

# A Greater Than Solomon

Sermonaudio, January-April, 2019

## AUDIO 1.

“Hear the cries of the shackled from the onset of time,

“For the chains of defeat there's no key.

“See the tears of the broken, the cries of the slaves:

“Is there no one worthy to set us free?” (Bill/Gloria Gaither)

I cried for the subject. I cried for my own teenagers of decades ago. I cried for my own ways. I cried over counterfeit brokenness espoused by those who misunderstand God's discipline. I cried over children who have no fathers except drunken ones, unloving ones, absent ones, unprotecting ones, brutal ones, perverted ones, or outwardly religious ones.

I saw Jesus, the Jesus I have claimed since my own teen years, in a new light. I saw how he handled the “troubled” of his own day. I saw no violence, except to a demon living in a troubled man. I saw his loving handling of a troubled adulteress, a troubled pagan woman, those troubled by disease. I saw His tears for a troubled nation, His desire for them to come under His wings and be sheltered there, troubled no more.

Yes, I know the God who is angry every day with sinners. He shall do what He shall do one day. I have not stopped believing in God's ultimate judgment, God's wrath. But I see in Jesus, One who would shelter us from that evil, One Whose heart burned with such a fire of love that even on the day when He was being slaughtered as the Lamb He was, He dealt with the troubled thieves and soldiers around Him, not with vengeance and deserved punishment, but with forgiveness.

And Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” It is this Jesus and this Father that some children are not permitted to see. Rather they see another Jesus, as if there were such a Person. This version of the Son of God is petty, judgmental, cruel, desiring judgment instead of mercy, shame instead of covering. At least, that's what they said...

All of us who have abused the privilege of bringing up children, and that includes a huge number I think, must sit under the judgment of God now, or face it later. But have I reversed myself? Is God really that way? The God of pure love yet the God of judgment? A mystery indeed, but it need not concern us if we simply go after this God and find Him. He will gladly and forever, receive us.

But God has told us that if we will judge ourselves now, that is, be truly broken by His loving Spirit now, we will not be judged. I call all care-givers to that soul-search that leads to the tender breaking, as opposed to the violent sort, of God.

There is a better way than the harsh mean way which some have used. Jesus spoke of it and lived it. But we will not know of it unless we enter into His Presence and ask Him about it. Let the trial begin. Let the witnesses break us with a holy breaking. Let the verdict resound somewhere deep within. We will never – thankfully – be the same.

A word of caution to my audience. I am a Christian. I speak to Christians. We in the church are in no way responsible for telling non-Christians how to live. We put the message out to them clearly that Jesus invites them to become one of us. But failing that, they are not under our jurisdiction. So when I give out advice and ideas from the Word or my own experience, I am speaking to the church.

You will be on your knees and faces with me, some of you, crying out not only for the hurting children of bad homes, but for your own inadequacies. The Spirit was given to us parents so that we can discipline our children properly. We have often ignored His gentle approach and used fleshly power plays, methods that actually work... for a while. But they have little if any eternal significance. And we thought we got all this from the Bible.

It is time for judgment to begin at the house of God. I Peter 4:17. Peter argues that if judgment is done even among us who are believers, what will it be like when the world outside Christ is judged? We, and when I speak of “we”, I am referring to truly born-again Christians - have been, since the first century, called upon to judge ourselves, to discern what is evil among us, and to do away with it. My profoundest apologies to those who now think the born again experience is a myth because of what has been brought upon them by those wearing that title.

### **Judge not, that you be not judged. Matthew 7:1**

You are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge. Romans 2:1

Both Scriptures have to do with one man condemning another without realizing his own sins. They have nothing to do with the exposing of false practices among us.

No judging, no condemning others. Yet I may put myself on trial here.

No judging, but release of a prisoner from suffering is a worthy activity for Christians to be about. Did not Jesus come to set captives free from false religious systems of thought? Cries that come from a North Korean concentration Camp are no more valid than those that come from some “Christian” ministry or home. All must be heard and addressed.

### **Touch not my anointed.**

When I traveled in charismatic circles (quite literally), I used to hear this Scripture (Psalm 105:15) quoted a lot by, and in reference to, charismatic preachers, who wanted the audience to know that “You better not come against what I am saying, if you do not want to incur the wrath of God!”

Sorry, Mr. Preacher, I think you’ve got it backwards. The context is about Israel. The people of Israel. “Don’t you dare touch people upon whom my favor and blessing rests.”

The question is, should a Christian (that would be me) speak against his own people? No, not unless said persons are hurting others of God’s people

Think of Nehemiah rebuking Jews for charging interest on their newly-arrived brothers from Persia, also Jews. Think of Moses rebuking Aaron for allowing sin in the camp, then undoing all of Aaron’s false ways. Think of Jesus rebuking Israel’s leadership for binding heavy burdens on an already-oppressed nation. I’m sure there are other examples.

Be it known, though, that I work alone. No church or organization or individual therein has asked me to write this report. No victim or victim’s relative or victim’s friend has called upon my services. I simply know of some children crying, and I go for help, what every decent citizen would do. I report their plight, give my reasons for a need for assistance, and pray assistance will come. And in my own sphere, I begin offering better assistance to the children still under my care.

Emotional reactions to child abuse by Christians, like the one I experienced recently aren’t always good. They’re not good at all if not followed up with something from the head. A little research online and elsewhere took care of that component. Mind and heart engaged here.

I never thought I would experience a tragedy that would stir me up like North Korea did a decade ago. That turned into a book, a visit, a shared website, and eventually a nervous breakdown. I’m not good at this emotion spending. Eats up adrenalin.

But when I began to know about things going on here and there in the church, in the name of Jesus, the fires got lit again, for better or worse. Something had to be said. And done. Yeah, the third part of the equation. Not just emotion and facts but actions.

I’ve never been to some of the homes and ministries I describe. But I have heard the cries of many who suffer there.

I was never in a Nazi death camp, but I believe their stories. Never in a North Korean prison, but I pray with them constantly. My website features hundreds of audios and hundreds of photos about this precious place. So in a way I’ve been to North Korea, too.

Don’t eyewitnesses matter?

## **AUDIO 2**

Well, are you ready for this?

Many churches and individual believers will not be, not at all.

“If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.” Mark Antony in Julius Caesar.

### **About Nuremberg**

“We were just doing what we were ordered to do.”

Surely you have heard of the Nazi trials that took place after World War II? Movies have been made about them. In many of the testimonies that came out at that time, the idea was advanced that they ought to be let off the hook because they were just doing what their superiors ordered.

Most of us see through that. But there is a haunting fact that bothers me as I write. Could it really be that in committing the atrocities I will mention, the leaders at some of these ministries believe they are obeying God? That this really was/is the finest way to raise children? That violence to a child’s will and very person will produce a Spirit-filled holy Christian youth, who will go on to be a great man or woman of God?

Do they really believe this? Or do they believe something better, but something that was simply too difficult to perform? Is there a policy problem here, or just weakness in human nature in dealing with children’s attitudes?

### **The myth out there**

So there are a few disgruntled kids, like the employees we’re always reading about, a couple of self-willed rebellious teenagers, who got thrown out of this home. So they make up stories to bring the ministry down.

That’s how many first hear it spun. You know, “Oh, those teens can be so awful! These teens were trying to destroy a valuable ministry that has lasted for so many years. How despicable!”

Uh, not exactly. So far I have read multiplied stories of anguish and unnecessary pain about teens who were dropped off by their parents by surprise – in many cases – one miserable day, to serve a long-term sentence in a “home” that was no home. Not for them.

That is what they write. Do I have a reason or need to disbelieve them?

Some say, Of course you do! They were not truly believers when they went in. They fought the Lord, and the Lord rewarded them, and now they are bitter and fighting back for their honor.

So, grown adults with nothing better to do? (Many of the reporters are not teens any longer, you know.) Some of the letters are written by now-grandmothers who with much trepidation re-open a chapter of their life that they wish with all their power they could forget. They do it to spare others.

I will share in the sessions that follow, bits and pieces of their stories, gleaned from internet websites, the only venue that many are allowed. I will explain some Biblical principles of child-rearing.

By and large I have sought to keep names out of this. It is the evil we are going after, not the person. And the wounded need not have their names brought out again. I am confident that everything I have said is the truth, and you will be too as you follow up.

How did I get into a battle over child abuse?

I mean, I'm too old for this, right? Retired, got my routine, enjoying my church, my home, you know, settled. It all started when I heard that a ministry my church supports was under attack. I wanted to know why. The place was a good place. A safe place where "problem" people could get it together with God and learn good things about life. But God would prevail because we would be praying.

Okay.

I decided to trace down the ministry and find out for myself if the "attacks" were really attacks, or just the desperate pleas of those who have suffered, and who desire that others not suffer.

One outcome of my research and reporting: we all need information. What really happened, or is happening, not just in that ministry but in many others? Hopefully information and exposure will need to reassessment and reformation. Failing this, one must think in terms of the closing of some of these places.

If places like this are shut down, either parents will have to shoulder their own responsibilities with assistance from varying pastors and church members, or at least discover who is doing the "home" ministry properly. Word is that such places are hard to find, but that they do exist.

One desired outcome in any such examination is closure for victims. Ability to move on. Neither my virtual trial or a legal one may prove the antidote for some of the damage done. These souls must be commended to God and His power. Sadly, it will be hard to convince them that anything Christian is the answer to their problems.

But there really is a true church out there.

Not wanting to be overly dramatic here, but I don't believe the Lord would be pleased with me throwing stones at others without taking some heat myself.

I raised teenage girls. It was not easy. the challenges can be overwhelming. But no excuses. I was loud. Angry at times. Single parenting through part of it. Unnecessary rules and regs and restrictions. I have since repented and am being given another shot at it, if God spares me for a few more years, via grandchildren.

I have been one given to "ministry" who honored ministry more than family, ignoring the greatest ministry of all. I reacted rather than prayed when situations arose. I needed control. I stopped the

spanking at the teen years, but could cause pain verbally. I was raised in a restrictive environment myself and tended to pass it on.

I also helped raise other kids as a teacher on Chicago's West Side. Many painful years. What did I do with rebellious teens when I had a chance there? Normally I called for security. I could not handle them alone. That's not a confession. That's an obvious fact that others who deal with teens need to recognize and correct if possible.

Once I slapped a girl, another time I shook one. Both times brought censure and near loss of employment. That's illegal. More than that, it was uncalled for, and showed my own problem as well as the students'. There was a better way.

### **My readers**

Can some of you sit with me on the bench here? Have some of you been unnecessarily rough with your teens? Yelled too much? Punished out of retribution instead of love and correction? Not easy, right?

Let's all be willing to say we have shortcomings in parenting. But none of that excuses the behavior that has become policy in some Christian homes and group homes. All of our and their behavior is forgivable when confessed.

Most Importantly: The real defendant "on trial" here is ultimately not a man or woman, or some ministry somewhere, but a philosophy, somehow taken from the Scriptures, adhered to by quite a number of Christian people, and governing the behavior of leaders of homes.

We are not talking only of some folks who have made mistakes in bringing up children. All parents fit that category. We are pointing out that a way of life has been described by certain Christian authors (we'll look at one later) that binds people to certain behaviors.

To some, this way of life is so connected to the Christian message, that, when we dare assail it or them, these folks feel they are being persecuted for righteousness' sake. Some would be willing to do prison time rather than change or shut down. I will tell you of one who did just that....

Not just child-rearing but church-leading is on the line here. Do independent pastors have the right to sever themselves from all outside authority, even Christian brothers and sisters who need to correct them?

That's what makes all of this so delicately difficult to address. Some of these leaders are God's people. Not all, but some.

On the other hand, there are quite a number of God's people in the group of "survivors", as they call themselves. Shall we ignore their cries?

### **AUDIO 3**

#### **THE CHARGES - CRIES**

From Psalm 31...

Have mercy on me , O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye wastes away with grief. Yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief and my years with sighing... I hear the slander of many; fear is on every side...

#### **A response from Jesus in Matthew 28**

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And from Charles Spurgeon, commenting on Psalm 31:8 (From Treasury of David)

Many saints have had their greatest enlargement of soul when their affairs have been in the greatest straits. Their souls have been in a "large room" when their bodies have been lying in ... some narrow dungeon. Grace has been equal to every emergency; and more than this, it [grace] has made the emergency an opportunity for displaying itself.

#### **Remember the prisoners... (Hebrews 13:3)**

If prison is a place to which you go when you've done bad things,

If prison is a place where you don't want to be, but can't escape from,

If prison is a place where bad things can happen...

Then unfortunately there are some Christian homes and group home ministries that must be classified as a prison. Therefore the Scriptural injunction follows, "Be mindful of the prisoners, as though bound with [them]."

Yes, there have always been in places of incarceration those who were relatively glad to be there, for reasons of their own. There are people at our Cook County Jail who are glad to be there. They are not wanted anywhere else, they are fed. They are kept in line by harsh rules. They have forgotten how to live their own lives, for better or worse.

Some of these children we are talking about would have been called "bad kids." They were "arrested" by parents in many cases, brought by deception or force to some facility, "abandoned" by their arresters, and forced into a sentence of many months.

And as in most prisons, some escape. Some are returned. Others are able to prove abuse and stay out for good.

Am I making all this up? Trying to be dramatic? Do the research. See if you agree that something is amiss in a facility that calls itself a "home" for the "troubled", but has become a "trouble" of its own.

If I have misspoken, please show me where.

JUDGE NOT. Possible to discern error, point it out, without having a judgmental spirit? That is our calling. When we condemn, we get ourselves in serious trouble with the Lord. I fear Him and tremble at His word. Nevertheless, the cries of the suffering must not fall on deaf ears. We seek not retribution, only correction. And we know that what we seek in others God will expect in us. He will have a perfect church when all is said and done.

### **On accusing an elder.**

The passage is 1 Timothy 4:19. The letter was written from an apostle to a member of his team. Timothy was only a “pastor” – in the modern sense – on a temporary basis. And the office of pastor in those days was a shared one anyway. Pastor/ elder/ shepherd/ bishop, seem to be overlapping terms.

But for the time being, Timothy had been assigned to put the Ephesian church in order by ordaining a group of elders, training them, and then moving on.

His instruction here is never to receive an accusation against an elder unless there were two or three witnesses. Hearsay would not do it. Someone must have seen the wrong activity. Well, two or three “someone’s” just to be sure.

Dare we come against church leaders? Yes, if the accusations mount against them. And they do.

The entire passage from verses 17 to 22 is about church eldership. Paul goes on to say that those [elders] who turn out to be in error need to be rebuked before the congregation, so that the congregation may “fear”, realizing that no one is above the law of God.

I have indicted myself already. I have suggested that some of my readers need to judge themselves. And included in this indictment are “homes” like the one in question in various states where such abuse is not monitored. But none of that clears me, or anyone aware of these sad events, from allowing these people to bring forth their clear and painful memories of this place.

Let me present to you some of the cries of the incarcerated children. Yes, some in secular places, but some in places bearing the name Christian. And many of these crying out are middle-aged adults telling their stories so God’s people will do something. Some are saved brothers and sisters. All need a healing. All are the reason for this series. All have broken my heart and will break yours.

I have taken many of the cries I heard and put them into 30 categories. There are others. I have included random statements under each category, combined fictitiously into one person. But each statement is from a real person.

There is absolutely nothing fictitious about this listing. These people being abused could have been your child, or sibling, or friend, or fellow church member.

### **EXCESSIVE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT**



I was so bruised from beatings that I could not sit or sleep comfortably.

I heard screaming from the punishment room often. I could not sit after a beating, but was told I was being overly dramatic. I peed all over myself while big \_\_\_\_\_ paddled me severely, seven or eight times, then had me sit on my wounds.

I was told that beatings would rid my soul of its wicked ways. I was so shaken by a beating they had me breathing into a brown paper bag.

### **MEALS WITHHELD or FORCED or SUBSTANDARD or SICKENING**

If my work was not done well, I could have dinner withheld from me.

I went to bed hungry many nights. I was often fed expired Dole lettuce with expired salad dressing. I was fed rotten vegetables. I was fed burnt oatmeal. I was fed Alpo dog food.

“No meals” was a form of punishment.

### **THE SHAME of ADOLESCENT BED-WETTING**

Because of scheduled bathroom breaks, often I wet the bed. If I wet the bed I would have to strip the sheets in the morning, wash my plastic mattress and get paddled. I was forced to wear a diaper. All my peers were made aware that I had to wear a diaper.

### **VERBAL ABUSE/ HUMILIATION/SHAME**

I was called lazy. I was called filthy. I was called disgusting.

I was told that my hair would be growing out because harlots wear their hair short. I was broken down and humiliated at every turn. I was often called “worthless” or “harlot.”

### **MOUNTING STRESS and ANXIETY and FEAR**

I often cried myself to sleep. I was afraid to speak out against atrocities I saw around me. I worried about whether \_\_\_\_\_ would scream at us. I worried about whether our chores would pass inspection. I worried about what the next meal would taste like, would the food be old and dangerous to eat?

### **TOTAL CONTROL and MANIPULATION**

Accused of not washing after using the toilet, I protested. Then I was accused of arguing and possibly lying. I was told there was no place to run to, that neighbors were friends of the House, as well as police.

### **STRIP SEARCH on ARRIVAL**

#### **AUDIO 4**

We were enumerating some of the methods of some Christian homes for teens. Here are a few more.

#### **THE PUNISHMENT of SILENCE**

I was not allowed to talk with certain girls. I was not allowed to look at certain girls. I could only talk to my assigned talking buddy. Complete isolation finally broke my will.

#### **UNANNOUNCED UNEXPLAINED INTIMATE EXAM**

I had to take an exam in a room that looked like a closet. I was traumatized by the invasion of my body privacy. They refused to tell me anything or let me speak as they gave me a pelvic exam. As a grown woman I still cry about the humiliation of my forced exam when I was a 15-year-old.

#### **NO PRIVACY**

I had to record publicly my movements. I had to record publicly my cycle. And show it. I had no privacy at all.

