my child’s behaviour communicating in this moment?’ and ‘What can I do differently to prevent this behaviour next time?’”

Smith hit the nail on the head. My daughter Shoshanna has perfected the application of that principle without any inducement. She didn’t know it was called Gentle Parenting. She takes it for granted that parents are gentle. Smith says further:

“Gentle parenting is not just about letting your toddler throw a tantrum—it’s all about digging

¹ <https://sarahockwell-smith.com/2014/04/18/what-is-gentle-parenting/>

deeper to find the root as to why they're unhappy in the first place. It places an emphasis on treating your child as you would want to be treated (you would want someone else to understand you if you were visibly upset or distressed)."

For about 50 years now we have been calling that approach "child training." Most of the noted Christian writers of ancient and modern times have taught that very thing. Smith states:

"If we respected our children, we would listen when they woke crying in the middle of the night instead of returning them to bed with minimal eye contact or conversation."

I must have said the very same thing publicly in seminars and in print a thousand times. TheConversation.com adds:

". . . gentle parenting encourages a conversation between parent and kid."

Ninety-five percent of the families in America would be helped by following that suggestion. Megabytes should never deprive our children of mega smiles and words.

The five quotes above by Gentle Parenting advocates express wisdom and understanding that is little understood by many parents. It is needful information that has been shared over and over again, but it is always new news to new parents.

I Believe!

So who does not believe in Gentle Parenting? Supposedly, parents who spank their kids occasionally. All the Gentle Parenting literature revolves around one thing—no punishment. The name, Gentle, is camouflage for a hidden agenda. It is an attempt



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to seize the high ground—suggesting that you either spank or you are gentle; you can't be both. It is designed to change minds about historical parenting—to shame us. It is a common rhetorical technique in the arena of ideas. It is like calling a pro-death movement “freedom of choice.” Who is against freedom of choice? Supposedly anyone who does not believe a mother should be free to kill her baby. Who is against Gentle Parenting? Disreputable characters you see in Hollywood productions and Bible-thumping preppers trying to beat the devil out of their children and break their wills. Leftist media have become the primary definers of supposed Christian practices. Anderson Cooper and MSNBC are the new popular sources of what it means to be a Christian in America.

Most parents who come across the Gentle Parenting approach are going to quickly see a great improvement, not because they stop smacking, swatting, spanking, and threatening their kids, but rather because for the first time they become conscientious and sensitive, giving more “face time” to their children. In our book *To Train Up a Child*, we call it “tying strings of fellowship.” As we have said many times, “the Bible says ‘train up a child in the way he should

go,’ not beat up or threaten up or nag up, but train up.” And we have said a thousand times, “Training is what you do before the need to discipline arises; you train so you won't have to discipline.” Gentle Parenting literature has recycled these timeless truths and has in some cases done a very good job of restating them, but they are presented in a mix that will be damaging to the children.

Mainstream Parenting and Gentle Parenting Contrasted

On Sarah Ockwell-Smith's website is a table with 14 points of contrast between what she calls Mainstream Parenting and Gentle Parenting. I do not agree with a single one of the so-called Mainstream Parenting techniques. The table creates a straw man, meant to cast aspersion upon traditional parenting. On the other hand, I find most (not all) of the 14 Gentle Parenting techniques as written to be very good. But when you know where they are going with some of it, it loses its luster. For instance, the fourth one reads: **“No behavior seen as ‘bad,’ but rather as an unmet need and a way to learn.”** Yes, bad behavior is a learning opportunity if it is handled wisely. But never representing any behavior as bad? What kind of worldview is that? If you don't know,



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the answer is . . . leftist. The world is indeed a place of good and bad. Kids can do bad things like strike their baby sister with a weapon, or run into the street, or climb the stairs, etc. And when they do bad things maliciously then they are bad.

The sixth precept in the table reads: **“No behavior is rewarded, particularly not the type expected by the parents. Rewards are seen as superficial and unnecessary.”**

Gentle Parenting . . . imparts a false impression of the most important reality of life—accountability and judgment.

They condemn punishment and reward equally. I recognize that the author is addressing a state of excess. Parents can neglect all interpersonal relationship and rely on purchasing

good behavior and punishing bad behavior. Proactive is better, but to cast off the time-tested praise and positive reinforcement employed by parents, and even by the business world, is a bridge too far.

Bad Theology

The Gentle Parenting suggestions in this table are sound, solid advice but with one major component missing—the concept of top-down authority, commanding obedience with the will and means to reward or chasten. That is the real world, whether spiritually or naturally. Consider the business you work for, your BOSS, the courts, the military, the IRS, child protection services, and traffic cops. Blind obedience to authority out of fear of punishment is the real world, both now and in eternity. *“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” (Titus*



Confessions of a Gentle Parent Advocate

Smith explains:

“Sometimes we expect little ones to act like adults, but we need to educate ourselves as to the developmental abilities at each age they hit. For example, a 5-year-old often throws temper tantrums, but if we had the same problem with a 12-year-old, we should consider that an issue worth working on. Instead, we should focus on treating our kids as we would want to be treated. Children have bad days just like us. Some days the world is overwhelming; some days they are scared, lonely, confused, anxious or angry.”

3:1). *“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Romans 13:5).*

Gentle Parenting, though mostly good in its practical, everyday way of relating to your children, imparts a false impression of the most important reality of life—accountability and judgment. It is bad theology.

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

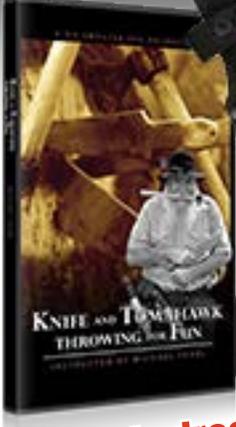
The background advocates of Gentle Parenting do not believe in a day of judgment where some fair well and others do not. There is good and evil in the world and children should be taught to recognize it for what it is—to flee from the evil, repent of it, and do it no more, and to embrace the good.

My children, brought up in the traditional Christian family, did not throw temper tantrums at any age, nor did their parents. “Bad days” were unknown. For *“The rod and reproof give wisdom . . . Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (Proverbs 29:15, 17)*. And for the record, we were always gentle. We gently spanked the

**Gentle Parenting and
the God of the Holy Bible
are not compatible.**

little ones when they needed it. And with a gentle attitude we more forcefully spanked them when they were older. We were all the nice things the Gentle Parenting literature advocates and more. But the children knew

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we were the supreme authority. We established the rules, enforced them with grace and firmness, handed out consequences without consulting the children on how they felt about it, and they all grew up to be the most stable, productive, creative people you will ever meet. They range in age from mid-thirties to mid-forties, and their children brought up the same way are all beautiful, outstanding examples of the sweet fruit of biblical child training—which includes corporal chastisement when needed. We deliberately placed the children under a rule of law that mimicked the real world—duty, responsibility, and

accountability with consequences.

It does not take a very discerning reader to know that the driving passion of all the Gentle Parenting literature is not to promote the great truths of Christian parenting; it is to eliminate—and eventually make illegal—any form of corporal chastisement, which they call corporal punishment. And it is not really spanking that is the issue with them. Rather it is a worldview based on absolutes, a Lawgiver, and a system of accountability. Their definition of Gentle Parenting and the God of the Holy Bible are not compatible.

Thy Rod and Thy Staff

One of the main books quoted by the many Gentle Parenting advocates is Thy Rod and Thy Staff They Comfort Me by Samuel Martin. In it he states:

“God sent His Son into the world to save the world so they would not have to suffer for their own sins, but parents today punish their children and make them undergo the horrors of punishment for even the most minor of infractions. The idea of mercy is seemingly not applied at all. When parents sin, they ask God to forgive them, repent and know they are forgiven. When children sin, they are judged, tried, condemned and punished (p.11).”

He, too, builds a straw man representing all parents who spank as inflicting “the horrors of punishment for even the most minor infractions.” He is poisoning the well. None of us would condone **“horrors of punishment”** under any circumstances. Nor would we resort to punishment for the **“most minor of infractions.”** I think he has been watching too many anti-Christian movies that represent believers as unhinged. Perhaps he watches a lot of Anderson Cooper, or maybe he has spent a good deal of time in the homes of Hollywood elites who do explode with “horrors of punishment,” and then publicly campaign against it.

As is common, those who crusade against spanking project their own feelings, assuming that other parents are as angry and hurtful as they would be if they yielded to their dark natures

to “hit” their children. They cannot fathom normal parenting instincts, nor have they ever seen the sweet fruit of a Christ-centered home.

How Does Such an Anti-Biblical Movement Take Hold in Christian Circles?

Some young parents had bad experiences as children, and they know themselves to be a bit testy and angry at times. There have been occasions when their children provoked them and they retaliated with words or blows that rightly caused shame and guilt. It is easy for them to believe that all spanking is an act of violence, for they know that if they spanked at the end of their tolerance rope, it would be giving in to violence. When they come across the Gentle Parenting literature, they see a way out. They become proactive instead of reactive, and immediately get better results.



That’s good.

But we have observed some of the

Gentle Parenting families and found that their children are the least happy and have the least self-control, and they are generally unruly. Gentleness without ultimate accountability gives way to permissiveness. Persuasion loses its power when the flesh of the child becomes more powerful than the so-called gentle approach. Parents have taught, encouraged, and fellowshiped with their children, but the children sometimes turn and walk away from it like Adam and Eve walked away from a loving, gentle God who had trained them right. Likewise the cherub Lucifer could not be contained by the fellowship and grace of God. God established law and penalty before he established grace, and grace rejected still meets

Gentleness without ultimate accountability gives way to permissiveness.

with the penalty of the law.

As good as some of their practical teaching may be, the theological underpinning of the Gentle Parenting movement is an abomination. It is alluring to the flesh because it promotes grace over law—grace without law, infractions being met with automatic forgiveness. Compare that to the Word of God:

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,
27 But a certain fearful looking for

of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Read the following passage and tell me if you think God practices Gentle Parenting:

Hebrews 12:6 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?

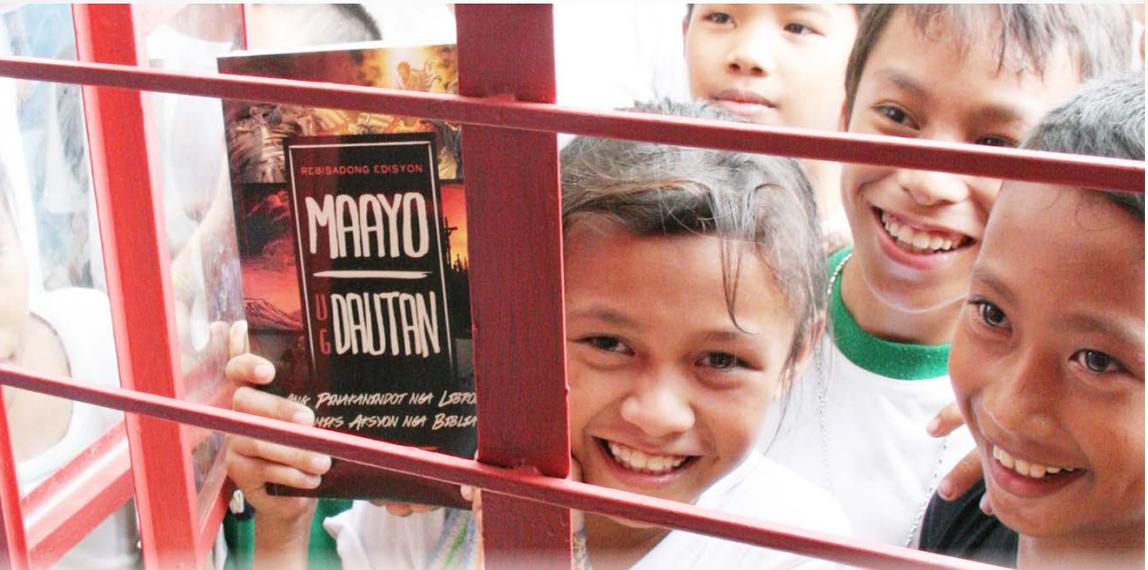
10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

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.