#### **RELIGION, BIBLE AS A TOOL of PUNISHMENT and SHOW**

The Bible and God were shoved down my throat. All day and all night was religious indoctrination. I got into trouble for questioning the Bible. God was used to scare me. He was only the God of judgment and wrath. I was taken out "soul-winning" although I was not even saved at the time. I had just memorized verses. God was misrepresented to me.

#### **EDUCATION INADEQUATE**

The high school curriculum here is not accredited and made it difficult for me to continue my education later.

#### **CUT OFF FROM PARENTS, FRIENDS, even PASTORS**

I was allowed one phone call a month, during which time I had to talk to my entire family. A staff member sat inches from me and would suspend my call if they thought it necessary. All my visitations were monitored by staff.

When my deaf mother visited, I was not allowed to communicate with her in sign language. I received many letters that were blacked out, censored.

#### **QUESTIONABLE FINANCIAL POLICIES**

#### **UNREASONABLE DEMANDS**

I was only allowed three minutes in the shower. I was not allowed to talk about home, location, phone numbers. I was not allowed to keep journal, diary, or calendar. I was assigned work duties for wrinkles in my bed-making. I was assigned punishment for looking in the wrong direction.

## **THE FORMATION OF MINDLESS ROBOTS**

I learned to comply. I did and said what I had to do and say to make it to the end. The staff did everything possible to quicken the breaking of my will. I trusted no one. This was extreme brain-washing and mind-control.

## **CONSTANT NEGATIVITY**

They made me feel I wasn't good enough for anything. Made me feel I would never make it in the world.

## **AWFUL AFTER-EFFECTS**

I still have horrible dreams of my stay there. I wake up 3-4 times a month with horrible nightmares. I cannot trust anyone to this day. I am suffering depression because of my stay there. I could not speak to my husband about this horrible experience until many years of marriage. I now have PTSD and abandonment issues. I thought about suicide constantly when I was there. I still have weekly horrible dreams... "I never forgot the nights I cried in those triple bunks for some sign that there was hope and a reason to live one more day."

## **OVERWORK**

I was asked to do so much outside work that it interfered with my school work. I had to work from sun-up to sun-down doing back-breaking labor. I missed days of school working on some building or cleaning project.

## **CYCLE STOPPED**

## **SHADOWING**

I was disciplined by being "shadowed" for nine months. Had to follow a staff member 24/7, even at sleep. Could not look at or talk to any human being. My spirit was broken by shadowing.

## **LITTLE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**

My asthma inhaler was sent home. I had an asthma attack and was told I would be fine. I could hardly breathe. I never saw a doctor or dentist in my months there.

## **FORCED TESTIMONIES**

I wrote a glowing testimony about the place because I was forced to do so. These were not my feelings. I was forced for my fifteen months there to write happy letters home, telling of my spiritual growth. I wrote a great "testimony" for their website after getting out. Now I want others to be spared going there.

## **A PATTERN OF DECEPTION**

I was deceived about where I was going on the day I entered. I had been taken there deceptively.

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE and DETERIORIZATION**

I could touch no one. I could show emotion to no one. I lost it. I began yelling and screaming that I had to get out, that I could not live like a robot. I was normal when I came here. I had to pray every night that God would keep me sane. I was aching for one little hug. I was so lonely.

## **PRISON-LIKE**

I never was allowed to leave the grounds. I was totally cut off from the world by a high fence. I was a prisoner. I was never allowed to leave the building while I was there. I was incarcerated ... The doors and windows had alarms, not to keep people from getting in but to keep us from getting out. I felt like Joseph in prison. Unjustly incarcerated, but God was with me through it all.

A comment on this: I saw a segment of a documentary about prison life recently on TV. The strictness. The strange rules. The punishments. Oh my! It put me in mind of places I have heard about when doing research for this report. But that prison was for convicts. Lawbreakers. Very bad people, we would say. Is that the environment we want to have from those representing Jesus, who came to set prisoners free? Not talking about a lawless discipline-less approach toward erring children. But prison? Is Jesus happy with prison? Is that the best the church can offer? Here, let me help you with your girls. I'll lock them up, build a ten-foot wall around them, and demand perfect obedience or else. Is that us?

## **MADE ME HATE CHRISTIANITY or CRY OUT TO GOD FOR HELP**

I was abused in the name of God. I hated church for a while because of what I saw there.. I lost my belief in God. I am a miracle, having come through this place with my faith intact, in spite of the way I was treated there.

## **NO LEGAL HELP**

I was asked to leave when they found that a lawyer and private investigator were checking the school out. When the State investigated us, staff was present. I could not tell the truth or I would be punished.

## **RACISM**

I was told God didn't like people who strayed outside their race.

Folks, all of the above is from Christian schools. I have no idea how bad it gets in the world. But the church needs to do some soul-searching if it is allowing places like the above to stay in place.

I found these bits and pieces all over the internet, pieced them together, and brought it before you.

## AUDIO 5

So, who is this guy doing the research? Many of my Sermonaudio friends know about me, but for new listeners, let me introduce myself:

Born into a non-Christian home in Columbus, Ohio, 1946.

God's been after me from childhood, and I'm so glad about that! Living at home was not a good thing. Dad (though I found out only a few years ago he wasn't really my dad) had a drinking problem. Mom had a nervous-emotional problem. There was rejection, control, general unhealthiness at home. I somewhat excelled at school, but my real break came from the church.

The local church was of a "non-denominational" denomination. (I'll just let that go.) They were into helping neighbors who were in poor situations. That was us. My dad's drinking and a lingering illness contracted in the Navy took him from us and from his work. Po' folks, for sure.

One day some bags of groceries appeared on our doorstep and we knew the church was blessing us. My mother, I believe acting out of guilt, got us all to go to that church soon after the gift arrived. Mom and dad never darkened the door of a church after that, and I have never stopped attending since that day!

That's not a salvation testimony, though I do have one, just the way God got me into a safe place where I would hear the salvation message, and delight in it.

God did follow through, called me into the ministry, sent me to Bible College, gave me places to minister, started a church through me, and above all gave me a night during which I felt the great weight of sins removed by His grace.

So, yes, I was saved and an ordained minister. But I came to blows doctrinally with my denomination and they could not use me any longer. I spent the next fifty years or so "at sea" in the so-called charismatic movement. There is so much good in that group, but more and more the extra- and non-Biblical teachings and experiences have crowded out the solid foundational teachings of Scripture. Just last year, in February of 2018, I decided I could no longer be called a charismatic.

Don't get me wrong here. I probably never was a charismatic by their definition. I never spoke in tongues in the Biblical sense. I held on to the cardinal doctrines of the faith, leaning more and more to the doctrines of grace.

I think of Von Trapp's message to "Rolff" in the Sound of Music: "You'll never be one of them!"

Indeed. I was a fundamentalist all along, and for the past twenty years or so have published messages and readings to Sermonaudio.

Anyway, I started looking for a Bible-believing church in or near Albany Park, the neighborhood where I have for many years done street ministry.

That's how I found this little fellowship. They took me in, let me preach some, warmly accepted me. Through a series of circumstances I will not relate here, I became aware of abuse in Christian homes and decided to address it with you.

### **"Brokenness"**

For now, may I tell you that I almost was a broken man, in the worst sense. I was raised in a home where Mom had an illness, mentally, that caused her to desire perfect control over everything. I was not beaten with a rod, but her language and mannerisms and rejection formed me into less than a person.

An act of kindness – not a whip – from a local church put me into fellowship with God's way of breaking people. Namely, His love and acceptance, something I had not known at home. The people of that kind church took me in. I still lived at home, but at church I was loved. It was enough to see me through those young years.

I have fond memories of staying at the home of one of the elders, who to this day is my friend. I saw a loving family, what it meant to have Christ in a home. What a blessing.

I was broken again, in the God way, when I learned that this God would answer my prayers. And when he did, tears of joy and gratitude flowed from a pre-teen's eyes.

Shortly after my teen years, the Gospel itself got through to me. Broken again, I mean really broken, hearing a message by Billy Graham. Sin was real, but grace was more real. I broke down once more, but only to be built up with the joy of the Lord.

More? Oh yes. The Romanian Christians and their plight under Ceaucescu, brought me to Communist Romania, where I was able to minister to those in a prison-land. What joy. But what breaking of heart.

And in North Korea, the cries of the people of God got to me, just a decade or so ago. Broken! Those poor people! Who will speak for them? Many have and are, and I joined their voices. I still advocate for them.

My last breaking was just days ago, as I write in December of 2018. When I read the stories of the victimized girls, so carefully and purposefully gathered together by one who was herself a victim, I could feel the familiar breaking coming again.

Yes, I know brokenness. It did not happen when I was spanked for smoking. Or when the principal of the school whacked this first-grader for his antics. Or when the gym teacher in High School laid wood to seat in front of the whole gym class. That may have broken pride for a short time. But God Himself broke the real me.

When some of these homes and pastors speak of breaking a baby's will by spanking her until he cries no more, my heart gushes out with rivers of agony. I can't stand it. My brain has no place to put it. I know the Scriptures, and no Scripture speaks of such evil!

God arise and stop this ongoing breaking of humanity by Christians who should know better!

## **The Prisoner**

It all began on September 6, 1967. The Prisoner TV series lasted for seventeen episodes and told the story of Communism and all other mind-control methods of mankind.

In the show, a man is kidnapped off the streets of London and brought to a village of idiots. Happy, nice people. No trouble. Nothing negative. All is sweetness and light.

These people have all been victims of a “breaking” procedure using drugs and operations, etc. They are left with functioning bodies but non-functioning brains. They can eat and sleep and work and interact. But they can’t speak against the government or anything in their society.

### **They are broken. Destroyed-broken.**

There are many ways to get to such a state. Brutality is one. Shame is another. Imprisonment.

Do I need to say that this sort of brokenness, advocated by some churches and their “homes for the troubled”, is not the Bible’s brokenness at all? Do I need to say that David’s contrite broken spirit did not come about that way?

Peter was broken by a look at Jesus whom He had offended. He had denied Jesus no less than Judas. But He was loved and forgiven.

These men were punished. But they were broken before they were punished. The aim of some seems to be to use punishment to bring about godly brokenness.

Ain’t gonna happen.

## **AUDIO 6**

### **North Korea**

In my early 40’s I began hearing the painful cries of the persecuted church. I have traveled to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, in the days when Communism ruled. How my heart burned for those people of God willing to endure such suffering for Christ.

Romania became a gut-jerking passion for me after that. I visited her four times. I advocated for her here. Wrote pamphlets. I prayed and corresponded. Then, Romania was free. And I felt free from that burden.

Then 2007. I became in that year aware of the awful pain present in Kim’s Korea. For two years I followed that nation by blogging, then collected all those blogs into the largest book I have written to date. I visited Korea with my Korean wife. We worked with refugees arriving in the South after the arduous journey from the North via China and several Southeast Asia nations.

They told us their stories. Concentration Camps. Torture. Humiliation. Reeducation. Forced compliance. Brainwashing. Daily and constant loudspeaker broadcasts. Starvation. The elite blessed, the rabble cursed. Families separated. Whole families imprisoned for one member's offense. Forced confessions and testimonials.

It had been a difficult year for me before that trip. And those difficulties, added to the constant hearing of North Korea narratives, and writing them down for the mission I was representing, evidently exhausted my supply of adrenalin. Nervous breakdown. Second-hand trauma. For months after my return I could do little besides pray and listen to Gospel music. I understand a little about stress that causes fear that causes breakdowns of the nervous system...

Passion is a good thing. But too much will eat a man up. The situation is so wicked in North Korea. Let only the strong approach it.

My website continues to feature photos and hundreds of audios both in English and Korean, addressing Chosun. I do not plan another visit any time soon.

But what in the world does all that have to do with child abuse here? Everything.

**Déjà vu all over again.**

Just tone it down a lot. Add "Jesus" and "the Bible" and "church." Then read again, if you possibly can, the methods books of some churches among us.

When you read the stories of the abused and you look at that North Korea list, you will see why I let out a wail of emotion when I encountered them. I have dealt with these things before. I know what is going on here. My heart is broken again. Already I have had to back off. I was advised to get out of this altogether, for it leads to bad places.

But I cannot. Perhaps it is the aching of this little boy from the unhappy home. Maybe it's the grown man, who has looked Romania and North Korea in the eye and seen the evil there. I can't tell you why my heart beats more quickly for some teens-now-adults that I have never met and probably will never meet. All I know is, I have seen this before, and I must tell God's people about it.

And I beg God's people to pray and act until something changes. The imprisoning of youth, the actual beating of babies... by Christians. By pastors!

Consider this testimony that I have rewritten a bit for your consumption:

"I will tell you the story my dear mother passed on to me. Age 2, I was. I was in my mother's arms, disturbed about something, making a fuss during a \_\_\_\_\_ sermon. A leading staff member at that time suddenly stood with paddle in hand and forced us to a room adjoining the area where they all sat and listened to her husband preach. Soon they listened to another sound. It was me, screaming for my life as the woman's paddle struck me on my hind-side. I screamed until I could scream no more, Mom said. When I finally ran out of breath, the swats stopped, and victoriously we emerged from the little



room as the sermon went on without interruption. Except one, where another staff member, who could hear the swats, cheered her on.

My mother would not lie. This actually happened.”

Speaking of moms, let me tell you some summaries of moms’ confessions . These are mothers of survivors of Christian ministry homes.

As in the sharing of the children’s accusations above, I have combined the words of various mothers as though they were one concerned mom. And believe me, “Mom” is very concerned. You will note that their grievances mirror those of their returned teens of years ago. And also as with the teens, these comments are directly from documents easily searchable online.

Arrangements were made without my daughter’s knowledge. We were under stress and were talked into it by pastor. Calls and visits monitored. Prison-like atmosphere. Wish I had stood by my feelings and not sent her. Meals withheld for punishment. I was looked on as a “sorry” parent. Humiliation. Letters home were always positive. Horrified to see how skeletal she appeared. Her arms were just sticks. Wonder if she will ever truly be over her experience. Shows signs of PTSD, twenty-five years later. I regret my daughter ever being there. Beatings.

#### **Listen to a “composite” former staff.**

As I did with the teens’ complaints, and the moms’ , I will list these charges in random order, with no names.

All they teach is fear, everything negative. Always cutting down everyone. Committed to two years but could not stay because of the abuses I saw. I was dumbfounded at what I saw. I cried for these girls when I read their testimonies later. The way things were operated reminded me of a Nazi concentration camp. There was a “prison line” for the bathroom. All mail censored through the staff. Even mine, as staff! Ate rotten food, expired and slimy. Humiliation. Psychological tactics. Bullying. Abuse. I almost gave up on God after I left this place of horror. I know they ate dog food at times. Ten-foot privacy fence, locked gates. Even as a staff member, my phone calls were monitored! When I resigned, it was said of me that “the devil got another one of the hearts of a staff member.”

The seventeenth-century songwriter Isaac Watts paraphrased the 23rd Psalm in his creation,

*My Shepherd Will Supply My Need.* It’s last verse goes like this:

Here would I find a settled rest While others go and come,

No more a stranger, nor a guest, But like a child at home.

Like a child at home. What’s it like to be a child at home? Is home a place of insecurity and constant fear of breaking rules? Is it the forever expectancy of the rod of the shepherd? Or is it a place where the still waters and green pastures are?

I know I picture Heaven, as did David, and Mr. Watts. But is not home, a Christian home, supposed to be a little like Heaven here?

**Traveling from Azubah to “Hephzibah”.** The prophet used these two words to describe Israel in two different times. Unacceptable. Delightful.

How does a person, say a teenage person, travel from hearing God say, “I don’t want you, you are not acceptable, get out of my sight,” to “I truly delight in you! You are so pleasant to me. I accept you fully”?

That I can answer in one word! Grace.

Not reformation. Not trying hard. But God’s grace written on the heart of parent and child. God’s very law, in fact, written on those hearts. The breathing of God’s Spirit on a human.

I make it too easy? Yes, because not everyone goes after the grace of God. I wonder how many of the students in Christian homes, or your home, already have tasted of that grace, but are struggling with growing up, or the sanctification the Spirit provides?

Some are headed God-ward perhaps and are turned off temporarily or permanently toward things Heavenly, if that Christian home was supposed to represent Heaven.

The lost who enter these places are lost still, hating God and church forever, but now with good reason, or so they believe.

## **AUDIO 7**

Why can’t the church regulate itself? Why does the government have to step in?

If these “homes” which dot our land don’t stop adopting non-Biblical child-raising standards, they are going to invite more and more state control of the church. Doctrines will be examined. Personnel will be scrutinized. The world’s values will be placed on the church.

We have seen in the Catholic priesthood the abuse of children sexually, and the government’s intervention. Now the specter of Protestant physical and emotional abuse invites even more.

May I say that “Independent” Christians have no right to be independent of the full Body of Christ. Just as there was formed a financial accountability organization to which Christians of many stripes subscribe, the true church needs to put in place an abuse accountability office, and reach out to all Christian homes for input in their facilities.

When “independent” means I can do anything I want behind closed doors, the church has gone too far. “Tear down this wall,” independent churches. Let the Body of Christ assist you with wisdom collected over the centuries, and especially with the wisdom of God’s Word.

Until that wall is down, true Christians from every group need to “interfere” with the compounds, and lovingly make a “fuss” in Jesus’ name.

The “broad-brush” syndrome can take over if I am not careful. Not all teen type homes are necessarily the same. I suppose there are sexual perverts out there, and sadists, and the money-hungry. But more likely, the leaders of these homes have simply read the same books, followed mechanically when they saw some things that seemed to “work”. Some no doubt have a heart to help the young people of our twisted time.

You must decide if all of that excuses the cries you have heard.

A book was written in 2015 by a Christian couple that became a guiding light for many in the church.

There have been others like it. I will not give you title or author because I do not want to promote it. Some would warn you to stay very clear of it.

It is a book by a Christian to the Christian community about the Biblical way to raise a child.

At Amazon I found that over 3,000 people had reviewed this book. Amazingly, 95% of the reviewers gave the book either 5 stars (33%) or 1 star (62%). You either love it, or hate it.