If physical chastisement is ungodly, where does that leave God in the Gentle Parenting worldview?

They require something of parents that not even God practices. As Job said, “Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?” (Job 4:17). If corporal chastisement wisely applied is ungodly, then God himself is ungodly.

It is sad, but we know that when the small children now being raised on Gentle Parenting precepts reach adulthood, parents will regret their adherence to this unproven approach. Sometimes it takes a generation to discover the fallacy of a trend. ■



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Gentle Parenting?

— Part 2 —

By Michael Pearl

Does the Bible Teach Corporal Chastisement?

I say again, one of the main books quoted by the many Gentle Parenting advocates is *Thy Rod and Thy Staff They Comfort Me* by Samuel Martin. But where did Martin get his ideas?

“That all changed when I read a book by Dr. Philip Greven titled:

Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse” (p.7).

So Martin was converted when he read a book by a secularist whose sole purpose, as stated by the title, is

to take down the biblical worldview. As is my habit, I purchased the book and studied it all the way through, word by weary word, Hebrew exegesis by Hebrew lexicon, right to the end, taking serious notes as I followed his twisted reasoning.

Martin, trying to direct our faith to Dr. Greven, says, **“Biblical interpretation should be left into the hands of those who are trained to do so.”** Bible believers are supposed to just humbly withdraw from the discussion and wait to be told what to believe.

Re-think Scholarship

When the secular philosophy that spawned Gentle Parenting came up against the believing community who continued to trust their Bibles, it was apparent that something had to be done to break down the wall of faith. So they pulled the old “original language” ruse. They invite you to follow them into the Hebrew weeds where they know you cannot see, and after they have dragged you through incomprehensible linguistics, you are supposed to emerge on the other side believing them and not the Bible. That’s right, in these modern times when new-think justifies abortion, sodomy, gender fluidity, and infanticide, we suddenly discover that the Holy Bible supports the new-think ideas on child rearing as well.

I will show you that the authors on this subject have lied to you, boldly and blatantly, misrepresenting Hebrew scholarship and rewriting history. I will make it a lot easier to understand than the Bible correctors, and this I will do without breaking

a sweat or performing original language gymnastics.

Keep in mind that their dissenting views are not based on the historical translation of Scripture in any language; they are based on re-think scholarship. But then Samuel Martin admits that in investigating how ancient Hebrews viewed the subject, **“it is surprising what is not available.”** A contributing author, David Kraemer, in a recent work, “Images of Childhood and Adolescence in Talmudic Literature” (published in *The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory*) agrees with the lack of Hebrew scholarship in regard to spanking children: **“but as for a treatment of the child in the Bible itself, there is very little information available from Jewish sources.”** After admitting the lack of evidence, he proceeds to quote a few modern Hebrew commentators—none ancient—to dismiss traditional interpretation of the Scripture by Hebrew and Christian commentators alike.

Text Attack

In his book *Thy Rod and Thy Staff, Thy Comfort Me*, Samuel Martin says:

“It is not appropriate to simply quote the five texts in Proverbs that refer to the ‘rod’ as the authoritative evidence for smacking children and imagine that there is little else to discuss in this matter. This does a disservice to the book of Proverbs itself, the whole of the rest of the Bible, and especially the New Testament (p.14).”

He tries to convey the idea that our position is derived solely from the book

of Proverbs and then has the audacity to accuse Bible believers of doing a **“disservice to the book of Proverbs itself, the whole of the rest of the Bible, and especially the New Testament.”** He is not well informed. Even without the book of Proverbs, the support for corporal chastisement is overwhelming in the Bible, and especially in the New Testament.

Again Samuel Martin says:
“Most proponents of smacking have many supporters in the religious community. Most people simply quote a few passages in the book of Proverbs as their authority and think there is little else needed to do. This is problematic especially concerning the question of what the Bible says about children. Most religious teachers do not point out that the Bible, in the original Hebrew language in particular, (which the bulk of the Old Testament and the book of Proverbs were originally written in) uses more than nine different words in Hebrew to describe the various phases of life for children up to adulthood. This was a revelation to me because all of the verses in the book of Proverbs focus on a single word translated as children, but not referring to young child under the age of about ten!”

Summation of Dr. Greven’s Argument

Dr. Greven goes to great lengths to make the point that there are ten Hebrew words for child, as in “train up a child,” and that the words are age specific. Indeed, some are, and they

are seldom used. Then he says that the two Hebrew words behind the English words child and son found in the four passages that mention the rod are age specific to young men, not children. The logical conclusion being that the rod is reserved for older young men only—a point he ignores. I will prove this to be false.

The five uses of the word rod



linked with the four uses of son/child are listed below. I have made bold the English words that are translations of the two Hebrew words he claims speak only of young men—not children.

*Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his **son** [Hebrew: **ben**]; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*

*Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a **child** [Hebrew: **na’ar**]; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*

*Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the **child** [Hebrew: **na’ar**]; 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.

*Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a **child** [Hebrew: **na'ar**] left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*

Samuel Martin is correct when he says, **“Just as in English there are words in Hebrew that specifically describe a particular age group,”** but he glossed over the fact that just as in English there are Hebrew words for child that are not age specific.

In English we might hear someone say, “Meet my children.” And standing before us is a man about twenty three, a young lady about twenty, a boy about twelve, a six year old, and a toddler—one word, not age specific, stating their parentage. In English we use words like child, offspring, descendant, posterity, progeny, and many more to express parentage, not age. None are age specific.

He is suggesting that because none of the Hebrew words specific to a small child are employed with the command to use the rod that the rod is designed for older children only. That argument has meaning only to naive people who are told it has meaning.

The layman is no longer at the mercy of Hebrew scholars in discerning the definition of a word. In this digital age there are aids available to the layman that enable him to see the evidence for himself. As in any language, a word is defined by its contextual use. When it is used many, many times, it is easy to define. When a word in the Bible has very limited use, one or two times, and very little context, that is when

scholarship shines, for they can search many extra-biblical sources—literature from the same time period—and read the word in context a number of times. But the words for son/child are used thousands of times in the Bible. We just need a program that enables us to read in English the many passages where the Hebrew word was translated son, child, little one, young man, etc. I use the Bible program *Logos*.

First Hebrew Word: Na'ar

נער [na'ar /nah-ar/]

Na'ar is translated “young man” 76 times, “servant” 54 times, “child” 44 times, “youth” 6 times, “babe” once, and “young” once.

Samuel Martin says:

“The word that we find used in three of the verses that advocate smacking in Proverbs is “na'ar.” The phase of life associated with the “na'ar” (which means the “one shook loose”) is that of young adulthood or the teenage years. This is significant. Based on this evidence, it is safe to say that all of these texts in the book of Proverbs have no application to anyone less than about ten to twelve years of age (p.32).”

Is that so? Let's just look at the facts.

*Exodus 2:6 And when she had opened it, she saw the **child**: and, behold, the **babe** [na'ar] wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.*

Baby Moses, three months old, is placed in a basket floating in the



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backwaters of the Nile River. The same Hebrew word *na'ar* is used in the passages in Proverbs that speak of the rod.

*Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a **child** [na'ar]; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*

The context indicates that there is a time when foolishness can be driven

from a child by application of the rod. It would be absurd to suggest it is any age other than a young child.

*1 Samuel 1:22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the **child** [na'ar] be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.*

Hannah called her not-yet-

weaned child na'ar, the same word used above in connection with the rod.

*Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the **child** [na'ar]: 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.

Again the same word used in Proverbs in connection with the rod speaks of a child not yet weaned.

1 Samuel 4:20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it.

*21 And she named the **child** [na'ar] Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.*

Her newborn son is called na'ar just as in the passage below.

*Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a **child** [na'ar] left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*

Anyone who does not see a child in this passage is beyond intelligent reasoning.

*Isaiah 7:16 For before the **child** [na'ar] shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.*

A child (na'ar) is too young to know the difference between good and evil.

*Isaiah 8:4 For before the **child** [na'ar] shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.*

A child (na'ar) is not old enough to say father or mother—the same Hebrew word connected with the rod in the book of Proverbs.

I am not suggesting that a newborn or a three-month-old, as was Moses, should meet with corporal chastisement and neither is the Scripture. It uses the same word na'ar to refer to newborns, teenagers, and old men who are offsprings. The King James Bible most accurately translates it “child,” referring to a descendent of various ages. But Dr. Greven and Samuel Martin based their entire argument on the lie that the Hebrew word na'ar applies only to older children. They lied to bolster a leftist agenda.

Second Hebrew Word: Ben

בֶּן, בָּנִים [ben /bane]

Ben is translated “son” 2978 times, “children” 1568 times, “old” 135 times, “first” 51 times, “man” 20 times, “young” 18 times, “child” 10 times, and miscellaneous 92 times.

Hebrew lexicons are in agreement, providing similar definitions of the Hebrew word *bane*: son, grandson, child, member of a group, male child, grandson, children, youth, young men.

*Proverbs 17:6 **Children's** [ben] **children** [ben] are the crown of old men; and the glory of **children** [ben] are their fathers.*

The Hebrew word *ben* applies to all ages just as does *children* in the English language—perfect translation.

*Genesis 21:7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given **children [ben]** suck? for I have born him a **son [ben]** in his old age.*

The children (*ben*) were nursing. Can you imagine the Hebrew men beating the back of a 20-year-old son while he was nursing?

*Genesis 25:22 And the **children [ben]** struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.*

The children (*ben*) were still in the womb. That is the same Hebrew word found in the passage below.

*Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his **son [ben]**: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*

There is no age designation in the context. That is why the author did not use any of the several words that are age specific.

*Proverbs 29:17 Correct thy **son [ben]**, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.*

How does a man correct his adult son resulting in giving rest to the parent? Would physically chastening an adult son so change him as to bring delight to the father? The passage assumes an age when correction would result in a change of heart. Only a young child would be so affected.

Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father

*the **son [ben]** in whom he delighteth.*

The Bible makes no attempt to reveal the age appropriateness of chastisement, nor even the spectrum of its application, leaving that to the culture, unique circumstances, and wisdom of the parents.

*Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy **son [ben]** while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.*

Is the chastened son in his twenties? At what age does he mature to where there is no hope? Does the adult son cry when he is chastened? The context suggests a younger son who would profit from the chastisement. That age will differ from one child to the next, something left to the wise discretion of parents.

To deny that the Bible teaches corporal chastisement of children of various ages is arrogant... it is an affront to Bible believers everywhere

Samuel Martin sums up his walk through the Hebrew weeds by confidently saying, **“We have to let the original Hebrew words and their meanings come through into our understandings or else we can lose the richness of meaning that is there for the interested party to investigate” (p.33).**

Yes, I am in full agreement. And since the Hebrew expresses precisely the traditional understanding derived from the King James Bible and practiced by Christian parents down