The church is divided over this issue, to be sure, as in many issues. We need to admit there are two sides to the child abuse debacle. There really are people who will defend the new philosophy in full knowledge of what goes on in these places, part of which I have been documenting. Yes, baby-beaters just may be acting in good conscience! That is the strange truth. You will note that some only change their policies when forced to do so by public outcries.

Reminds me of a statement I made once in a book about Roman Catholic persecution...

Anyway, both sides point to results and personal experiences. Both sides claim to point to the Bible. But of course, both sides can't be telling the whole (Biblical) truth. Someone's missing it.

I give you some of the reviews of this book, and call you into the struggle. I think we will all be praying more, when we have faced the realities of current leanings, brought out so well by these authors of the 2015 book.

These first three reviews were put out front, and no negative reviews were found until scrolling to the official review section. The implication being, that this was a favorable book to the public. In fact nearly two thirds of the readers despised the book, often calling for it to be burned or banned. A full 1,200 reviews used the words “child abuse.”

#### **The out-front favorable reviews, meant to sell the book:**

1. I highly suspect that the majority of the people reviewing this book haven't even read it . . . or because their parents were abusive, they think that everyone who spansks their child is abusive as well (striking a child out of anger is abuse - spanking a child for disobedience is not – the difference is thoroughly discussed in the book). I purchased this book expecting to find a manual on how to beat a child with rubber tubing -maybe even the inspiration for A Child Called It based on reviews. Well, I was disappointed but also pleasantly surprised. What I bought as a joke and novelty actually turned out to be

an enlightening and valuable advice on disciplining young children. I applied some of the practices in this book immediately, and saw positive changes in my son's behavior the first day. --B. Moore

2. I know you probably get way too much mail, but I just had to write and say THANK YOU, thank you for the updated \_\_\_\_\_. Wow!! I started reading yesterday and am already half way through. I've read the original at least 10 or 15 times in the past 3 years, but this new version has SO MUCH that clarifies and encourages me as I train my two small children. I love how, in the new book, you consistently emphasize training before the need to discipline arises and speak so often about how parents MUST be involved before they can properly apply the rod. A parent who does not show up to read a book...should not show up to administer a spanking. (pg. 94) Wonderful, true, biblical advice. Thank you so much for writing this book. It is SO good and your principles have made such a difference in our family, I just had to write and tell you. I share your materials with every parent I know! --A big thank you from a very appreciative, training mom!

Wow! Makes me want to go out and buy a copy. I could use this on my grandkids! But just a minute...

**... the other side... (btw, please forgive grammar and spelling and casual talk from simple people...)**

1. I am a Christian and a mother who wants to raise my children to be productive members of society and also to love the Lord. This book presents the exact opposite way of doing that. I was given this book when my daughter was a baby and I couldn't even finish it. I have since, and it appalls me that this is touted as a book of Christian principals. The tactics are cruel, humiliating, and downright harmful. DO NOT BUY THIS. There are so many other books and authors that can help you!

2. I was raised on the teachings of this book and it has devastated me as I have tried for the past several years to correct the psychological damage it has caused. If you want a healthy, happy child and not just a damaged robot, avoid this book.

3. Horrifying read. Only sifted through before deciding to burn this. Do not purchase this. Appalled anyone highly rated this, and more applauded a "friend" suggested this to me.

The 4<sup>th</sup> reviewer, and I use more of the negative reviews because they outnumbered the positive 2 to 1, gave actual quotes from the book, which reveal the reason why so many have a problem with it...

4. DO NOT BUY THIS BOOK, DO NOT DO THIS TO YOUR KIDS. Trust me, both my parents followed these teachings and I was beat every day for 18 years along with my six siblings. What they did to us did not make us love god, but hate him. I feared my parents, hated and resented them. My siblings and I raised each other. We had no one, not even God. Because God was on their side. Because God said it was okay for them to do these things. I read this book and I heard this messages my whole young life. And there is only one thing to say to people who follow this. "DROP YOUR PANTS AND GIVE ME THAT SWITCH, BELT, ROD, HANGER." Until you are bent over half naked, and "spanked" with any of those things he mentions you will never know the humiliation, pain and hatred that forms within you. If you are already "spanking" your child. You should ask yourself if you would like it if your husband, friend,

mother, sister, brother or child would use one of those things on you? Their book has many spots of child abuse: here are my parents favorite passages and they used them offend.

"If he continues to show defiance by jerking around and defending himself, or by expressing anger, wait a moment, lecture again, and again spank him until it's obvious he's totally broken."(TTUAC, p59)

"Switch him 8-10 times on his bare legs or bottom. While waiting for the pain to subside, speak calm words of rebuke. If his crying turns to a true, wounded, submissive whimper, you have conquered; he has submitted his will. If his crying is still defiant, protesting, and other than a response to pain, spank him again. If this is the first time he's come up against someone tougher than he is, it may take awhile...if you stop before he is voluntarily submissive, you have confirmed to him the value and effectiveness of a screaming protest!" (TTUAC p80)

"If you have to sit on him to spank him, then do not hesitate. And hold him there until he has surrendered. Prove that you are bigger, tougher, more patiently enduring, and are unmoved by his wailing. Defeat him totally...A general rule is to continue the disciplinary action until the child has surrendered." (TTUAC p46).

Why is this book allowed to be sold? It is a guide book for the abuse and bullying of children.

#### **WHY WOULD ANYONE DO THIS TO A CHILD!?!@ WHY**

Passion speaks for itself. Please understand that it is the philosophy found in this book and others like it that is guiding some Christian homes and ministries. We're not talking about human weakness and failings now and then. We are talking about power plays. Here are a few more quotes. Do you think this is how Christians should train their children?

"One particularly painful experience of nursing mothers is the biting baby. My wife did not waste time finding a cure. When the baby bit, she pulled hair (an alternative has to be sought for baldheaded babies)."

"Select your instrument according to the child's size. For the under one year old, a little, ten- to twelve-inch long, willowy branch (stripped of any knots that might break the skin) about one-eighth inch diameter is sufficient. Sometimes alternatives have to be sought. A one-foot ruler, or its equivalent in a paddle, is a sufficient alternative. For the larger child, a belt or larger tree branch is effective."

No one is standing against Biblical principles for raising children here. We're saying that Solomon [and Solomon is the only appeal these people have for such tactics] may not be the last word for the born-again Christian. We'll speak more of the Scriptures next time.

#### **AUDIO 8**

Let's look at the Scriptures now as we try to decide what God wants from us in this area.

We must begin with Moses, to be consistent...

### **Deuteronomy 21:18-21**

“If a man has a rebellious son who will not obey... when they have chastened him,... then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones.”

Oh no! What are you saying? I’m not saying it. Moses did. And Moses spoke for God. If the abusers are going to be consistent, Moses, who was Solomon’s lawgiver, must take precedence even over Solomon, who is praised as the supreme authority in childcare!

The law of God is holy, pure. We all broke it. None of us can keep it, neither the girls who got the beatings or the ones dishing them out. But that does not change Moses’ law. Justice must prevail.

For the Christian and his family, justice has already prevailed at Calvary. Mercy triumphs over justice. Compassion and guidance and teaching, and if need be, a strong push in the right direction that might involve pain.

Look at Jesus if you want to see how to deal with sin in others. Look at yourself if you want to see the sin needing to be dealt with internally. Only then should the stones start flying, or the paddles.

### **Psalms 103:13**

“As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.” This is about followers of the Lord, but in the process David casually mentions that good fathers pity. The Hebrew just means love, have mercy on, have compassion on. Yes, yes, love must be tough, I get it. But love must come from a broken heart. That’s what this verse says. When you raise that board above your son or daughter is your heart broken or are you just angry you didn’t get your way? Are you really trying to correct, or just dominate? And what kind of lesson will that be for your growing son or daughter? The strong should dominate the weak?

Solomon said of his dad (Proverbs 4:3) “When I was my father’s son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, He taught me.”

He beat me? We don’t know. But David’s love was tender, edifying. It’s hard to imagine the scenes of today’s abuse happening in David’s palace while Solomon was growing up.

Perhaps Solomon was a little tougher. And Rehoboam, his son, was about to get tougher still when his toughness divided a kingdom.

### **Good old King Solomon.**

This poor – but very rich – son of David has been used and abused and forced to say things he never said. I suggest that “a greater than Solomon” sits among us here in the room, and will have the final say in these proceedings.

But anyway, the aberrant views on child-rearing and discipline that we are talking about today are all based on leading child specialist Dr. Solomon. Or to the rest of us, just, King Solomon.

God endowed this man with wisdom beyond his years, beyond his kingdom, beyond his own father!

But as we said, a greater than Solomon is here. Let's not be too intimidated by Solomon.

Solomon, a good Jew, would have to have advocated circumcision for all. Solomon, in honor of his father, would have looked approvingly on the slaughter of entire non-Jewish nations, as they had become corrupt and worthy of judgment. Solomon would have advocated the entire Torah, including animal sacrifice, feast days, food choices, the Aaronic priesthood...

Solomon built and worshiped in a Temple. Honored the seventh day as the Sabbath. Faithfully gave his tithe. Solomon was eye for an eye. Corporal and capital punishment. Cities of refuge. The rule of a monarch, in a dynastic succession.

Solomon killed his brother with no rebuke from God, because his brother tried to take the throne promised by God to Solomon. He deserved to be killed. Solomon was right. Today we are told to love these enemies.

Solomon believed in slavery (Ecclesiastes 2:7), "eat, drink, and be merry" (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, 5:18, 8:15), that man has no advantage over animals (Ecclesiastes 3:19). With all his (true) wisdom, he was given little or no concept of eternal life

Everything he believed and taught and did, until his fall, was good and holy and from God. We accept none of it except his way of disciplining children. Strange?

We are a people of the Book in that we believe every word of the Book. But we are a people of the Spirit in that we allow the Spirit to bring to our heart that word [from the Book] that applies to our present situation. Most of Solomon's life and beliefs do not apply to us...

But may I say again, a greater than Solomon is here. I'll show you what I mean later.

Now let us look at the passages that so many Christians have used as justification for their savagery, but let us keep in mind that for His New Covenant people, the Greater-Than-Solomon may have better ways.

Solomon, like Moses, told the truth about human nature and what to do with it. But neither man had had revealed to Him a full account of the nature of the Spirit of God that can do things differently and better than the Old Covenant ways. Listen to Jesus.

[First, this disclaimer again. I have no claim to having been the perfect parent or grandparent. I used anger, loud voice, some "spanking" in their younger years, all in an effort to control the sometimes uncontrollable. I did not think too highly of myself after some of these episodes...]

Solomon spoke of much more than unruly children. I have added in the mix below items that relate to the child abuse experience. You will note that Solomon's masterpiece is addressed to his own son.

### **Proverbs 1:8**

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother."

The emphasis throughout the book of Proverbs is instruction, teaching, wisdom, not beating.

### **Proverbs 1:10-17**

“If sinners entice thee, consent thou not... they lay wait for their own blood.”

Another stressed topic in Proverbs is the fact that life itself is the way most men and women will be punished.

### **Proverbs 3:11, 12**

“My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”

This verse is quoted in Hebrews. There is no getting around the fact that discipline is meant to be a necessary part of every Christian’s life, and the life of every child of every Christian, via the parent.

But notice here the words. “Chastening” by any means appropriate. “Correction” not “punishment” or “vengeance.” And see how the father who administers such corrections does it because he truly delights in the child, not to gain control over him at the moment.

### **Proverbs 4:3, 4**

“For I [Solomon] was my father’s [David’s] son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also...”

What a precious insight into Solomon’s childhood days. Was he afraid of Dad? Did he expect cruel punishment for minor infractions? The relationship was “tender,” and developed into a learning experience Solomon now passes on to his own son.

Doesn’t sound at all like the testimonies out of some “Christian” homes.

### **AUDIO 9**

### **Proverbs 6:12-15**

“A naughty person, a wicked man walketh with a froward mouth... therefore shall his calamity come suddenly... he shall be broken without remedy.”

Again, stress on the fact that evil produces its own judgment. No parent is involved in the breaking of this man’s evil. We will bypass other such passages, but they are there.

### **Proverbs 9:8**

“Rebuke a wise man and he will love thee.”

One size – beating - does not fit all. Rebuke alone can be enough for some.



**Proverbs 10:13**

“A rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.”

When rods are mentioned in Solomon, backs are mentioned too. Perfect literal interpretation means a switch across the back, probably leaving scars. In this case, for grown men.

**Proverbs 10:27**

“The years of the wicked shall be shortened.”

By parents? No, by God. Most of Solomon’s warnings are about God’s judgment on men, not the work of parents.

**Proverbs 11:17**

“...he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.”

A word to the wise , parents and ministries.

**Proverbs 11:29**

“He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind.”

He gets nothing for all that abusive behavior, though he worked long and hard at it. Nothing. Notice the use of “troubled” to refer to adults, not teenagers.

**Proverbs 13:24**

“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”

We’ve heard it all our lives, “Spare the rod, spoil the child.”

Now, are we literal or are we liberal? Those are the only two choices that some allow for us. You say, “Literal”? Then we must use a rod. A real rod. Like from a tree. And obviously we do not aim for the lower-lower backside, the place where you sit. Nowhere is that recommended in Scripture. A rod, as we found elsewhere, is for the back...

Is that how many people punish their children? No, more likely it is a paddle to the sitting place. Unfortunately, those beatings leave blisters and worse on the sitting place.

So, following Solomon, if I really love my son – and the child-abusing people, correctly or incorrectly, expand the meaning to include daughters – I will beat him with a rod to the back, early (betimes) in his life.

That’s where they get the justification for walloping crying babies. Hit them hard enough and long enough and you will break his will. Yes, you will. And a whole lot more.

Can you see Solomon as a baby-beater? Advocating that his people do the same? Was his advice ever repeated by another Bible-writer? Are children made to bear such torment early in their lives?

Wisdom, Solomon's wisdom, demands a closer look at the King. For sure, "early" is a relative thing. Twenty years of age is considered very early and young by an oldster like myself. Oh, he's an adult, but he's still a son. He's still teachable, though he may need physical pain to go along with it.

I do not say that physical pain, lovingly administered in small amounts and rarely, will not do some good. It will. But that sort of pain is not what the folks today are advocating. They are talking about savage blows given for any number of reasons, mostly none of which are serious.

At best, then, everyone's favorite text on child-rearing (literally) is perhaps not as usable as we thought. Solomon could well have been talking of a grown son, as in a male, who was indeed turning out wrong and needed a wake-up call.

Babies do not need such calls.

#### **Proverbs 15:10**

"Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die."

So there are alternatives to beatings. Correction and reproof are two prevalent subjects in Proverbs.

#### **Proverbs 16:24**

"Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones."

In some of these homes pleasant words do not come to them very often. Some aching for such a word or even a hug. And they starve waiting. Rules are the order of the day, and the week, and the years.

#### **Proverbs 16:32**

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Are we talking about policy, or just some angry out-of-control people? Either alternative is scary.

#### **Proverbs 17:22, 18:14**

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit, who can bear?"

It is here where I lose it. The new "doctrine" demands that a child must be "broken" while still a baby! Break his will!

I know that horses and dogs are trained that way. With a dog, a rolled up newspaper on the hind-side and a treat will do the trick. But humans need more.

Break the will? Break the spirit? You have a zombie. It happens in North Korea and every Communist country. Through deprivation and violence, we will crush you until you cannot ever rise up against us.

That's the idea. But the human spirit will rise up. Witness Romania, 1989. The entire Soviet bloc. Men will not be held down forever. They will rise up and hurt you.

For once your will has been broken, if only temporarily, courage is in short supply. Shame, pain, oh they are great teachers indeed. But they teach things you didn't want them to learn.

### **(Proverbs 18:14)**

Perhaps the most important verse in Solomon's writings, as regards these homes. "The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness. *But who can bear a broken spirit?*"

If one crushes the spirit while trying to "break the will" one creates a robot. Depressed. Anxious. Compliant. That is the fruit of man's breaking. When God breaks the heart it comes out as David's repentance, "a broken and contrite heart you will not despise."

Those who had their wills – and hearts and spirits – broken at Christian homes can come to Jesus for healing. Yes, that's a promise. Jesus said in Isaiah and Luke that He came to heal the brokenhearted.

Brokenhearted is more than sad. It is crushed. Defeated. But you don't have to live like that. And there are really churches that will support you in your healing. Christ has a church and he Himself lives in it. Go find God's people. You'll be blessed.

Brokenness is a good thing when God does it. It is an awful thing when man tries to duplicate it. God's breaking produces joy and love and peace.

### **AUDIO 10**

#### **Proverbs 19:18-19**

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying," interestingly followed by, "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment."

Chastening, in whatever form, should not be administered by an angry man. The juxtaposition of these two verses may be only Providential and not purposeful on Solomon's part. But they certainly belong together. Chastening must be given out by one who loves, not by one who is angry and vengeful and seeking to control behavior by the only means that seems to be available. But let us not forget in all of this, that chastening is to be given, and tears may follow. Both ideas in one package. The true test of good parenting. God parenting.

#### **Proverbs 19:25**

"Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become wary."

Is this God's word for believers today?

### **Proverbs 19:29**

“Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.”

The rod again. Leaving marks, on the back. This is Solomonic correction. Is this what is intended for the children of Christians?

### **Proverbs 20:20**

“Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.”

The death penalty. Where did Solomon get this idea? From Moses. Leviticus 20:9. Did any of the youth in these homes have disrespectful comments about their parents? If we are going to use Old Covenant precepts, how about this one?

Remember that the Law spoke truth and justice... but knew not of mercy. Nothing is wrong with the Law. But much is wrong with us. We can't live Moses. Never could.

### **Proverbs 20:30**

“The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.”

What? Solomon, explain yourself! No need to. It is up to the modern interpreters of this verse to do the explaining.

Not one commentary I read assigns this soul-cleansing to a parent, especially the parent of a small child!

The truth is real, though. There are those who learn by reading books. Others learn by rebukes. Others need stronger medicine. Possibly a disease. A trip to the battlefield. A disaster of some sort.

Job is an example of one whose wounds healed his soul. He was forced to look inward and discover the deeper meanings of life, revealed directly by God after the time of searching.