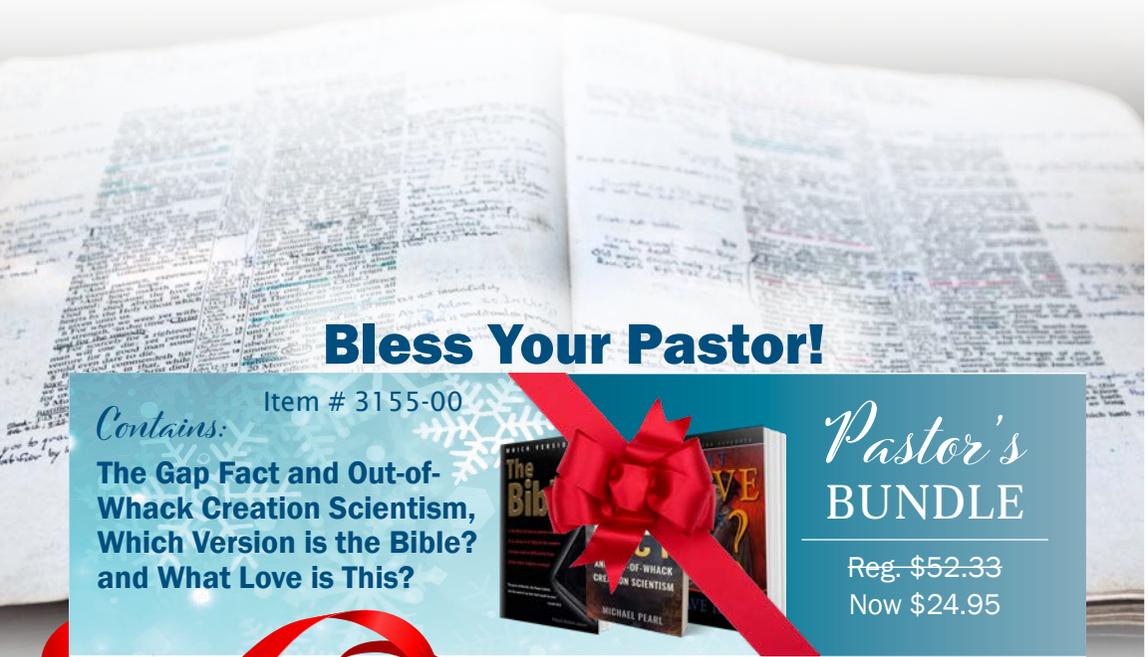
through the ages, to deny that the Bible teaches corporal chastisement of children of various ages is arrogant, if not infidelity, and it is an affront to Bible believers everywhere.

Now this will blow your mind! After our walk through the Hebrew weeds, Samuel Martin admits, **“This word (ben) is used hundreds of times in the Bible and can refer to a son of any age.”** Then where is his argument against corporal chastisement of children? He goes on to argue that since *na’ar* means older children, then *ben* would have to be older children as well. Huh? **Any intelligent, open-minded person would have to say since *na’ar* means child of any age and *ben* is child of any age, then the Bible does not dictate the age at which to either commence**

chastisement or conclude it. God trusts parents to be wise and judicious in that regard. Two whole books wasted on foolishness; what a shame.

I must conclude by saying to all the quacks propagating this lie, shame on you for dismissing 3,500 years of Bible believers with a come-lately, novel interpretation spawned from the womb of reprobate theologians impregnated by socialists.

If you want to get the biblical and practical lowdown on child training, read the book that has sold over one million copies in multiple languages worldwide—*To Train Up a Child* by Michael and Debi Pearl. It was written 25 years ago. All of our children were spanked from time to time, and all turned out to be delightful human beings. ■



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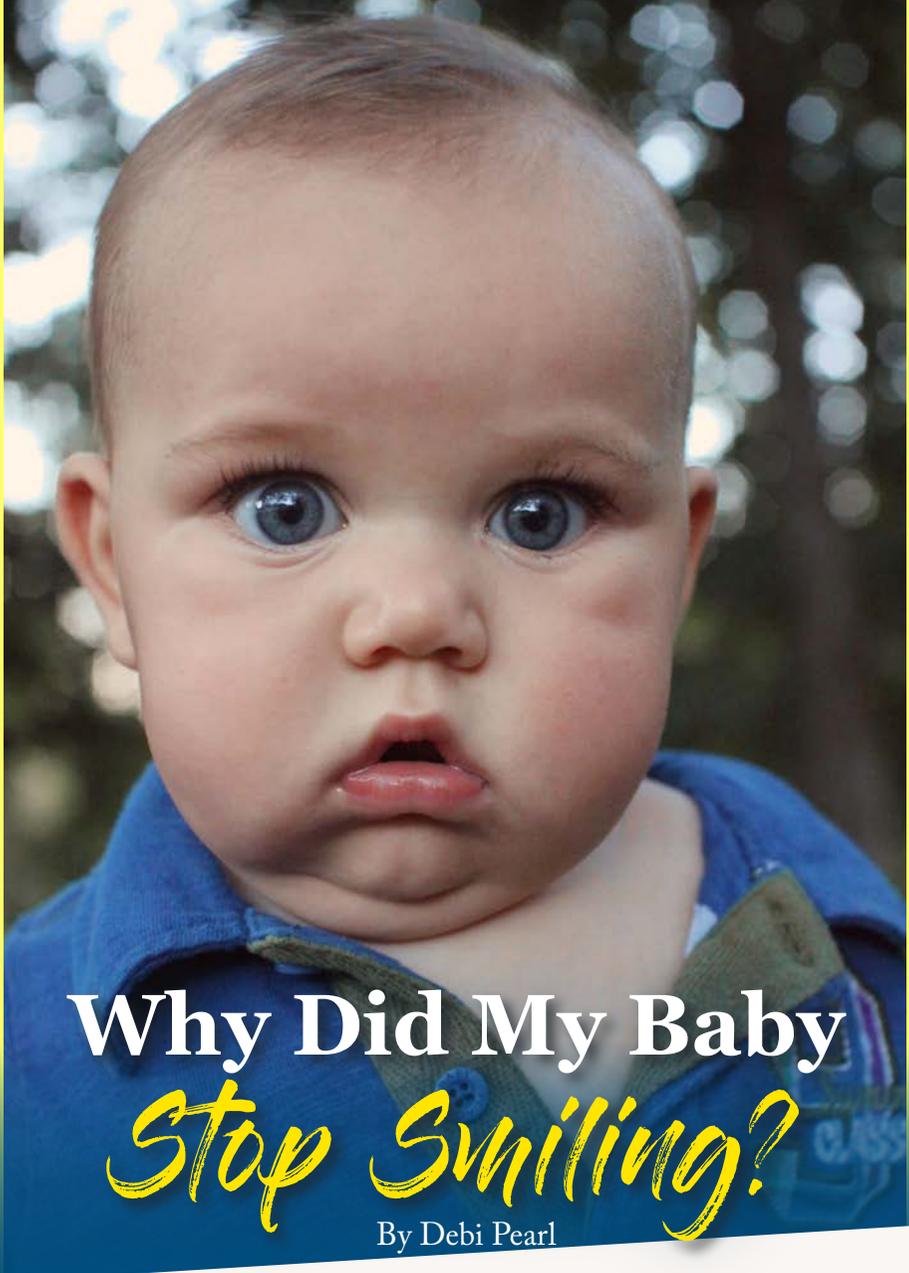


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Why Did My Baby Stop Smiling?

By Debi Pearl

Mrs. Pearl,
This is weird. When my son was a newborn, he was the happiest little guy you would ever see. Anyone that looked at him received a big laughing smile in return. When he was about four months old it seems his smile just disappeared. Now at seven months he is like a totally different child. The only people he smiles for now are his daddy and me. Instead of smiling, he appears to study people like he is deciding whether he likes them. One of the ladies in my church asked me what happened to him, as he seems so completely different. I never leave him so I know that he was not abused. Should I be alarmed?

~Susan

Read Debi's Answer > >

Dear Mama,

Don't be alarmed. He was just smiling because of his mirror neurons, but you are a smart mama to enquire further. Much has changed in our culture, environment, and food industry in the last 30 years that makes it critical for wise mamas to stay informed. In my book *Samuel Learns to Yell and Tell*, I coined the phrase "Those prepared are usually spared." I think it even goes further: "Mamas that learn, watch, and take wise action are usually spared." In the case of mirror neurons, it could be critical to be informed.

If you read my book *Create a Better Brain through Neuroplasticity: A Manual For Mamas*, then you know that most babies are born with a few select brain cells called mirror neurons. These mirror neurons cause your little one to mirror behavior. Your baby wasn't really joyfully loving everyone, he was just mirroring what he was seeing. As a newborn he had not yet developed his other brain cells to make decisions about who and what he really liked. But as your baby's brain began developing more and more connections (learning), he was able to begin making choices using different areas of his brain. It is part of maturing. You can understand why it is so important for a child at this tender age to be in an environment of joy and thanksgiving.

Mirror neurons are what cause people to yawn when they see other people yawn. They provoke others to laugh or at least smile when they hear someone laughing.

Mirror neurons are what allow us to "read" other people's emotions or even intentions. Females are better at this than males because they usually have more mirror neurons. Occasionally you will see a baby that never smiles or even frowns, and some of these babies rarely even cry. This is a sign of the lack of mirror neurons. A



person with very few mirror neurons can be smart, talented, and creative, but there is a downside to this deficiency. It is difficult for that person to have empathy, since they don't have the part of the brain that naturally provides that feeling. But as you read in my book, empathy can be developed with a few simple techniques.

New research is suggesting that the lack of mirror neurons is likely a factor in autism. Just 30 years ago only 3 out of 10,000 children tested positive for autism, but in 2020 the estimated number of four-year-olds testing positive for autism will be 1 in every 23!



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Autism appears to have triggers and foundational causes. The shortage of mirror neurons would be more of a foundational cause. But it appears that autism could possibly be avoided if there is never a serious trigger in a child's health or emotional state.

Mirror neurons are what cause people to yawn when they see other people yawn.

The question is WHY are babies being born without mirror neurons? Right now, much research is focused on how cell phones carried in men's pants pockets are affecting their sperm. It is known that most cases of autism come from the male sperm.

Thankfully, since your baby boy was a smiler, I think that it is safe to

say he is loaded with mirror neurons, thus according to the research he will likely not develop autism (which does not become apparent until a child is two to four years old.) And I venture to say that your smart husband never carried his phone down around his male parts. Knowing this information and acting upon it is the kind of information mamas need in today's changing world. It is certainly better to be safe than sorry. Knowledge is power; learn and live well.

Read more in: *Create a Better Brain through Neuroplasticity: A Manual for Mamas*. It is a fun read full of stories and new research that will help you raise happy, healthy children. You will also learn interesting yet amazingly simple strategies researchers have discovered that help improve symptoms in autistic children and will also help all children have a healthier, calmer, more focused life. ■

A Letter from a

Reader

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Pearl,

... One time my parents bought a Red Heeler puppy to mainly have as a pet. His name is Roy and he had an instinct to work with cows but he would just go out and try to get them to scatter because that was all he knew. He was also afraid of them so when a 1300 lb cow would turn on him he'd run and hide. I started doing a little work with him to train him and two things happened. He quit chasing cows for fun on his own time (before we would scold and punish him for his "freelance work") and he lost his fear of the cows. If I told him to apply pressure to a 1300 lb cow he would get in the middle of her because he knew I would back him up and