This is not to say that a parent will not prayerfully administer a correction that “hurts.” And there are things that hurt more than beatings, but that are geared to help. On the other hand, physical abuse will lead to bitterness and rejection.

### **Proverbs 22:15**

“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.”

Literally, then, every child of every age bracket needs a literal rod applied to his or her back. Question, then, is this the only way to drive it away? Must every parent be standing ready with a rod every time foolishness erupts? How far to take this text?

But yes, it must be admitted, that as far as things had progressed to that point in the history of God's people, a rod was an effective power play. Trouble is, if misused the rod of correction can drive away other things too.

So many situations, so many possibilities. Is there something missing in Solomon's formulas? Yes, the Greater-Than-Solomon had the answers, and passed them on to His apostles.

**Proverbs 22:24-25**

"Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul."

Anger is contagious. Is it angry men who are administering blows to young people, or simply men trying their best to obey the Word of God as they understand it?

**Proverbs 23:1, 2**

"When you sit down to eat with a ruler ...put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite."

Should we take Solomon literally here?

**Proverbs 23:13-14**

"Withhold not correction from the child: for if you beat him with the rod, he shall not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell."

Children must be corrected, and loving parents must stand in the way of their child's freefall into foolishness. Occasional pain, physical or otherwise will not destroy him. Rather, the absence of such will.

Once more we cannot avoid Solomon's clear language. But we can say that excessive use of this one method can indeed lead to serious injury and eternal loss.

**Proverbs 26:3**

"A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back."

Habitual child-beaters seem to be concluding that the child is a fool. Though we are born into the sinful nature, it would seem to me that it takes a little longer to be classified as a fully functioning fool.

**Proverbs 27:4**

"Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous..."

I have heard of places under Christian supervision where young girls are stretched out on the floor, held down by staff members, being beaten by a man three to four times their size, in the name of the loving Jesus. Outrageous indeed.

**Proverbs 29:15**

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame."

Indeed. Notice that “reproof” is brought in here as an alternative to physical pain, but pain is not excluded. Measures must be taken to stop a child from ruination. But each step must be thought through, prayed through, carefully. One size does not fit all. One discipline will not do the job every time.

### **Proverbs 29:17**

“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.”

It’s true that an out-of-control child is a pain. Can’t eat out. Can’t go to Walmart. Can’t visit friends.

It’s also true that an out-of-control adult breeds serious sickness and may be responsible for the out-of-control child. Is he learning violence from the lowly Jesus?

Proverbs 30:17 (from Agur, not Solomon)

“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.”

Again, the death penalty for hating parent or guardian. Now why in the world would a child hate a parent? Or any authority figure? Can any of this be traceable to methodology? One can force behavior, but the same wind that blows a person’s body to the ground, slams shut the heart’s door out of which would normally come appreciation and respect.

The hundreds of children, now adults, speaking out have had that door shut. Their bodies were controlled for a while, but the heart cannot be controlled by the strongest of discipline.

### **AUDIO 11**

The silence of Jesus and the apostles about Solomon’s ways.

Walking through Proverbs is difficult. We see what natural man deserves, and what parents who walk in the “natural” must do to get the desired results. None of these methods are mentioned in the New Testament, though we do run into a rod of sorts. Let’s go now to the “greater than Solomon” and the ones He trained.

**“This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Mark 9:7)**

### **Matthew 12:42**

“...a greater than Solomon is here.”

Context is everything. The Pharisees wanted a sign from Jesus. No, says Jesus, you have your sign from Jonah. By the way, they repented when Jonah preached. You are not repenting even though a greater than Jonah is here.

And don't forget the queen of Sheba. She listened to Solomon's wisdom and was impressed with it. But I am greater than Solomon. Wisdom. Solomon was wise. He received his wisdom from God. But my wisdom is greater as I am greater.

Solomon was right for his time. He spoke truth from Heaven. But so did Moses. And Elijah. And David. All these men spoke truths that were superseded by the truth that is in Jesus, and that is Jesus. Look at His life and listen to His words if you would know of the wisdom that is greater than Solomon's.

Proverbs is still in the Bible. But so is Exodus. The unapproachable God. The laws about sacrifices. Capital punishment of all offenders, including bad sons. Circumcision.

Proverbs is still in the Bible but so is Psalms. Ever heard David's invectives against his enemies? They were his enemies because they were God's. Canaanites were to be destroyed, annihilated. Is that Jesus' word to us? Are we not called upon simply to love enemies and strive to bring them to Christ?

Proverbs is still there, with King Solomon's wisdom. So is the prophet Elijah with the Holy Spirit's power. Fire from Heaven! Kill them all! The disciples of Jesus wanted to do the same thing! Jesus said, No. Wrong spirit.

The Holy Spirit gave Moses and David and Elijah their cues. They did what they were told and God blessed them for it. If we try to do today what those men did we will not be blessed for it. Wrong spirit. Jesus wasn't calling His disciples demon-possessed. He was saying you can no longer act as God's men used to act. If you do you'll just be using your own spirit. God's Spirit is doing something else now.

Jesus was announcing a new covenant. A new way. A new agenda. Life in the Spirit. Listen carefully to Jesus, the greater than Solomon.

#### **Matthew 18:2-14**

A little child is called front and center. This child is the new model for my kingdom, Jesus says. Humble yourself like this child. Be low in your estimation. The lowly and weak are now the great ones.

Much more: If you receive a child like this in My name, you are receiving Me. What could that possibly mean? He goes on to say the opposite. If by your actions you cause one of these little ones to sin, it would be better if you were drowned.

The subject has not changed. He is still talking about little children. The child is still standing there in the middle of the group. He's talking about abuse! If your actions cause a child to sin...

Jesus knew this was going to happen. And it is in this child context that He gives the extreme recommendation to get rid of hand or foot or eye if that hand or foot or eye would cause you to sin.

Verse 10 confirms that children, the abuse of same, is the continued context of this passage:

“Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones (Mark adds, “that believe in Me)...” Despise because of their size, or their vulnerability or their ignorance. Take advantage of. You are bigger than they are. “They’ll get over it...” mentality.

Jesus makes it plain that the very angels of God are watching every move.

Amazingly enough, even though Jesus next goes into His famous passage about the ninety and nine sheep and the one lost sheep, He comes back immediately to children:

“Even so it is not the will of your Father Who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

God wants people to be saved. Even little people. The smallest of all, the young child who comes to Jesus must be welcomed in, even as He says in the very next chapter.

Mark 9:36-42 in relating these same truths, places the offenders in the context of eternal hell fire. It is a serious offense to come against a little one.

#### **Matthew 19:14**

Parents who had been listening to Jesus’ gracious words, seeing Jesus was all for the children, brought them to Him for a blessing. The disciples, who it seems had not been listening to His recent warnings, tried to stop them.

“Suffer little children and forbid them not to come to Me.”

That’s old English. You would think that some homes take that old word “suffer” to be literally like the word of today. No, it means only “allow.” Let them come to Me. Don’t do anything to keep a child from coming to Jesus.

Again, we’re not talking about a pain-free existence. We’re talking about a loving invitation for children to meet Jesus, and if that doesn’t work right away, *being* Jesus to the child and allowing them to come to you. I don’t picture Jesus, in this context, holding a rod in His hand and saying “Come here child!”

Who would respond to such an invitation? Who would get near a man like that? Unless forced to, of course...

By the way, Jesus did take these children into His arms and bless them. He is our example and the power we need to live like this.

The last time we see children in Matthew, they are crying out in the Temple as the Messiah passes by, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

Is Jesus’ view of children the same as that of the modern cult of baby-breaking. I quote from a tract written by one of them:

“A child very quickly demonstrates his fallen, depraved nature and reveals himself to be a selfish little beast.”



In Christian thought, to welcome a child is to welcome Christ Himself! An awesome thought. From the Wisdom greater than Solomon.

### **John 8:3-12**

“... a woman caught in adultery... set...in the midst... ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery... such should be stoned... what do you say?’ ‘He who is without sin... let him throw the first stone.’ ‘Has no one condemned you?... neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’

The Pharisees were right. Moses did condemn such as these. Moses was right to condemn. It is an awful sin. But a greater than Moses is on the scene. And he was right, for He was God, to forgive.

That’s the ticket. Forgiveness, grace, mercy, mixed in with your loving discipline, even painful discipline, from time to time. But if this Jesus brand of mercy is not in what you do, you judge yourself, said Jesus (Matthew 7:1).

I want to make an appeal for investigation, repentance, stepping down, starting over, in Christian ministry homes across the nation. Jesus is merciful and will forgive the most heinous of sins and sinners, if they will only confess their sins. No one wants to bring about the conditions of this awful word of Christ.

### **AUDIO 12**

#### **The prodigal son**

Perhaps past his teen years, perhaps not, this young rebel had had enough. He left. The father did not lock him up or call the police. We can imagine tears of pain, as the Heavenly Father experiences with His own, but no rebukes, no fists, no kicks. He gave the son his money and let him go. He overcame this awful evil with bountiful good.

We know the middle part of the story, we who have similarly left and played the fool.

Did I say “the fool”? Sounds familiar. Oh yes, the fool of Proverbs! Solomon’s fool. The one who needs a rod across the back, if not, in this case, a final stoning. That’s Bible!

But wait. See the young man coming up the road? Dad sure does! Does he grab a rifle or a whip or a rope to hang this villain of a son? No, he throws a party. The boy knew he could come back whenever he wanted to, but he didn’t know just how deep was the father’s love and acceptance.

You say, that’s about lost souls. That’s not about raising kids? What? Aren’t kids lost souls until they know the Father’s love and yield to it, not by force of a rod, but by the inner force of God’s grace, working through loving parents!

#### **Paul and the family**

The Scriptures talk about child-raising. Old Covenant, we have seen, and with it we tremble. Is there nothing else? We have heard of Jesus’ love for children and the serious warnings about offending them.

Is that what has tempered the Spirit's remarks through the great apostle? For, in Paul there is no rod. No beating. No shaming. No constant harangue. No lock-up. No rigidity.

### **Ephesians 6:4/Colossians 3:21**

Wrath! "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Now there's a mouthful. No command to moms. Dad is to take responsibility for the children with Mom at his side.

And look at that first order! Is it possible for the man in charge to push a child so far that the child's natural feelings of anger and wrath can erupt? Paul says so. Never push them that far. Never.

Commentator Barnes brings out several good points here:

- As wives are to obey husbands who in turn love them, so the child cannot be expected to obey if there is a father who keeps provoking them with harshness. Even if they should obey, you can't expect it.
- Provoking can happen when commands are unreasonable or when correction is too severe.
- If children believe they are being ruled by anger, they will become angry too, and "discouraged" as in Colossians 3:21, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."
- If a child "submits" to angry discipline, it will often be only because the adult is stronger, not because the adult is right, and slowly bitterness builds in that child, a bitterness that turns into hatred!
- Disciplining a child must never become a contest to see who will win this episode. The adult will always win, and that means nothing. The aim is correction. And love.

### **"Nurture and Admonition" ?**

Rather than angry wrath-producing beatings at every opportunity, the good parent goes after nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Nurture here and "chastening" in the famous Hebrews passage are the same idea. Paideia in the Greek. Simply the training of a child. It involves education, instruction, discipline, godly principles. Words that form minds that form character that form bodies, lessening drastically, though not necessarily eliminating, the need for anything physical.

As for "admonition", *nouthesia*, we're talking about putting something in the mind, not on the backside. Put the Lord in the mind. Put His ways in the mind. The word can be translated "warning" as it is elsewhere. Life is dangerous and difficult. Children need to be supplied with a set of principles that will help them navigate the waves that will certainly come their way.

Barnes points out that “to suffer a child to grow up without any instruction in religion, is about the same as to suffer a garden to lie without any culture.”

Do you feel threatened by any of this, reader? Of course not. Our hearts are warmed by such tender advice. A loving parent feeding our hearts and minds with God’s ideas is no threat at all, even when his hand must be heavy at times.

You will forgive me if I do not sense that this is the atmosphere of some Christian church homes in our day.

### **Children in submission, 1 Timothy 3:3-5**

Headship has been so abused by men that the whole idea of “ruling” the household doesn’t sound quite right to us. But rule it is. The man who wants to be a part of “ruling” the church must first have shown he is able to do this at home. And in both places, harshness is not a part of the equation.

He must first (v. 3) be a non-violent, gentle man, and in this way “one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission...” Must we always see a rod when we see the word “submission”? There is a way to take responsibility without forcing oneself upon another.

Jesus ruled His disciples with love. The rod, or the whip, was reserved for evil men in the house of God. With His own, and especially with children, our Lord was nothing but kindness.

### **The “rod” of the New Testament. Words that sting.**

So is there no rod at all in the New Covenant way of looking at things? The apostle Paul carried one, after a fashion. He could get very frustrated with the churches he founded, the people who, to him, were as his own children. There was immorality in the church at Corinth. Paul warned them in 1 Corinthians 4:21 that they had a choice between a gentle spirit or a “rod” on his next visit.

Does one picture the apostle as a violent man who would bloody their backs if they did not shape up? I don’t. But the words of rebuke he could bring would certainly cause many to repent.

Rods come in many forms, the most extreme of which are still reserved for fools as in Solomon’s day. But the raising of a teenager in a Spirit-led home may demand rods of a different sort than the physical ones. There is an effective way to deal with teenage rebellion. Until some ministries can figure this out, pray over it, strategize, it is probably best that the doors close.

### **How does our Father chastise us?**

In hearing all the cries of the abused, the temptation is to run away from discipline, especially the physical sort, altogether. While there is real cause to run from abuse, we can’t be ignoring Solomon altogether, even in the light of Jesus and Paul. Chastisement is in, until we are perfect! Notice the varieties of its workings in your own life. First, this word from the writer of Hebrews, quoting Proverbs 3:11, 12 (Solomon):

“My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and whips every son whom he receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chastens not? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons.”

Tough words. The toughest in the New Testament on this subject. But notice they are spoken about the Lord’s dealings with us. Nevertheless chastening is in. We must simply pray about which chastening on which son and when. Note carefully that no specifics are given in this passage or any other passage in the New Testament.

Does our Father, about whom this passage is speaking, beat us with a board? If we say yes, maybe once, is it true that same discipline would happen a second time. Has our Father no creativity, no wisdom as to what is exactly appropriate for every situation where discipline is needed?

Is that wisdom not available to every Spirit-led parent? And these homes, whether individual or group, all claim to be Christian, which by definition means Spirit-filled. We walk in the Spirit and ask His specific direction. Did you think to pray, Sir or Madam, the last time you “corrected” your child? Or were you simply accepting Old Covenant Solomon as your policy-giver, your rule-maker? Solomon cannot replace the Holy Spirit, who knows every child and every need of that child.

A smart child will learn your policies and learn how to endure or work around them. He will remain unrepentant but you may see immediate compliance. Is that all you want? Have you already decided what you will do the next time your child is disobedient? Have you been praying for the appropriate response? Are you one step ahead of your child? What if the Holy Spirit says a good talk will work, or an act of kindness. God can break in ways that do not damage. Have you sought His breaking power instead of using the world’s power-plays?

Propriety, not policy, is the answer. But, you say, they will not know what to expect! Exactly. God will out-smart them if you will listen for His wisdom.

Much discipline in the Christian home, if not being led by this false idolizing of Solomon, is led by impatience and anger. “You bother me, you pay!” Don’t be led by your spirit. Be led by His.

## **AUDIO 13**

### **Only God’s Word breaks the hard heart**

I am not sure of the aim of a Christian “home for troubled teens”. If it is for the saved only, then saved methods must apply. The discipling of young girls, as with boys, must model the ways of Jesus with His disciples.

But if we are talking about converting the unsaved, as a certain percentage of the girls over the years must have been, by what stretch of the imagination can we see the past and/or present methods of these homes applying to any form of evangelism mentioned or implied in Scripture?

What? Shame them into coming to Christ? What? Beat them into submission to the lowly Jesus meek and mild? What? Starve them into obedience to the One who fed multitudes with a graciousness unimaginable? Is this the way we bring people to Christ in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century?

The Word of God penetrates those who are coming to Him. Those who are not touched by God cannot be won over by brute force or human manipulation. They may “comply” but they will hate Christ forever for the shame that He brought to them.

### **On the “breaking of the will”**

The aim of some family gurus is to break a child’s will, preferably by age one year. Gets one thinking...

Suppose I own horses. My horses want to ride free. But I need them to obey. I want to ride them peaceably, with no rebellion. How do I break the will of that horse?

Or suppose I am a Communist dictator. My people do not love me or my rules. They want to be free. How will I break their will so that they will serve me without question? And in fact, so that they will come to think they really love serving me?

Or suppose I am a parent. I have given birth to some strong-willed children. How can I break their will in such a way that they will do exactly what I say when I say it for as long as I say it? And even love me for it?

I ask you, is the answer to all three questions the same one? Brute force?

If the horse never does comply, we can shoot him. Same in Communist countries, for that matter. Can’t do that at home, unless we are to go back under Moses, when such was allowed.

While we’re talking about horses, I read recently that the breaking of a horse, the training of a horse to be obedient, is not what one might imagine. His future loyalty will depend on the type of breaking he receives. The idea is to get him to follow you out of respect, not fear. So you create a personal relationship. Spend time with him every day. Talk calmly to him. Never get angry or scream or hit or be aggressive. All of that breaks the trust, though you may get the desired effect for a while. Yes, occasionally later on, a little tap on the buttocks or shoulder is helpful if disrespect seems to creep in. Reward his successes. Be patient. Be slow.

My goodness. Is that how horses learn?

I think the breaking of the will is impossible, humanly speaking. Even God does not break the will. When the will is totally broken, a living creature can do nothing. The will is the essence of behavior. No will, no life.

What some are actually looking for is the changed allegiance of the will, not the breaking of it altogether. After all the beating and restrictions and isolation and what-not, the child is asked to follow

the master. And he weakly cries, "I will." His will is not broken. It is reassigned. Theoretically from that day on he will do what he is told.