**What shall we then say to these things?
If God be for us, who can be against us?**

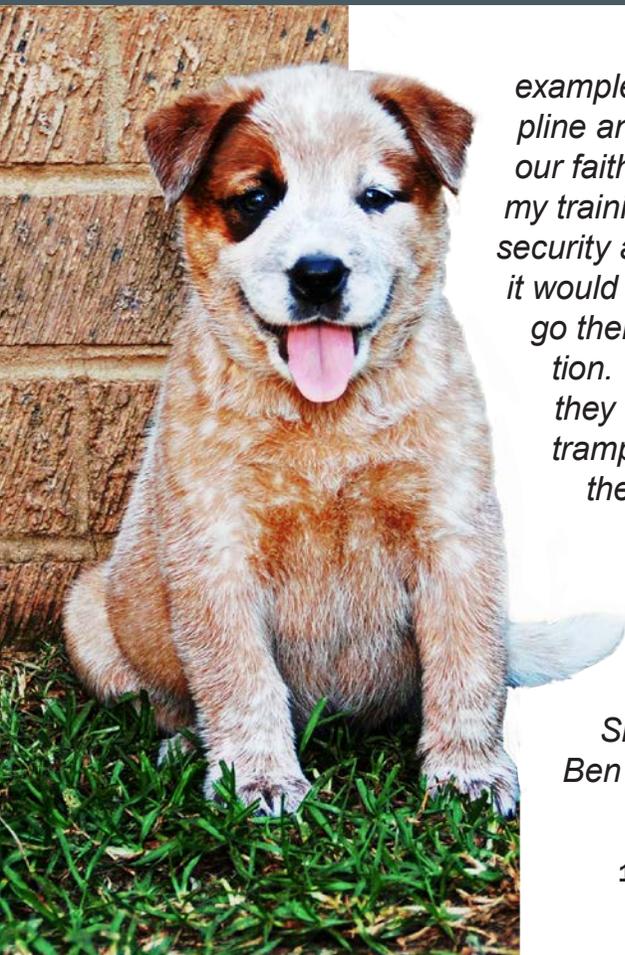
Romans 8:31

he was doing the right thing. I was on his side. It made me think of the scripture in Romans that says "If God is for us then who can be against us?" It was an

example to me of how God's discipline and training of us increases our faith and trust in him, and also my training of my kids provides security and comfort to them and it would be child abuse to let them go their own way without direction. Without the loving training they will only run in fear and be trampled when confronted with the "1300 lb" devil.

Thank you for taking the time to read through my meandering note. We are looking forward to receiving your magazine.

Sincerely,
Ben and Trisha





BOSSY BOYS AND *Independent Girls*

By Shalom Brand

Ryder, my two year old, is quite the handful. He loves to be in the middle of it all, helping and directing everyone! Yes, he's a tad bossy, full of life and ambition, and knows what he wants. He can be domineering, for sure. I am definitely already seeing a little Command Man emerge.

When raising a son or daughter who has a gift for leadership, it is so much fun to guide their commanding personality. My first daughter and now my youngest son are so much

alike in their need to control. It is amusing; even with their age difference (13 years), Ryder sees Janelle Grace as the one he needs to rule. I have to remember not to dictate or dominate them.

So let's talk tips for raising these strong, confident, and—at times—trying children.

PRAY

Pray that you will have wisdom and patience—especially patience. You

want to direct the explosion, not disarm it.

ACCOMMODATE

Don't scold their leadership tendencies; incorporate them into the daily routine and seek special situations where they can be the overseer of animals, young children, household repairs, etc. Understand their need to lead, while taking into account that they don't know how. Ask their opinion and discuss the wisdom of their ideas.

HAVE A CLEAR PLAN

My daughter is a nanny. When she first started working for this young family she had a battle for leadership with their oldest. I encouraged her to create a plan for the day as soon as she got there. So instead of her being bossy and butting heads with him on every part of the day's activities, she would sit down with all the kids and create a plan for the day so he would know what was expected. After all, the plan was of his own making. He felt in charge right from the start. Often kids with command personalities are not stubborn or cantankerous; they just hate a vacuum and inefficiency. Helping to formulate the plan of the day satisfied his need to command, and he became the most efficient worker.

GIVE THEM SELF-WORTH

This is so easy—PRAISE them! Let them work with you and be a part of the team. When I was working at the Russian orphanage as a 19-year-old girl, I was in charge of a young man who had been so crushed and talked

down to by the leader before me that he had become bitter and angry. He had no self-respect. I started off by just praising him a LOT for all the little things he did right. I gave him opportunities to lead and advise. This created trust and respect and brought healing. Working together, planning together, and doing life together are key to happy leadership.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

Two-year-old Ryder has no idea how to lead with wisdom, but I can give him opportunities to be THE MAN. I let him carry in the wood or jugs of milk and then brag on him. He loves to fetch the broom, and I make sure the other children don't take that away from him. Yes, they fight over who gets to help Mom. They know helping me comes with lots of praise so they compete for it. I brag on him to Dad, saying what a big boy he is. I let him lead me around the yard, showing me their progress in dirt, rock, and shrub removal, or rearrangement of a wood pile. I follow and brag on his leading me so well. Each word, each praise, builds him into the man and leader he will be later in life.

You have an opportunity right now as a mother or father to teach your children in a way that speaks life into them. Teach them to have a learning mindset. This world needs good leaders who stand up for our rights and our families, and for GOD. Moms, we are raising MEN and WOMEN for GOD. Let's not be slack! ■