Trouble is, that child won't remain a child with that master forever. Several possibilities will follow. Perhaps he will long for the day when he can be the master. He will become a bully and a misfit. Or, he will be so compliant as to be pushed around by everyone.

But his will will not die. Changed, but not broken.

We know of children who were never "broken" in this way at home. Never did really obey. And now they serve God as strongly as they were disobedient. Their will has been realigned.

And we know of compliant children who never needed much coaxing to be good, because they saw older brother or sister getting whacked so often they did not dare go out of line. Yet they never obeyed from the heart and were easily led away from the Lord.

### **All about the heart**

The heart is the issue. God "breaks" the will and forms beautiful people from the heart.

The Philippian jailor saw Jesus in the apostles as they endured an earthquake, and wanted Him. Jesus had reached to His heart through quiet example. Not through the earthquake.

The apostle Paul had been "goaded" from within for some time when that light shone on his road. He knew he was wrong, but didn't know how to correct himself. God did.

Cornelius was led to Christ by a personal visit of some believers. His heart was totally changed that day.

Under the New Covenant, the work of "reformation" becomes God's work, with our work being merely to introduce people to Jesus. I do not see one human breaking the will of one other human in all the New Covenant time. I do not see violence or force advocated or practiced by a New Testament saint on another saint.

When the disciples wanted to use violence Jesus reminded them they were in the wrong spirit, the old way.

### **Governments bear a sword. We do not.**

Do you love Jesus? How did Jesus capture your will, Christian? Beating you? You heard the old, old story, your heart was touched. You believed. You freely gave your will to Him. You are His because He won you. He drew you with cords of love.

In this, Jesus is our example for how to draw young people to an obedient life.

Remember, he will not extinguish a smoking flax or discard a bruised reed. Go and learn what that means! He is so gentle, so accepting. Are our children about to burn out already? Are they so damaged that you want to turn them over to a "home" to do the job you have been created to do?

Some unthinking person told me that people who come to some of these ministry homes are not “angels” and so they deserved the treatment they got. Yeah, they were damaged goods alright. What do you do with damaged goods? Damage them more? Throw them out? Not Jesus. He doesn’t discard the bruised one. He heals her.

### **Let Jesus have a chance first.**

Easy for me to say? I know I could have prayed more, strategized more (with the Lord), gotten some assistance from books and believers. But I wanted control, now!

Why do parents want control immediately? Because they feel they, the parents, are out of control? Is it their pride? Are they really worried about the children’s growth or their own face-saving? There is a better way than the way we are seeing in “troubled-teen” homes. Often they are troubled-adult homes.

Why no extra rules for child-raising?

Ever wondered why there are not so many commands in the New Testament regarding disciplining of children? I believe it is because we as believers are to live the Christian life with the children as we would with anyone else, based on the fruit of the Spirit outlined in Galatians 5.

Love. Must be tough, you say? The love described in 1 Corinthians 13 is not “tough love” in the sense it is often demonstrated in teen homes. Read through the description. Where is harsh toughness recommended? Love must be consistent and firm. But never forceful or demanding. It’s a new world in Christ. We are to demonstrate that new world.

Notice the little “extra” at the end of the list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5: “Against such there is no law!” If Christian “homes” leaders were walking in the Spirit promised by Jesus, not the old spirit of Moses, there would be no investigations, no lawsuits, no CNN reports about them.

In your New Testament, almost no separate rules for kids! Do I need a Solomon to tell me how to do this when Jesus Himself is available?

### **AUDIO 14**

#### **They really are all different.**

If there is a call for such a ministry as this, the rule of individualism must apply. The first rule is “No rules”, when trying to determine how we shall deal with student X. Prayer. Conversation. Being led of the Spirit. Team discussions. We are all of one blood and all under sin, but there the similarities end.

Young people are shy. Or not. They are creative. Or not. They are open. Or not. A hundred other listings could be made. And you will address all those differences with the same approach? Not good.

Will you punish a special needs child for learning slowly? Will you punish a blind student for not seeing? These are not actual charges, I am speaking theoretically. But will you force a shy child to emerge from a

temporary cocoon before he is ready? Can you make a sickly child be well by coercion? Can you add your own brand of shame to the list of abuses she has already endured? And all in the name of Jesus?

Some came to your Christian ministry because of sexual sin, mostly unintended on their part. Will you blame them for this? Will you walk on their feelings forever? Some were unruly? And some of them were unloved. Can't you overcome this evil with good, the best good, the love of God in your heart?

### **Two ways to fail as a parent or parent substitute**

First way, do too little. Let them just grow. Put the seed in the ground, provide basic necessities for life, and let the plant alone. This is abuse. It is unfortunately not covered in the lawbooks of local governments. You can get away with it. But your children will be a menace to all around them unless someone comes along to take your place.

Second way, do too much with the wrong methods. This is where these abusive homes come in. No one can accuse them of the former abuse. They certainly are trying to do something. And maybe in their heart of hearts they believe that they are somehow obeying the commands of Scripture. How that could be, I know not.

But they are dead wrong on so many of their methodologies. Yes, it must be hard to deal with "troubled teens." But surely there are places where better solutions have been found. Shame on God's people if it is only the non-Christians who have figured this out.

### **The last words of the Old Covenant**

Malachi 4:6 closes out with a solemn promise regarding an Elijah who is to come. The immediate reference is to John the Baptist, with a possible dual reference to an Elijah who shall come before Christ's final return. The promise is that the prophet will turn the hearts of fathers and children to each other.

There was much confusion in Israel, much apostasy, even as in the church of our own day. Churches split. Families split. Alienation. But the prophet prepares the way for Christ, making ready a people for His kingdom.

When Christ comes into a family unit, hearts are melted. Many are the testimonies of children and/or parents coming to the Lord in a preaching service, and melting into each other's arms. No amount of discipline was responsible for that action. The Spirit of the Lord brings it about. Anyone who claims responsibility for the new birth by any other means is a liar and must be avoided.

We can teach. We can lead by example. But only Christ can change a wicked heart.

### **A different Spirit**

David unleashed curses upon his enemies. We are of a different spirit. Elijah prayed down fire. That is not us. Solomon recommended the rod. That is not necessarily our finest method. The judgments of the Old Covenant are true and good. Warfare and violence reigned, and God was in it! But that is not our



day, Christian. Our homes must reflect that the Spirit of God and prayer and fasting and waiting are better tools than any Old Covenant saint used. From the Old Testament we get the knowledge of God, the examples of faith, much inspiration, but not day-to-day instructions on how to have a godly home and church.

Is it possible to raise children by the Spirit as we are called to do everything, vs raising them in the flesh?

### **Words that get tossed around among us...**

Some words have lost their meaning altogether. Some never had one, Biblically. Let's take a look at some of these words, so we know what is being said when we discuss abuse in the home.

### **Independent/separated**

Independent is a teenage word. Young children cling to their parents. Young adults quite often return to some sanity about the family. Teens want independence. The kind of independence they want is not a mature sort. It is a "leave me alone" sort.

Americans love that word. So do some Bible-believing Christians. Free. Free from Rome, said the Protestants. Free from the liberals, said the conservatives (and liberal & conservative are a couple of words worth examining too).

Some segments of the church have taken "independent" to another level. To them, "independent" means, "no one is going to tell us what to do. I will believe only what the Bible says. You will not control me, whether you be priest or confession or creed. We will not officially fellowship with anyone. Our local church, started by us, will be ruled by us. Our pastor is God's called man. Leave us alone. If we do fellowship with you, remember you are not going to influence us. We will not band together. Free!"

Sounds nice. But I see no such churches in Scripture, do you? Look at those seven churches of Asia addressed by Jesus in the book of Revelation. There were true believers in each one, and they were told to be faithful, not to separate.

But in the "independent" church, separation is a mandate. Not only are they to separate from the world, but from each other when necessary. And it always seems necessary.

### **So "independence" which is not a Scriptural term, bleeds right into "separation", which is.**

You'll recall Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 5, perhaps. Paul had told the people to stay away from fornicators. They were starting to take him literally and extremely, it seems, and here he has to explain to them that he meant for them to withhold fellowship from believers involved in sin. He lightly remarks that a person who is going to separate from all sinners will have to leave this planet!

This separation from believers was intended only as a temporary measure, to cause the brother –and he still was a brother – to repent, at which point he was to be taken back with open arms, as the father in the prodigal son story welcomed back his erring son.

Jesus was separate from sinners, Hebrews 7:26, yet was accused rightly of being a friend of publicans and sinners, Luke 7:34. Which is it? Both of course. Separation has two meanings.

When Christ fills us with Himself and His word, we are sanctified, set apart. But also sent into the world. Separated inwardly, totally involved outwardly.

Physical separation, especially for non-serious things, is looked at as a sensual Spirit-less activity by men whose motives are fleshly and dangerous, Jude 1:19. Why do people lead rebellions against leadership? Ask Korah about that, if he can hear your voice, buried alive in the Camp of Israel. He thought he knew more than Moses. Pride leads to separation.

What about conscience, what about genuine sincere people who cannot abide hearing false teachings from the pulpit?

Pray. Talk with pastor. Be a light in the congregation. As a final last resort, quietly move to another location, being sure the attitude is humble and not condemnatory and competitive.

Separation is painful and causes harm to the Body. Remember that the reformers, by and large, did not separate. They were kicked out! They spoke the truth steadfastly and the powers that be cast them out.

Some have separated for the wrong reasons. They have taken a stance for a particular Bible version that is not warranted. They not only want to have a simple lifestyle, they want to enforce that style on all. They have come up with serious errors regarding child-rearing and made that a distinctive of their group. Some have entered into what they think is Biblically-justified racism regarding the Black people, upon whom they say the "Mark of Cain" rests.

This is not about Biblical separation. This is something else.

There is another "Biblical" separation, come to think of it. The word Pharisee means "separated." This Bible cult did not start out so wrong. There was much evil going on in Israel, in the centuries before Christ appeared. Greece was now the ruling power, and the Greeks emphasized man as the measure of all things. Totally humanistic ways permeated Israel's culture and the truly holy were concerned.

Their concern turned into separation from the culture. Reminds one of the Puritans, whose initial motives may also have been pure. But Pharisee, Puritan, fundamentalist, regardless of good beginnings, can turn into a distinctive outward religiosity that says nothing more than "look at me!" People have been in awe of the "holy ones" but not benefited by them.

I was in Communist Romania in the 80's. The government had closed down many church buildings and forced believers to unite under one roof! They had no idea they were bringing God's people together, asking them to give up their pettiness and unite in the name of Jesus.

And the new buildings were packed!

Unfortunately, when holiness becomes outward and demanding, the essence of true religion slowly evaporates. I don't need you any more. You go over there and we'll go over here and we'll both call

ourselves the church and never speak to each other. And as for our children and our children's homes: leave us alone.

Just like Rome is saying to the world: we'll judge our own priests. They'll be dealt with. We promise.

What will it take to bring Christians back together?

## **AUDIO 15**

We were looking at some words that need defining...

### **Fundamentalist**

I told my wife when I began hearing about Christian child abuse, that I no longer wished to be called a fundamentalist. Or a charismatic. Or anything. That's a little unfortunate, because I do believe in the fundamentals of the faith and that God gives gifts to His people.

But what are the fundamentals? Here is where the arguments begin. Most will agree that the basic traditional teachings about Jesus are fundamental. OK. Then there is the One God and the Trinity. The sufficiency and inspiration of Scripture. Resurrection, His and ours. Second coming. Justification, sanctification. The doctrines of grace.

If that's what it means, I'm in.

But, if it means every word of Scripture is to be believed uniformly among us. Or else. That kind of fundamentalism, count me out. Let me grow. Let me learn. Don't force me to agree with you, because I may never. If you leave me alone, I may come to your position, but don't push.

### **Conservative**

As with "fundamentalist" we're dealing in non-Scriptural terms here. And there are many shades of this term. I may be more conservative than anyone listening to me now, in that I truly believe God's Word is literally true, whenever the text allows such an interpretation, but I won't force my opinions on you. I'll realize that much that happens in the church is a matter of style and preference, not of truth.

I can't handle most contemporary music, but I understand why the young love it and are worshiping with it. I'm not a holiday person, based on some things that happened a long time ago, but I condemn no one who loves the holidays and generally has a celebrative nature. I wish the media and sports would go away, but I try to go easy on those who have this or that attraction to it.

There's a way to be conservative, fundamental, independent, separated, without being angry, vengeful, bitter, divisive.

What hurts most about the abuse experience among us, as I understand it so far, is that what has happened in some of these ministries has turned many away from the Scriptures, the fundamentals, truly godly discipline, and God Himself. Shame.

## **Abuse**

There's another word that deserves some work. It simply means "the use of something in a way that is wrong or harmful." One can use marijuana in a medical way, or in a body-destroying way. One can eat some sugar-food for a light dessert, or one can become addicted to sugar and have severe medical problems.

One can discipline his child in a number of ways, including occasional physical pain. Or one can beat the crap out of a child, even a baby. That's abuse. Let's call it that. Let's raise our voices in love and humility against it.

One can counsel a person privately about a sin that is ruining his life. Or one can announce to the child in front of all his peers the awfulness of his sinful ways and condemn him to hell. That's abuse.

One can separate a child who is misbehaving, in a short but meaningful way, to drive home the point that bad behavior will influence others. Or one can lock up a person in a closet, and pipe sermons into that closet for hours at a time, Kim Jong Un style. That's abuse. You don't think that happens?

Again, the problem with abusive homes is that it has turned hundreds against all discipline, all Scriptural mandates regarding correction.

## **Cult**

Now there's a word that gets a lot of use.

When I was in Romania many years ago, I remember hearing all non-Orthodox (as in Eastern Orthodox Church) churches referred to as a cult. I'm sure Rome views all Protestants that way, too, though you will not hear it so much today.

Some think of cults along doctrinal lines. That is, as explained above, groups that deny the "fundamentals" of the faith. Many of these Christian homes are not like that. They're pretty good on the fundamentals.

Then there's the Jim Jones type. The personal magnetism of a leader draws fanatics around him. Scriptural truths are there, to keep a Christian appearance up and running. But behind the scenes is an agenda. Jones' agenda wound up in the death of many. You remember.

I was in a cult once. Oh my. Fresh out of some failed ministry. Fresh out of my home denomination, from which I had been fired because I suddenly believed in the gifts of the Spirit. Just fresh.

Couldn't find or afford a place to live, but heard about some Christians who were living together in a house near the church I attended at the time. Great. Great people. We all lived in the same building but separately. Nothing communal.

Then came the knock on the door. The children of God had heard about us, and wanted to know if we needed fellowship. They were true believers, seemed to us. Taught us out of our own Bible. Fired us up to go the street with the Gospel. And with more than the Gospel.

Before it was all over they had convinced us that America was dying, our pastor and his church were evil, and a whole lot more. I found out later that if I had just kept my mouth shut I could have risen to the top some day, and had all the women I wanted, and so on and so on.

You get the picture. This is the cult experience of which I am speaking here. A Christian group. Teaching the truths of the Bible, and teaching them faithfully. But then teaching things that aren't in the Bible, things that "just need to be said to this generation" etc. Our distinctive. Our cause.

A third definition of cult will suffice: "a misplaced or excessive admiration for a particular person or thing, as in 'a cult of personality.'"

Strong and powerful speakers and leaders. Some would say, intimidating. You don't cross men like these. You follow or you bail.

There is no question you will hear Biblical/Gospel truths some of these churches. But you will hear much more at some of them. And what you will hear will slowly turn you against the rest of the Body of Christ. You will become proud and content that your new group has found the truth when no one else did.

The Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons produce the same feelings. They are cults by two definitions. But one is enough. May God's people beware.

### **Spanking/beating**

Let's get real here. "Spanking" is not in the Bible. "Beating" is. We generally mean by "spanking", the application of a paddle, or even bare hands, to the posterior of a child, usually one who is, say, 4 years old until teen-age.

The Biblical "beating" is with a rod, and should be applied to the back, not the bottom. It is reserved for fools and incorrigibles. The death sentence was also suggested by Moses for the worst of cases.

Thankfully, the people of which we speak have not taken the Bible as literally as they thought. The severity of sin is pointed out by Moses and Solomon and the entire legal Mosaic system. Innocent animals died in the place of sinful men. Seems like a different system we are under now.

Not to say God is any lighter against sin. Sin will be judged. It was judged at Calvary in His Son, and those who refuse that judgment must pay their own way. An awful thought, and not the subject of this study.

What we're after here is, what is God's directive to God's New Covenant people regarding the raising of children? And perhaps as a corollary, how does God our Father deal with the sins of His people? Nice Guy in the sky? Well, yes, and...

I refer you back to the Scripture section for the completion of this discussion.

## AUDIO 16

A bit of logic. For the nay-sayers, the ones who can't believe what I am talking about now, and who feel I should not be talking about it.

As the opposition, like mine, to these abusive ministries mounts and increases, there will be counter-attacks, and defenses. They will want to know why we are doing this to a Christian group.

Our reason is the cries of those who have been wounded, pure and simple.

Some are afraid to come against "the church". That's an honest and even good fear. Some are not wanting to relive the horror? Just not wanting to have their life distracted right now? For some it has been many years!

It is scary to whistle-blow alone. That's why individuals do not say anything for a long while. Then one bold one comes forward. And another. The case is being made. That's why I'm reporting to you.

Some will quote Proverbs 16:28 about how evil men sow strife, and a whisperer separates friends. No, just crying people.

But friends of the ministry will begin to look at them with suspicion. Yes. And that will be a good thing.

Some will argue that accusers are just using their ministries as a scapegoat, a reason for their own personal failures. They simply believed they were victims, blaming others for their faults. Maybe. But after many years, is it worth it to be involved in this?

There's just a couple of "disaffected, disgruntled" past students trying to stir up trouble. No, hundreds have been hurt.

But they are just bitter and angry. Yes, very. Some need to forgive, truly. But what has caused their anger?

The media has entered the fray recently. This in itself is a signal to the "independent" Christians that the devil is attacking. I'm no fan of the media, but I got to thinking. How many absolutely valid Biblical ministries in America are attacked by the media? Isn't it normally ministries that have some real issues?

Benny Hinn? Kenneth Copeland? Jimmy Swaggart? Jim Baker? Catholic priest pedophiles? Does the American media come around when there is absolutely no story?

There are cases out there that show an anti-God bias. But it is equally true that all the false ministries brought to light, somewhere along the line claim their rights are being trampled on, that they are being persecuted.

One could turn this around to the staff and note that there are a number of grown men and women who feel they were the persecuted ones, trapped in a prison where they could not defend themselves.

Here is a position paper on child discipline by a respected pastor. He may have changed his opinion but this is what he once believed and I think many of his peers are with him on this. You judge as to whether his ideas come from Scripture.

I will comment here and there and condense when possible. And we will be taking multiple audios to work on this essay. It is packed full of truth and half-truth. It is a position paper that could have been written by any number of practitioners of what I believe to be unscriptural teaching. Listen carefully.

### ***The Correction and Salvation of Children***

#### ***TWO DIRECTIVES OF SOLOMON FOR THE CORRECTION AND SALVATION OF CHILDREN***

*“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.” Proverbs 23:13,14*

***THE FIRST DIRECTIVE: The perception of my duty and the promise involved if I carry out my duty***

##### ***A. The perception of my duty***

*“Withhold not correction from the child.”*

*Through a negative admonition, “withhold not,” Solomon is encouraging us to perceive what our duty is with regard to our child. One might ask, Why is it necessary to be told what our duty is? Because we would naturally “withhold” instead of obeying. The Scripture indicates in Proverbs 13:24, “He that spareth his rod, hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Many parents today are in a position where they Biblically hate their children because they are not acting against their natural feelings and disciplining themselves towards the Godly habit-pattern of consistent correction. In other words, it takes work, wisdom, self discipline, and Godliness to correct children the way the Lord wants.*

##### ***Fight your feelings***

*[For example] in the area of a man loving his wife. The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:25 says, “Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.” Why did the Spirit of God believe it necessary to instruct a man through the Apostle Paul to love his wife as Christ loved the church? Because a man would not naturally do this. A man is naturally in love with himself even as that same chapter indicates in 5:29: “For no man ever yet hateth his own flesh but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as the Lord the church.” A man left to his own inclinations and desires will love himself supremely above all others. A Christian, however, who is obedient to the Spirit of God and to the Word of God, will love his wife and not submit to the natural inclination to love himself first; even as the Lord Jesus demonstrated through His supreme example in His love for the church. Therefore, when the Lord gives a negative admonition to parents to “withhold not,” it is in keeping with this Biblical principle of instructing parents to obey where they will have to overcome their natural inclinations, control their emotions and do what is right even when they do not feel like. [There is truth to this. But is it the whole truth? When the Spirit lives in a man does He not deal with feelings too, and give us a new “heart”, or seat of emotions? Do those new feelings from Heaven that break us, cause us to want to take a rod to break*

*others? Did Jesus really cry over Lazarus? Did Jeremiah cry over Israel? Didn't Jesus weep over Jerusalem? Are we always to deny feelings? Won't a broken heart on our part cause us to see our own sin and find other ways to deal with discipline?]*

### ***Whose job?***

*Who is to perceive this duty that Solomon outlines? The Hebrew language indicates in this passage through a second person masculine singular suffix that Solomon is probably [probably? Sufficient evidence for this conclusion?] addressing a man. The context of course, [of course? How so?] would indicate that the father of the household is the subject of Solomon's admonition. Solomon, in doing this, is underscoring and agreeing with the rest of Scripture when it teaches that child-training and education is the primary responsibility of the father of that child. The primary responsibility for this vital task is not delegated by God to the mother [Titus 2:4 seems to indicate a major role for mother. Father is not at home much of the time.], Sunday School teacher, pastor, day school teacher, grandparents, or any other person, but is the primary responsibility of the father. Obviously, these other individuals are an invaluable help to the father, especially his wife, but they are helpers only. A father will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for the spiritual, emotional, and physical welfare and training of his wife [what Scripture mentions the training of a wife? The proverbs wife seems to be well-trained to begin with, albeit in different areas.] and children. It therefore behooves a father to be extremely judicious and cautious in whom he selects to be his helpers in the vital task of training and educating his child. Why? So as not to compromise the Biblical standard he must inculcate in his children.*

*This same principle is especially underscored in Deuteronomy 6:7—"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." Moses in that Old Testament passage uses a similar ending or suffix on the words in that verse, again indicating that he is addressing the heads of Hebrew households, or more simply, the fathers of each family [simply not true. This passage is addressed simply to Israel.] . Moses, as a spokesman, for the Lord, indicated that God expects the father in the home to diligently train the children in Godliness and in God's standards.*

*This concept is not exclusively an Old Testament concept, but is highlighted again in the New Testament. Ephesians 6:4 states: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." [But honor your father and mother, obey your parents in the Lord, is the command given to children. It is a shared authority.] The Apostle Paul directly addresses fathers in this verse and lays the responsibility for nurture and admonition squarely on their shoulders. So to answer the question, "Who is to perceive this duty of correction," one must simply answer, it is the responsibility of the father to perceive this duty. [Children, obey your parents. It is a dual responsibility.]*



## **AUDIO 17**

We continue our look at a position paper written years ago but still representative of many Christian homes around the country. I'm reading from it but adding my comments. I do not tell the author because I have no desire to embarrass him. He may well have changed his views but he has spoken so eloquently about this position that I feel it necessary to share with you what is most certainly believed by many.

### ***What job needs to be done?***

*Next we need to ask, what is the duty perceived by the father? Solomon indicates that the duty to be perceived by the father is something he calls "correction." Correction in the Bible has two basic ideas. The first idea is training through oral instruction. This is a vital part of child- training and cannot be neglected lest the child not receive a balanced instruction from his father. The Scripture indicates that it is the rod and reproof that gives wisdom, not the rod alone (Proverbs 29:15). The other aspect of this word "correction" is training through physical scourging or chastening. Both concepts are involved [what Scripture says that physical and verbal are involved in "correction"?.]*

### ***Who is the object of our attention?***

*With whom is the duty of correction concerned? This passage indicates that "the child" is the object of concern with regard to Godly correction. Many young people, in learning about the Biblical standard of correction, might well ask, who is a child and who is not? The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures) uses the word meaning a minor child to translate this word [But much of Proverbs' beatings involved adult males]. One could well ask, how old a child should receive physical correction? Or, to put it another way, when is a child not a child?*

*It is my opinion [speculation number one] that the parents of that youngster should decide [speculation number two] when a child is no longer a child and when he should no longer receive the correction of which Solomon speaks in this passage. Admittedly, this is not always an easy decision inasmuch as an older child may do unlawful things that the parent believes should be corrected by the rod. I would suggest [here the author departs from Scriptural definitions] three simple thoughts as possible helps in determining when a child is no longer a child in need of physical correction. First, when that child starts paying his own bills from his own resources he has probably [Probably is not a thus saith the Lord] reached the level of responsibility wherein he will respond better to the reproofs of life given him by the Lord than he will by the rod of correction given him by his earthly father. Second, [Another probably] when that child starts his own household, whether it be as a single adult or as a married adult, he is quite obviously out of the realm of being physically corrected. Third, it is my suggestion [But you are a man. What does the Lord say?] that a child in your home be corrected according to his emotional age rather than his physical age.*

*In my limited experience [Thank you] , I have often encountered a child who physically has attained an age many parents would view as being too old to receive physical correction. However, that same child may be committing extremely immature and irresponsible acts in his life that could well benefit from the*

*rod of correction. With these things in mind, you as a parent can be helped in determining when physical correction with the rod should be used and when it should not [Are we saying that years of beatings have done nothing so far, or that we are beginning the beating process with a grown male?]. These are not guidelines that should be chiseled in stone but might prove helpful [Or not].*

*One thing is certain, correction with the rod should and must start very early. In fact, correction with the rod should start much earlier than our contemporary godless and irresponsible society believes is normative. The Scripture says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs 19:18). In other words, there is a time when there is real hope that a child can be corrected and have his will broken [breaking of the will is not mentioned in any of these passages] by the parent who uses the rod of correction, and there is a time when that hope diminishes by virtue of the child's advancing age.*

*In my position as the director of a rehabilitation ministry, I receive phone calls daily from desperate parents all across the United States. They have children for whom all hope seems to be gone because they did not start the use of the rod of correction while there was hope as the Scriptures mandated. I do not mean to discourage parents with older teenagers, who have suddenly been exposed to God's inspired instructions [added to this man's uninspired interpretations] in this matter. As long as you have a child under your authority and your home where you can directly supervise and correct him, there still is hope that you may turn that child from his wicked ways and break his will [Is that the goal?]. You may still teach him to submit to authority in his life. [Or teach him to hate authority]*

*A good illustration of this hope is found in the case of a mother who called me from a distant state about her troubled teenage daughter. This teenager had gotten into such continual mischief and wickedness that the desperate mother went to the local hardware store and purchased a lock and chain with which to lock the girl to her body. This unorthodox measure kept the girl in her home at night but fell far short of Scriptural methodology in changing the heart! I explained to the mother that we did not have room to receive the girl at the time because our beds were filled. However, I mentioned that I could give her a possible answer for her predicament. I also said, "But I doubt that you will follow through." The mother, hearing that there might be a solution to her crisis, desperately implored, "Yes, I will take your counsel. What is your solution?" I then proceeded to explain that the mother should get a stick that would not break and get after that daughter until the daughter asked for peace in their relationship. The mother hesitated in silence for a time on that long distance telephone call, and then seemingly made a firm commitment before me and the Lord that she would do so. She answered, "Alright, I will!" I then forgot about the mother and her call inasmuch as we receive several calls like this daily.*

*Three weeks later, I received a phone call from this same mother. I had forgotten who she was and was reminded of her identity only when she reminded me of the lock and chain she had purchased to secure her daughter. I remembered who she was at that point since that was a unique method of restraining the girl. I asked, "Well, what has happened since our last conversation?" The mother replied that she had taken my advice to secure a large stick that would not break, and to quote the mother, "I wore off her behind!" I chuckled at the mother's response and thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the story. She went on to explain that she was simply amazed and dumbfounded at her daughter's change of heart following*

*the severe thrashing that the mother gave her. It seems that the daughter, for the first time in sixteen years, chose to obey her mother when she realized that the mother was unflinchingly determined to break the girl's will and to settle for nothing less than complete obedience. The mother then said, "And it has lasted for three weeks! But I think she needs it again this week."*

*[This child has learned only that mother is stronger. That physical power wins the day. The mother has learned that overpowering a child "works". But is that the goal? ]*

### ***B. The promise involved if I carry out my duty***

*The second part of the first directive is the promise involved if I carry out my duty. "For if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die." The condition of the promise is found in the phrase, "if thou beatest him with the rod." Who meets this condition? Again, the original Hebrew gives us the clue. Another masculine suffix is used here indicating that the father is probably [again with the probably] the one who shoulders the responsibility of meeting this condition. The specific action involved in meeting the condition is summed up by Solomon in the word "beat." To use this word in connection with child correction conjures up in the listening mind all manner of horrible child abuse through stories vividly displayed by our mass media and by liberal thinking do-gooders [is that a fair assessment of all those who disagree with you?]. They decry almost any form of child correction beyond praise and persuasive speech or possibly withdrawal of privilege. [Not all, sir. Some try a mix of things. Others listen to God for each situation. Walking in the Spirit.] God [Solomon, under the Old Covenant] however, who knows better than men, and has wisdom that men can never approach, uses a word that is very strong.*

*The emotional freight connected with this word causes even many fundamental preachers to withdraw from its use. But since God uses the word and the translators of the Authorized Version have used a perfectly good English word, we shall attempt to explain it in its context free of the emotional freight so often connected with its use.*

*...Not only must we cause ourselves to "beat our child" but the usage of this particular word indicates that God has designed corporal punishment so that it would cause pain. The word "beat" that is used here is the very same word used in Deuteronomy 25:2,3. In this Deuteronomy passage, it is very clear that the word is used in connection with a physical beating where pain is being inflicted by the beating as a means of punishment ordered by a judge in Israel. [finish the comparison. Remind your readers that Moses demanded the death penalty for young people who still didn't get it after being beaten. ] By this Scriptural illustration we are absolutely compelled to realize that this word is used in the sense of physical pain being caused by corporal punishment, and, further, that this is God's very objective! [The objective is correction, not pain. Pain is a possible alternative as a reminder, but constant pain produces hatred.]*

## **AUDIO 18**

*If we return to our passage in Proverbs 23:13, 14, we see by the context that God is also talking about the theme of physical beating, not a beating with words, withdrawal of privilege, or anything else short of physical chastisement. Some folks have a real problem in thinking of the Lord planning to have a child experience pain during an incident of correction. Those who would have a problem in this area should quickly review Hebrews 12:6-11. There the writer to the Hebrews develops the point that painful chastisement at the hand of God is a very clear mark of being a child of God.[But physical chastisement is not the only kind in view. Surely His dealings with us are not always physical.] Moreover, verse eight indicates that anyone without this chastisement, “whereof all are partakers,” is in reality not a son of God at all and therefore not an object of His filial love.*

*The world and humanistically-trained minds are repelled in horror at the thought of a God who would deliberately order painful correction of a child and use words as strong as “beat” in ordering parents to carry out that correction. The Scriptures [Proverbs only] make it abundantly [not abundantly. Only once in the New testament.] clear that such painful correction is the most loving, wise, and responsible procedure that a Godly parent can follow in developing obedience and character in his child. Therefore, when you hear someone object, “But that will hurt my child,” you can answer, “Precisely, that is God’s goal, that the child be hurt with the pain of the spanking during a session of correction.” [No, the goal is correction.]*

*Ideally, a child should know the reason that he is being dealt with in this way. In other words, he should know the sin or the rule he has broken [are your rules and sin equal?]. He should especially know how he has offended God and broken His moral law and then be called to repentance before God and others who are affected by his sin. When this is done the session of correction has its maximum benefit in the life of the child. “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Proverbs 22:15). Mysterious? Yes, but mysterious as it is, the promise is bound in this Scripture that Godly and consistent application of the rod of correction will deliver the foolish rebellion and stubborn willfulness from the heart of a child when his parents have disciplined themselves enough to carry it out. [The foolishness will be gone, at least temporarily. But “from the heart” is not in the promise. You’ll get your behavior modification, but not a saved soul.]*

### **Correction not a one-time affair**

*Another condition of the promise Solomon develops in this passage is that correction must be consistent and repetitive. The verb for “beat” that he uses in this verse is not a one-time action. The verb calls for ongoing activity of beating. Therefore a parent may not reasonably expect that one or two times of Biblically beating the child is going to deliver that child once and for all of the rebellious heart with which he was born. [Not all children are the same!] However in the same breath, we must emphasize that Godly parents who insist on complete obedience and back up their demands with immediate application of the rod discover to their joy that the need for the rod diminishes as the child recognizes the parents’ determination to apply it when necessary. [Here the author has gone again into speculation and false interpretation. There is no Scriptural basis for what he has just said!]*

*Many parents have said to me when being challenged about their lack of consistency in application of the rod of correction, "I have tried that; it doesn't work." Let us think about that response for a moment. Can it really be true that a child correction procedure that is ordered directly in the Scriptures for Godly parents will work in some cases and not in others? The earnest believer would be repelled in horror and say, "Of course not!" Then if the fault does not lie in the Lord or His Word, where does the fault lie if a child is manifesting the rebellion bound in his naturally depraved heart? I believe the answer lies with the father primarily and with parents collectively. [Work? Doesn't "work"? Sure it does. Beating a child into submission does work. But it doesn't change the heart. Over-used it becomes just a matter of grin and bear it. Endure the pain then go on with your life. Not looking for something that "works" for my peace of mind. Looking for a true breaking of the heart.*

*Whenever I have encountered such an excuse on the part of a parent, I immediately begin to ask specific questions about their child correction procedures. In each case I have examined, I have discovered that the parent who claims that they have tried the rod of correction God's way, in reality hasn't done so at all. Some have given their child the rod of correction with such a lack of determination and vigor that their blows could not be expected to seriously dampen the enthusiastic rebellion of the child. Other parents have tried the application of the rod at widely divergent intervals of time and have been seriously negligent in the area of consistency. Further questioning always has revealed that the correction was not done with God's methods in mind at all. In fact, when a child is disciplined in this inconsistent way, he seems to become a worse child of the devil than he was before. [So disciplining a child is now an exact science. And any child who doesn't turn out right has his parent to blame for not beating enough, or hard enough, or with the right rod, or....] In effect, as he is given half-hearted strokes of the rod by a parent who is not fully determined in his heart to break the child's will for the glory of God [which Scripture speaks of the will?], that child in his heart reasons, "I can take this. My parent has not succeeded in breaking my will and I have won." [So this is a contest?]*

*To carry out the spirit of this passage, a parent must immediately carry out correction with the rod as soon as practical after the offense has occurred. This is fully in keeping with Ecclesiastes 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." [This is courtroom talk, not family talk] God clearly states that the further correction is removed from the actual offense in terms of relative time, the less effective that correction will be. What an instructive lesson for our judicial system! How corrective can any method of punishment be when it is weeks, months, and even years after the actual offense? Therefore, a parent should apply the rod as quickly as is possible following the breaking of a rule.*

*For this reason, a mother who is alone with her children during the day is wise to use her delegated authority from her husband to speedily execute the correction against the erring child rather than wait the minutes or even the hours that it may take for dad to arrive home. When one keeps in mind that the greater the time difference between the offense and the correction the less effect will be gained from the correction, it is obviously wise to follow God's method and apply the correction immediately after the offense.*

*Many parents in using the rod of correction on their child do so with an obvious lack of vigor and often stop short of the child's will being completely broken. Manifestation of this error is illustrated in countless homes as a child gets up from his session of correction still spouting rebellious words and giving willful looks at his discouraged parent. The parent has no one to blame but himself for this problem since he did not completely break the will [unscriptural language] of the child during the session of correction. A child who is still willing to resist the authority of his parent after having received the rod of correction is still in need of more of that same rod [or something else!]*