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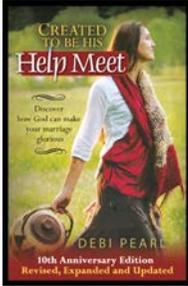
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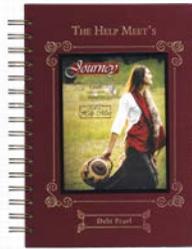
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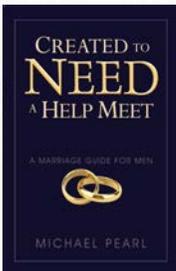
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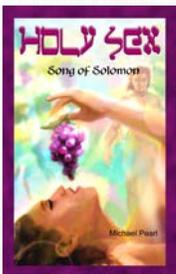
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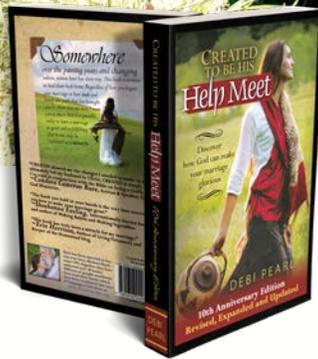
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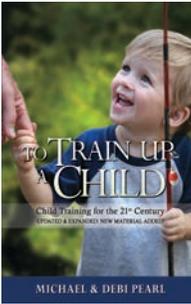
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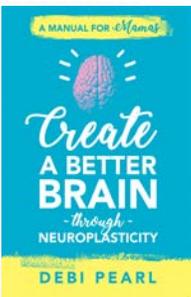
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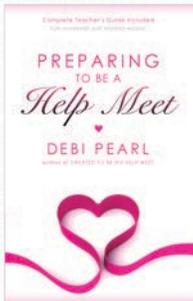
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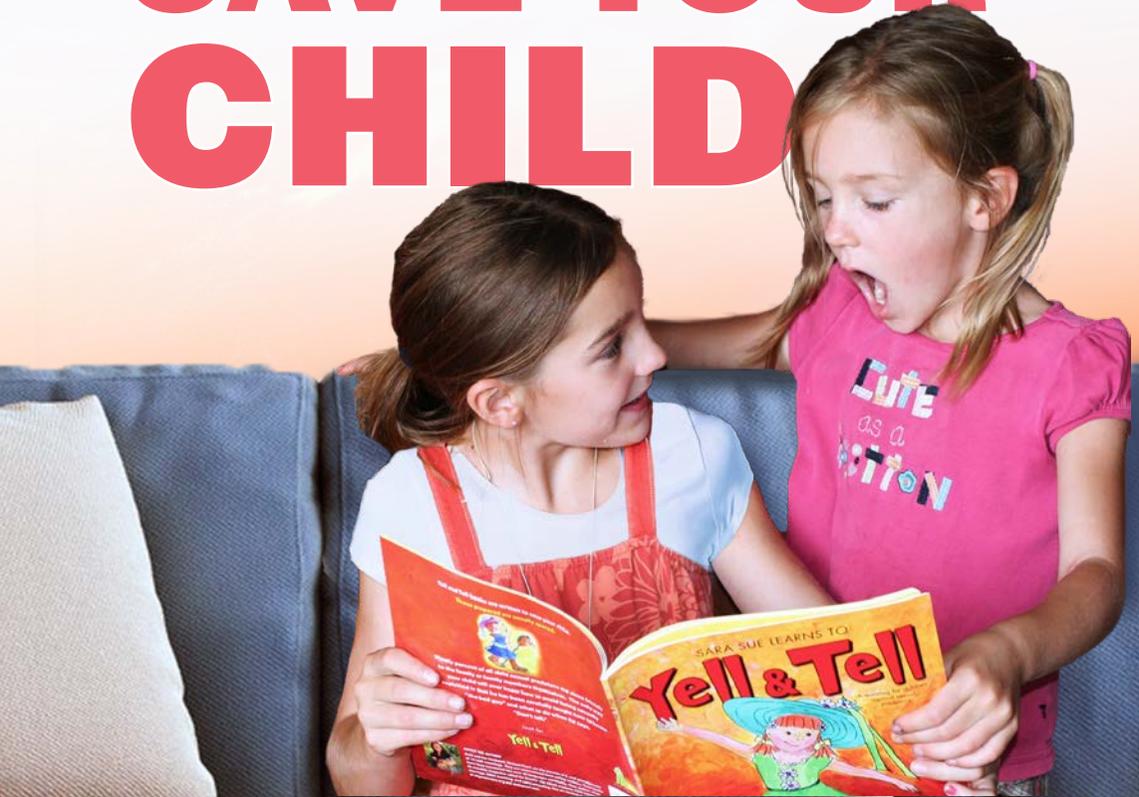


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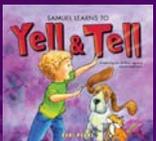
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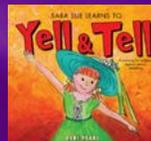
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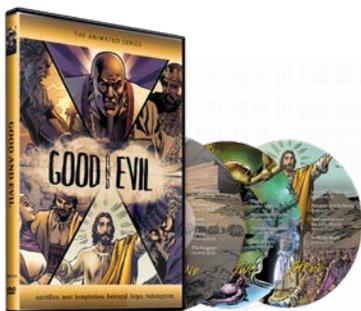


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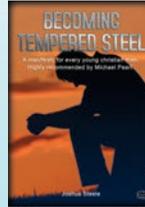
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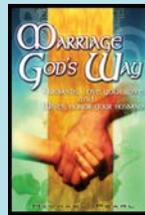
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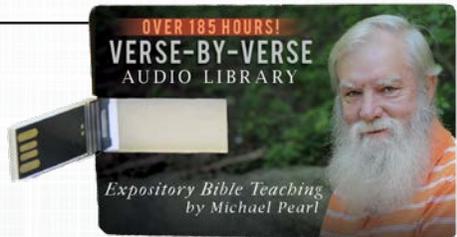
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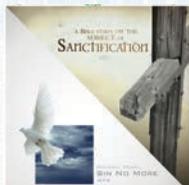
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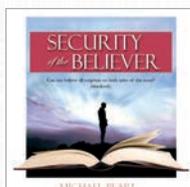
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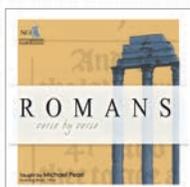
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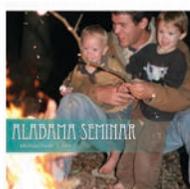
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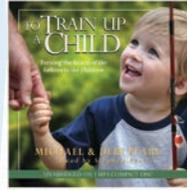
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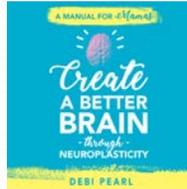
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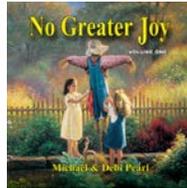
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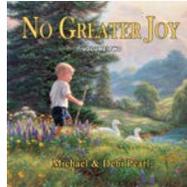
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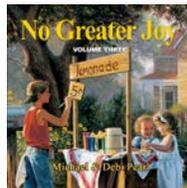
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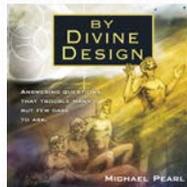
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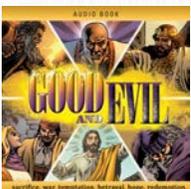
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