*Both my wife and I have often remarked that it is good that one of our children was not our firstborn. This particular child who came along later in our family was extremely willful and rebellious toward our authority and would often require sessions of correction lasting from one to two hours in length before the will would finally be broken! Had this child been our first, we may well have been tempted to despair of the grace of God. [The grace of God and hours-long sessions of beating. Somehow they don't seem to fit together.]*

### **God's tool for correction**

*What is the tool of the condition in this passage? Solomon explains that it is "the rod." I have spent a great deal of time researching just exactly what a "rod" is and the Scriptural usage thereof and have determined that a "rod" is simply a rod! It is variously defined as a rod, a staff, a scepter, or a wand. In short, a rod is an instrument strong enough to be used in a session of correction so that it will not be broken. It also lends itself to inflicting pain on the posterior of the child [oh? where is the posterior mentioned in Proverbs? The back is the usual target!], but it is not so constructed as to break bones or tear flesh! In other words, the rod is not a pencil, or a ruler, or a pillow. It is far more severe than any of these objects. Nor is the rod a rubber hose or a length of barbed wire! A rod in most cases is probably [probably doesn't count in discussions like these.] a wooden paddle [this, after your hours of research?] used for spanking the buttock [paddle and buttock are not mentioned in Scripture. Are we to be literal or not?]. In my own family, we use a large hardwood paddle.*

*Although a hand may have to be used in an emergency session of correction, this is not what the Lord had in mind. Your hand cannot do an effective job of correcting since you will inflict about as much pain on your hand [hurting myself is not an option?] as you will on the child's buttock. Your hand should represent love and affection, not correction. [No. The hand of the Lord can be for or against, same with your hand... Exodus 9:3. The hand of the Lord will bring a terrible plague... 1 Samuel 12:15. The hand of the Lord will be against you] The Lord prefers this inanimate object called the rod.*

## **II. THE SECOND DIRECTIVE: THE PROCEDURE AND PRODUCT OF CORRECTION**

### **A. The procedure of correction**

*A parent must recognize and see clearly that Biblically beating his child sensitizes that child not only to the fact of sin but also to its ugliness. In addition, the child will see that the penalty must always be paid when we sin. The beating spoken of in this passage is done often and consistently so that the child recognizes he will always pay a price that he does not want to pay for rebellion against his authority [our*

*punishment does not pay any price for sin, that price was paid for us. The pain is a reminder of the fact God is not pleased.]. Such a child who is Biblically trained and corrected will be far more likely [but no guarantees. Many examples on both sides. Beaten children who blew it. Hardly-touched children who by the grace of God are in Heaven now.] to respond to the spiritual concepts of sin and salvation when he reaches the age of understanding. A vital principle for a parent to grasp in this business of child correction is that our children will leave our house to obey their heavenly Father in exactly the same way as they have obeyed their earthly father. [Not at all true.]*

*If a child has been accustomed to disobeying his earthly father and was rarely corrected or corrected inconsistently at best, that child will not likely be trained to expect the hand of God to be active in his life in chastening and drawing him to repentance for his personal sin. Therefore, he will not be a very likely candidate for responding to the spiritual concepts of sin and salvation. Obviously, by the grace of God, there are exceptions to this general rule [many] . By the mercy of God, the Lord has often reached down and saved a rebellious youngster who has left the home of parents who never corrected him in a Godly fashion. [And many well-beaten children have evaded the Kingdom of God.] It must be remembered that he was saved by an all-wise, merciful, and loving heavenly Father who regenerated his heart even though his earthly parents were unfaithful in the area of correction.*

*To put it another way, the one who does not Biblically beat his child, in a loving and consistent way, in a very real sense predisposes that child for hell and even has a direct part in sending him there! This truth is precisely why the Lord says you “hate your child” if you do not chasten him betimes (Proverbs 13:24). Interestingly, the world believes a parents hates his child if he does use the rod on him!*

## **AUDIO 19**

Our final look at a philosophy of child care that supposedly rests on Scripture, written by a man who directs a Christian home. I withhold his name so as not to cause him any shame. My desire is only to have him communicate to you, on behalf of many others, what is being taught and practiced in many homes of our generation.

*Again, these concepts cause horrible thoughts and evoke dramatic reaction in those not accustomed to principles of God. Such folks may say at the top of their lungs, “That is child abuse”![In many cases it is indeed.] My response to their cries of horror is that their methods of correction in never using the rod and never trying to bring a child to repentance for his personal sin is a horrible, hateful, and unloving method of correction. They are the ones who really are the child abusers, the parents who neglect and leave their child to his own devices. [What of those who take a middle prayerful course? You mention only the two extremes] These are the parents who allow their children to express their natural depravity and become increasingly wicked and more sophisticated in their rebellion toward their authority and toward God in their advancing age.*

*But these opponents of God’s methods may object, “What you are suggesting will hurt the child and may even bruise him!” My response would be, “That is correct.” A child may in fact be bruised by a session of difficult correction. In fact, the Lord has already anticipated this objection and has discussed it briefly in the Scriptures. “The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly”*

*(Proverbs 20:30) . One may say, "That is talking about a child who has bruised himself in an accident at play." [One could and should also say that this passage has nothing to do with the parent child relationship.]*

*No, the latter part of the verse explains that God is giving this passage in the context of physical chastening for correction. God makes the point that if a child [not in the text!] is bruised during one of these sessions of correction that a parent [Not in text!] should not despair but realize that the blueness of that wound cleanses away the evil heart of rebellion and willful stubbornness that reside in that depraved little body. I must hasten to add that no parent should deliberately seek to bruise his child nor should that be the goal of Biblical correction. [Many children in "Christian" homes will testify to the blueness of their own wounds, and the blood that caused serious problems of undressing.] I simply must agree with the Lord and declare that if a bruise does occur, God knows about it and will use it to cleanse the guilty heart of that erring child.*

### ***Bitter medicine***

*But the humanist or disobedient parent who does not want to use God's method may still object and say, "I just cannot bring myself to do such a horrible thing to my child." Let me ask this question. If your child was dying of a deadly disease and a very bitter, extremely distasteful medicine was discovered that could cure your child of the deadly disease, would you not give him that medicine? In fact, would you not get help to hold the child to even force the medicine down his throat in order that he might be saved? [Yes, the children in some homes are held down with hands and chair!] Most thinking men [those who disagree are not thinking caring men?] would most readily admit that they would indeed do so even though the medicine was horribly bitter and distasteful to the child. So it is in this matter of God's method of child correction. It is very distasteful and painful for the child involved and since this is true it has become bitter and distasteful to disobedient parents as well, but it is absolutely vital for that child's character training and ultimate spiritual salvation. [Parents can learn to be sadistic yet all the while believing they are saving their child's soul?]*

### ***When to begin?***

*When should a parent start using the rod of correction on a child that the Lord has brought into the family? There is no clear and specific answer to this very good question. [So let the paragraph end here] However, it is my opinion that the correction of children should start as soon as the need for that correction is made manifest. Every discerning parent who has been blessed with a little child in his home realizes that his initial impression of the sweetness and the innocence of the child is in reality an illusion. A child very quickly demonstrates his fallen, depraved nature and reveals himself to be a selfish little beast [wonderful view of a child. A selfish little beast] in manifold ways. As soon as the child begins to express his own self-will (and this occurs early in life) that child needs to receive correction. My wife and I have a general goal of making sure that each of our children has his will broken [by what Scripture?] by the time he reaches the age of one year. [ghastly thought. Admittedly not in Scripture, just the rule of "my wife and I." And carried out at some Christian homes, per eyewitnesses.] To do this, a child must receive correction when he is a small infant. Every parent recognizes that this self-will begins early as he*



*has witnessed his child stiffen his back and boldly demonstrate his rebellion and self-will even though he has been fed, diapered, and cared for in every other physical way. [And are you sure his crying is not because of illness? Is he rebelling or trying to tell you something? This is awful.]*

### **The stakes are high**

*Every father and mother must recognize this all-important fact, that the very soul of their child is at stake in this matter of Godly correction with the rod. [Indeed!] The immortal, undying portion of that child is in very real jeopardy if his will is not broken and he is not trained to respond to God's authority in his life.*

*A parent must not just correct for present results. If this were true we could understand more clearly why so many parents allow their children to get by uncorrected at present only to reap sad results later on. NO, a parent must correct his children not only for present results but for results twenty years from now and for an eternity!*

*I am often reminded of a conversation I had with a neighbor of mine who related a very personal incident from his life with regard to the correction of his children. He mentioned to me on one occasion that he thought that he was much too hard on his son and was even accused of being too harsh with the boy by other friends and associates. However, when the boy became an adult man he became active in the Lord's work and even chose a full-time position in Christian service. On one occasion the young man returned to his father and with tears streaming down his cheeks related to his father how thankful he was that his dad cared enough for him and his spiritual welfare that he absolutely insisted that the child do right. He was also thankful that he backed it up with the consistent and Godly use of the rod of correction even though it was extremely unpleasant and distasteful at the time to his flesh. Your children will also come back and thank you twenty years from now for making them do right if you in fact do so at this moment in their lives. [These testimonies are surely out there. But was there a better way? And did you take a risk of losing them altogether? Each child is different.]*

### **What do I do now?**

*If you purpose in your heart to be consistent in this matter, you will soon discover as countless other Godly parents have discovered that you must endure persecution [Who is persecuting whom?], misunderstanding, and negative reaction from others around you. Some of your friends, perhaps your parents, neighbors, and even other Christians will not agree that you should carry through with this Godly discipline. Be prepared for this reaction, for unless you are in very unusual circumstances, it is most likely to occur. [So now, we who disagree with this harshness are persecuting our brothers?]*

### **Parents must use wisdom**

*Christian parents must be very wise today in how they carry out Godly correction. I would encourage you to be vigorous and consistent in the application of these procedures in the privacy of your home. I cannot completely tell you the grief I have shared with so many parents who have telephoned me and asked me in tears to somehow help their daughter. They have asked to get their daughter back from the welfare authorities or other bureaucrats. You see, many parents who have educated their child with the rod of*

*correction in order to make them do right have found out in shocked disbelief that even the authorities of our local and state governments are against the implementation of this Godly method of training a child. Countless parents could give you vivid testimony of how various authorities have come to their door and have taken away their children because the parents were observed correcting their child with the rod of correction as God ordered them to do. You must correct your child in the privacy of your home so that the fruit of your training will be so indelibly fixed on the child's heart that you will not have to use the rod of correction in a public setting and expose your family to this very real risk in today's permissive lawless society. [it is true that we do not want government intervention in the church. But what of ministries and homes that go too far? Who is to protect these abuse victims?]*

*Another aspect of this is that if you carry through with Godly correction in the privacy of your home your child will not embarrass you in public. Many are the parents who are embarrassed in a church service or in a public setting by their child's unruly behavior simply because they have not enforced rules of obedience on that child in the home. [or is it because of something else going on in the home?]*

*We must recognize that those people who disagree with what God commands parents to do in this passage are in a definite majority in our society. Perhaps as you read this material, you yourself disagree with what has been expressed. If you do disagree, you may be comforted to know that you are definitely in the majority of opinion. However, you are also very wrong. [Why are so many of your products living nightmarish existences now? They were surely beaten enough. How can you sit in judgment on the entire church of Jesus Christ because of one interpretation of Scripture you have arrived at?]*

*[One other observation. All the Scriptures regarding discipline in Proverbs talk about your "son" and "him." If we are going to judge Scripture by verb endings and grammar etc, and if we are to be literal, girls of any age should not be beaten with a rod.]*

**A response to this article was posted online:**

*This is horrible teaching and I cannot believe our system has allowed these people to keep their doors open with all of this evidence of abuse before their eyes...WE have been doing every thing we can to get someone to LISTEN....are our voices not GOOD enough ?? WE experienced the ROD OF GOD first hand and were horribly abused ... and yet the home is still open.... WHO WILL BELIEVE US.....*

**AUDIO 20**

**The Media**

When the Media get involved

This is not North Korea. Or China. Or a Muslim nation. In those places, the media is told by the government what to say about the Christian Church and its ministries.

In America, though there be a bias against much of Christianity, the media by and large stays away from the "Church", whatever that word might mean, unless it senses a great news story and an abuse of human rights.

Such has it been with American media and the Catholic Church. In this generation at least, there seems to be a more or less favorable approach to Rome and its illustrious leader. Its pageants, his visits, her holidays generally get a thumbs-up.

But not always. Consider the recent scandals regarding men abusing children. That men are abusing each other in the Roman priesthood can no longer be considered a “story.” But let them touch a child, and the political correctness spirit invades the newsrooms.

The Protestant part of things has been an easier target. If we are not accused – rightly – of things illegal, at least we are brought to task for things considered shocking, and against our stated principles. Think Swaggart. Baker. And some prominent men of this very decade.

These men need to be forgiven, certainly, but their exposure seems just also. None of them would have come forward to confess this tragic behavior had not the media gotten involved.

Can you see exactly where I am headed here? Of course you can. Some Christian ministries and personal families are hiding behind the world’s “apostasy”, the media’s “prejudice” and all the normal places to hide.

Granted, the apostasy is on, in full force. Granted the media delights in what they are finding, at least some of it. But do we not believe there are any Christians in the media? Some who view integrity and morality as do we?

In spite of all the hiding, is it not likely that when places like CNN, A & E, “Sixty Minutes”, and local broadcasters, all report the same findings, that there is something going on?

### **Let’s take a look at their reporting through the years.**

A TV station in 2008 began to air a report, very fairly done I might add, suggesting that the abused waited ten, twenty years to come out, because of shame perhaps, or thinking that no one would believe them. Their stories are indeed hard to believe. But why come out with such things? What could their motive possibly be after all this time?

One girl at one of these homes stated that though she had been paddled all her life, she had never been hit like she was there. She fantasized about suicide several times during her first years out of the home where she was victimized. Others claim that once they entered the compound, they never once left the grounds. Others complain of nightmares all the time. They dream of being trapped in a house where they cannot get out.

“The first day I was there, I was brutally beaten,” Other hardships they said they and other students experienced included verbal bullying by staff, being forbidden to talk to or look at any other students for months at a time, and shaming punishments such as making teenage girls wear diapers.

Parents are stepping forward to tell their stories. “When she got home, she was very quiet and much more ‘quote’ obedient,” \_\_\_\_\_ said. “It really took a few years before she was able to tell us. It

was devastating to us as a family to find out what had happened. That's why I'm here, because I don't want other parents to make the same mistakes."

Still, when the abused step forward, they are greeted with anger by some.

"I think some of you just need to grow up and stop complaining about the past, and start being thankful you're still alive and well and not into what you were saved from." That's why others don't come forward. People who have no clue what goes on are willing to blame the victims.

Sometimes the victims are forced or later just asked to write positive stories about their incarceration. The truth gets mangled that way too.

One enraged citizen of a town where such a home exists, gives some good advice:

"If your son or daughter has issues, why don't you decide to deal with it, rather than relinquishing your duties as a parent? Maybe try counseling? But whoever gives their children away to some Bible-swinging, rod-wielding fundamentalist does not deserve to even have children. I guess it's easier to just give up your responsibility as a parent, setting yet another great example for your children.

"I hate government interference as much as the next person, but it's the government's job to protect its citizens, and that includes children. If you want to send your children away to some religious school, that is your choice. But such institutions should be inspected closer than public schools. At least in the public school systems the potential for abuse is greatly diminished."

### **A former resident of one of these homes**

I guess I am not understanding why it is so hard for some people to believe things like this happened, and it does affect a person tremendously. My concern now is no one having to keep going through this

Please, before you readers just say I know the director and he-she would not do that, or I was a speaker there and that was not happening, do the research and talk to people, get online. I believe God would expect that from us.

Sometimes members of these institutions are brought to churches to help raise money. One observer of such a church service writes:

The thing that struck me most about the young women was that they did not speak and they made no eye contact with anyone. I thought at the time something was going on there, but was assured they were troubled young people and were being well cared for. I wish now I would have gone with my gut feeling and question what was actually happening

I encourage everyone reading this letter to write to the Governor! Our community needs an independent, outside investigation done either by the state, or, as another e-mail mentioned, Dateline NBC - not an investigation by people and organizations in this county that most likely have been turning a blind eye due to God forbid, monies received to turn a blind eye.

### **An article in a local newspaper, 1985:**

What's going on at this ministry home? That's what Rebecca K of Aurora, IL and her family would like to know. She has been trying since October to see her sister, who is being held against her will . The rules of that place read like something from a concentration camp.

[The resident's] Mom admits she has abused her and didn't know what else to do with her. Her grandmother cared for her for five years, noticing that she had head injuries from being beaten by her mother [at home]. The girl is not well.

Both the sister and the grandmother have offered to take responsibility for her if she is released, believing she was just "dumped" at the ministry home.

### **Those troublesome support letters**

It's like studying a Bible doctrine. You think you've got it all figured out. Like, election, pre-trib rapture, etc. Then you stumble onto a verse that throws everything off your theory, right?

I'm trying to be as candid and open as I can with all this. I read the stories and I cry. I read more stories until I finally have to put them away as my emoter is giving me signals that this is too much to handle.

Then I hear a parent telling these girls, "Grow up!" And I read the newsletters of some of these places admitting nothing, apologizing not at all, blaming victims for speaking out.

So I press on.

Please understand. Everyone has friends who will stand beside them when they are challenged. King Saul had his followers who kept a wary eye on David. I'm thinking of famous names in the news this hour, who have a band of loyal friends who can say nothing bad about them. The fact that people support someone cannot be used as a valid defense.

"Just the facts, ma'am." Only the facts. The truth. That is all that matters. In the mouth of two or three witnesses, let everything be established! And if there are twenty or thirty or more?

### **AUDIO 21**

#### **About church leadership.**

We didn't discuss it much, since our focus is on the cries of some hurting girls and women. But it needs to be pointed out that, Biblically, one-man rule of a church is nowhere taught in Scripture. You will not find the words "the pastor" anywhere. Timothy and Titus, for the record, were not "the pastor" of a congregation. Both were allies of the apostolic team, left behind in this or that city to teach and put together a team of elders who would take over when they were gone.

Little kingdoms were not in mind. The Pope is not the only one who needs to be told this. Group leadership is messy and slow but it's wise. When one man gets his way, things go south pretty quick.

And if that man happens to be a strong man with strong ideas, that church will go where that man wants to go or else. Constant calls for loyalty and obedience. Oppression. Prison mentality. Mind control.

It happens over and over.

The Holy Spirit needs to rule the church through a team of men who listen to Him and confer with one another until they are sure they have the mind of God. All else can turn into tyranny.

I said "can." There are obviously many places where a humble one-man leadership does good things in a church. But it will probably be discovered that that man listens carefully to the flock. The flock is Christ's flock after all.

If the organizations in question in this report had opened up to the greater Body of Christ to begin with, there would be no such report. There are many congregations that surround all these ministries. Such wisdom is collected there!

When some of these churches hear about the situation, they are serious and saddened and want to help. But what can they do if the doors of the ministry remain locked?

There is a right way to raise a child and a wrong way. Let's listen to each other.

People who finally get out of these homes quite often make some conclusions about the church. Here are a few of them I found:

They are a cult. Without God's assistance I would not have survived. My mother so regrets that she sent me. The place is all about abuse no matter how anyone looks at it. Their ways are not God and not good, period.

Everything there was about control. I would never ever put my child there. I would not recommend anyone else send their daughter there. Things that happen there should simply not be allowed.

My parents are sorry they sent me. Some staff there should not be working with teenagers.

They abused me, screwed up my mind, and broke my spirit. Submission was the main thing. They do nothing to make, train, or teach someone to be a better Christian.

I hope that my statement will save one person from the treatment I received. They enjoyed being sadistic. They manipulated us into embracing their extreme religious agenda. Their isolation and fear tactics may be successful in the short term, but they have a lasting negative effect.

I thought it couldn't be worse than my home, but it was worse. Students here are robots. I would never wish anyone to go there. I live for the day that this place will be shut down. Laws must be changed regarding religious schools like this one.

This place was like a Nazi prison camp. They may mean well but since they treat us all the same, some are being hurt more than helped. God never calls on parents to humiliate their children. The staff are

Christians but some are not helping people, they are hurting them emotionally and physically for the rest of their lives.

Some staff are sick. It didn't seem like child abuse when I was there, because of the awful abuse I suffered at home.

Not even men in prison get treated that bad. This home started for the right reasons, but power and greed took over.

Maybe one or two good testimonies came from this place but I can give you a couple dozen more that were not good. If your goal is to intimidate, humiliate, diminish hope for your child, send him there.

May the right people find out what is going on and put laws in place that will prevent this kind of abuse. Some staff are serving the Lord through ministry, but they should not be working with teen-agers. They don't know what they are doing. They are power tripping because they can.

No one cared about us there. I would rather have gone to boot camp! They tear down but do not build up. I pray and beg God to bring this awful place to the ground. My mother cried and apologized when I told her the things that happened to me. I would never send my girls there, now that I have become a mother. We needed love, we got abuse.

### **Psalm 31, continued...**

18: Let the lying lips be put to silence which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous...

"What wickedness it is that unworthy characters should always be the loudest in railing at good men!"  
Spurgeon, Treasury of David.

It will be difficult for me to change hats at this point. I will try to speak what some of these homes believe from their perspective, but I reserve the right to jump up out of my seat and cry out, "I object!"

Defense's opening comments

### **A positive spin?**

We must be fair. We must search for something that makes sense in all this reporting. Let me try:

- For some of the people, these homes may actually represent a step up. Even in "Christian" home settings, there are parent problems that would shock us. Unbelieving spouses. Hypocrisy. Ignorance. Girls do get abused sexually and otherwise before they come to the homes, and the new place might look like heaven to them.
- Some people are compliant by nature if enough force is applied. They actually hunger for someone else to discipline them, structure them. These can be "whipped into shape" so to speak, rather easily. So they were not hurt all that much and even sang the praises of the place when they left..

- Let's be real. Some of these people may have actually improved during their institutional stay. Some have even stayed on to become staff. And not necessarily because they have no place else to go, although that is the testimony of at least one I heard of.
- Some had no place to go before they came here. Parents had had enough. So, they could have been in worse places.
- Some students brought in some pretty difficult attitudes and habits. It's not easy to deal with teens in our generation. Never was. So we give the staff a pass on some of their policies and reactions? Well...
- The staff, those in the highest part of the pyramid, truly do believe they have discovered Biblical principles, and are being persecuted when they are told otherwise. They believe they are really re-educating people, making them better members of society, better children of God.
- These complainers are just bitter and trying to get even.
- They are trying to find someone to blame for the abject failures they have become.
- Once one person opens the door to putting down a home, it is easy for the others to join the game and pile on.
- There were really only a very few people that actually had any gripes, and most of those gripes were not legitimate.
- These were just typical kids who didn't like to work, had never had discipline, and were shocked into reality.
- These people had Christian values but for some reason, over the years they have turned against the truth and now see their experience through the eyes of the world's values.
- God used this home to judge the sins of some teenagers, and therefore the home should be praised as used by God in their punishment.

It hurts somewhere deep inside to keep digging for "truths" like that, so I'm going to stop.

So what do you think? Do any of those bullet points above justify the horror you have read in the testimonies of this report so far? Not in my opinion. Maybe your opinion differs. But we must try to make some sense of what otherwise is unthinkable for a Christian residence.

It's true that raising kids today is not an easy thing.

But then, it's also true that being abandoned and then abused is not easy either.



## **AUDIO 22**

### **High School Humiliation, 60's style**

I understand why some Christians cry for the old days, when discipline from the police to the school to the family was in place. A safer world, a more predictable world.

I was playing the jerk in my high school gym class, around 1962 or '63. And getting others to join in with me, to the consternation of my gym teacher, who happened to be the school's football coach. A strong man you didn't mess with. Unless you happened to be a jerk.

Suddenly Mr. Jackson froze, and looked straight at me. I was in the back row of four rows of male students. So glad they hadn't yet gone co-ed or the shame would have been multiplied. He called out someone else's name and told him to go downstairs and get his paddle.

Oh yes, this was all legal. Columbus, Ohio, 1960's.

I was summoned to the front of the class, told to bend over and grab my ankles. Don't remember the rest, but it was unpleasant.

True, I never messed around in gym class again. True, this was the world, not the church.

But the coach had made a point, and the point is now being made by Christian homes. There are some things you can't solve any other way, they say.

True? I don't remember my past history. Was this a first event? Was I always that obnoxious? Why didn't parents deal with me? And what should the church have done with such a guy? For after all, we are dealing in this book with the church's obligation.

Those who wield the rod claim to be a shepherd of the flock. Is this the way God's big people are to deal with God's little people? Didn't we answer this in the Scriptures above?

Pause before you answer. It may not be so easy...

### **Another consideration: Jehoshaphat and Ahab.**

Bible people may remember these two kings in Jewish history. The former was a "good" king, of Judah in the south. The latter, Jezebel's spouse, ruled in the northern kingdom called Israel.

These two nations were often at war with each other, and understandably so. In their earlier years, the people of Judah clung to Temple worship, the Aaronic priesthood, and all that was good about God's laws. Israel went soon, after its split with Judah, into idolatry and worse. Ahab was among the most devilish of the lot.

But as it turned out, there was a period of time when Ahab needed a partner against an enemy that was common to Israel and Judah. He asked for help. Jehoshaphat of Judah agreed immediately and

graciously. Too graciously, said the prophet of the day. The southern king was rebuked for his improper fellowship with evil.

My report is written by a Christian to a Christian audience, though others may read it. Christians and non-Christians have a different agenda in life. So why must we join forces with so many others outside the church, who are decrying the evils of Christian abuse?

This is a question each will have to answer personally. My own conscience tells me to press forward, deal with the church's people and leaders, and worry not about who comes along. I am not to join any group that is outside the New Covenant but I will be, simply by the nature of this case, in the company of those who hate what I hate, and what God hates.

My apologies, by the way, on behalf of one set of the people of God, to the people outside the church, for the outrageous behavior of some of His people, at least that claim to be His people, in another set. This abusive home stuff is not who we are or who we want to be. But can we write off the people of God and join with those who hate them?

It would hurt me deeply if our push for government interference would cause the government to enforce non-Christian values on homes like these. But it hurts me equally to think that the church, which is often not very effective in judging its own, is allowing abuse to fester, thinking it is obeying God's commands.

Who is going to be raised up among us to save us from sexually ravenous priests and baby-beaters? If we won't judge ourselves, we must be judged from the outside. What alternative is left?

## **THE VERDICT**

Our little investigation is over.

What if?

While the appropriate persons make their ruling on this case, a horrible thought surely must be presented to both sides? The thought is, what if the victims and the defendants are both right and both wrong?

What if they both told the truth but not the whole truth? What if the abused could only see the abuse, and not be aware that there were some happy campers at the home? That there were some good meals, good activities, good facilities? Even good people?

"Always" and "all the time" are terms that mature people do not use. No activity in our life is "all the time." I dare say that even in North Korea prisoners have a moment or two of reprieve. Could not there have been such moments, or hours, or even days, of relative harmless behavior?

And could not all of this be true, yet their testimonies be true also?

What if, abusers, you were not able to see the pain you were causing, a pain that would never go away, by beatings too severe, rebukes too unkind, practices far removed from Biblical compassion? What if your record is indeed stained with abusive tendencies? What if you founded your beliefs on faulty interpretations of Solomon, and you ignored Jesus and Paul on the way?

That would not take away from the fact that you provided much good for these “troubled” teens. Their stories of “happy days” would not be denied. But their not telling of abusive unhappy times, well that would be regrettable and even deceptive.

Brothers in the homes, is it really your notion that these hundreds of whistle-blowers, now quite grown, are all anti-Christ people who have a sudden urge to target your ministry where their feelings were hurt 25 years ago? Really?

Can both sides admit they didn’t really tell it all?

Just sayin’.

### **Judge Not!**

It will seem that this made-up “trial” of mine was unfair. It was obvious whose side I was on from the beginning. Some may wish to call it a mistrial, others will say that no person has a right to try another.

We are certainly going to hear about Matthew 7:1 . Don’t judge, or you will be judged!

I take that admonition seriously, and try to guard my speech in my report, limiting myself as much as possible to the bald facts of the case. I have judged myself, confessed my guilt, and repented of bad parenting.

But the facts are clear, in my opinion. Abuse does take place. It needs to be addressed. Those who have broken laws need to be prosecuted. More importantly, correction of the problem. And all need to be forgiven, if indeed repentance is forthcoming.

We must not be condemning in our judgment, but wise and careful, looking to ourselves and our own many needs. And being serious about protecting the ones needing that protection.

We remember that Assyria was called of God to judge Israel, but she went too far, and became unnecessarily abusive. Assyria then had to be judged too.

Let’s don’t go too far. Let’s be careful. But let’s move ahead with setting free some girls who otherwise may be in grave danger.

### **Remember the Titans**

It’s now an old movie. A tough high school football coach. Some rough teens. Awful methods and words. But the team turns out great, though the coach has to learn a few things on the way.

Moral of the story: Gotta be tough with some people? Gotta do things that look and sound horrible if you want to turn kids around?

Is that the moral of the abusive home way? Seems to be. Do whatever it takes to achieve the desired end. Tough guy, rough kids. Beat, lock-up, shame, do whatever to gain control over these lives. Break them. Doesn't matter if they're already broken by life. Break them again. And again. Until they call you lord and master. Win the game.

That may be the way of the world, the way of the Titans. That's not Jesus' way. Jesus' way is Matthew 11:28, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

I raised some teens. I taught teens in Middle School. Not easy at all. I wasn't successful during those years. It has to be among the most frustrating of all careers. This we must "give" to the abusers, and allow that we might not do it better.

Let's be honest. But let's be real. Read the stories, weep, and join the resistance to these places, for Jesus' sake.

### **AUDIO 23**

There are some things the people of God, among the survivors, would like. The ones who suffered. I know they are not after "blood," or imprisonment etc. No vengeance is being called for by the great mass of the ones who have come forward. But there are some things that would bring closure in their minds... I have added a few thoughts of my own.

- Written admission that abuse did take place.
- Admission that the policies arrived at years ago were mistaken, and have since been repudiated and repented of.
- Apologies from the heart for having sent young girls into the world with a taste of Christ that was so bitter.
- Desire for reconciliation with all the offended.
- In ongoing ministry, if this ministry is to continue, a submission to the greater Body of Christ. Formation of an inter-church committee that will have oversight of this home.
- Unfettered access of present and future residents. No more monitored calls, censored letters. Any-time visits from family and local churches. Stopping of the prison mentality. "Tear down that wall."
- An abuse hotline connected to pastors of local churches (not only IFB).

What a testimony to the Body of Christ this would be! What a clearing of the air, a spirit of repentance that would be felt throughout the churches!

### **About the pendulum**

Many who enter Christian ministry homes are part of the church before they enter. That is not to say they were saved and on their way to heaven, just “churched.” They believed in God, understood “discipline”, knew there were rules, respected the church in some way.

For many of the survivors, the pendulum has swung to quite the extreme. Many do not believe in God any longer. Many who believe in Him do not want anything to do with His church. Many have shut their Bibles for the last time.

Many repudiate the whole idea of discipline of the physical sort, even if given in small truly loving doses. It’s all out the window. Whatever that home taught must be false, they surmise, based on the pain they feel to this day.

My appeal to those people and to those who sympathize with them, is to not allow the pendulum to swing this far in your own ideas about raising children. Too much discipline is awful. Too little or zero is likewise destructive.

Beware of carrying anything to an extreme, except fervent love for Jesus Christ. Surely this one lesson we can learn from all that has happened?

### **A strange outcome**

In an odd sort of way I have to join the abused people who are thanking God for their evil experience. In negative ways, it helped make me a better man to hear of it. By seeing how people can be hurt, and how I made some of the same mistakes as the pain-givers, I did not want to hurt anyone again. And I was remorseful of the ways I had treated my own charges in past years, and determined not to waste any more time with flawed disciplinary measures in connection with my present responsibilities. All things do work together for good. God used the abused-child story and the brave people who tell it, to work a wonderful change in my life. Thank you.

### **Vengeance is His**

Though parents and others are often called to discipline, the ultimate work of this and many other activities is not in our hands. God will judge the world one day. We don’t judge it now. God will make everything right, by force, one day. That is not our agenda now. Nations will topple. We don’t topple them. A wise man in Christ knows what is his to do, and what belongs to God.

### **Sixteen going on seventeen**

You old folks remember it. The Sound of Music. Maria sings to the eldest of the seven children about how life will unfold for her if she can wait...

When you’re sixteen going on seventeen, Waiting for life to start,

Somebody kind who touches your mind, Will suddenly touch your heart,

When that happens after it happens. Nothing is quite the same,

Somehow you know you'll jump up and go, if ever he calls your name...

Indeed these are wonder years. Everything is changing. Not a child. Not an adult. And many kind voices come along trying to take the heart away. It is the goal of the parent and the church to allow that young lady to hear the voice of Jesus. Not thundering from Sinai, but pleading from Calvary. The gentle kind voice saying "Follow me." I fail to see how a beating or any of the devices used by abusers, puts a person in touch with Jesus, except in the way that a prison sentence might do. Have we nothing better to offer than the Law enforcement agencies of our land? Can no "troubled teen" come to Jesus simply by His invitation?

Will disciples of Solomon, trigger-happy paddle wielders, ready to punish but not to listen, carry the day? Does every child need to be beat into submission? Isn't something wrong with that picture?

Ah, but "it works"! Meaning, I was able to get a victory over my child? Or, meaning that now my child has come to love the kind Jesus?

### **Another word to the wise.**

Alexander the Great, so the legend goes, had a soldier in his charge that was noted for his cowardice, but also named "Alexander." The great leader exhorted him to "change thy name or mend thy manners." Not sure how that comes out in the Macedonian language, but it works in English.

May any who have read this text who call themselves Christians, author included, never participate in activities that will give the wonderful name of Jesus a foul odor. We really are being watched. Our day to day actions mean something.

To admit to this narrative also will bring on cries of "accuser of the brethren". It is the devil that accuses Christians, one will say.

Yes, I have read the book of Job. The devil himself appears before God Himself and begins to berate a good upright man, about whom no human had ever brought an accusation before. He questioned his motivations, did the devil. And God was up to the challenge. Job eventually passed the test too, and never cursed God as the enemy said he would.

That seems to be a far cry from what I and many other Christians are doing. I mean, many of the girls who are in this fight truly still claim the Christian faith, in spite of what they endured. Are they and I accusers of the brethren who run the houses of abuse?

Was John the apostle an accuser of the brethren when he came publicly, in written form, against the bully Diotrephes? (3 John 9) Was Paul accusing the brethren when he announced in a letter that Demas had forsaken him because he loved this present world more than the promised one? (2 Timothy 4:10)

We do not accuse these men before God. We pray for these men. We have asked them to consider their actions and repent of things that cannot be squared with the Scriptures. We ask them to have mercy on a lot of grown women still struggling with nightmares due to their stay in an abusive home.

These are not my charges. I am speaking on behalf of the many who crippled my heart with their stories. Who will hear us? Who will understand what we are saying?

What else can we do besides cry?

- A Google search will turn up dozens of websites. Educate yourself as much as possible.
- Join in the protest of un-monitored homes. Not for governments to influence the teachings within our church, but for concerned citizens to protect children from those who would harm them, knowingly or un-
- Above all, pray. Ask God what you should do.

### **The off-key folks.**

I was sitting in a church the other day, trying to keep up with the song, but having trouble because one of the musicians was playing off-key and clashing with the rest of us. Someone needed to have a little talk with the good brother (or was it a sister?) to help get us all on the same page.

It is the opinion of many believers and definitely many victims of many homes, that someone is playing off key. I suppose we could ignore it, and try to sing somewhere else? Or better, maybe have a "little talk" with the persons involved? There's a lot to learn on both sides.

This report was meant to be such a talk. Please pass it on. And have a little talk of your own, in your own way and time.