

## **Discipline vs. Child Abuse**

A synopsis of the issue, contrasting the benefits of discipline with the detriments of child abuse.

“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (Prov. 29:17).

The difference between child abuse and discipline is like the difference between night and day. The one produces insecure, unhappy and undeveloped children. The other secure, joyful children whose potential is being realized.

For those to whom the line seems gray - here are some helpful pointers.

### **Discipline. Consistent.**

There is no Russian Roulette with discipline. Every transgression has a repercussion. The child knows ahead of time the consequences and therefore can choose to avoid or indulge the consequence.

### **Child Abuse. Inconsistent.**

The child never knows for sure the rules because they change constantly depending on the mood of the parent.

### **Discipline. Controlled.**

Never in Anger. Discipline is given matter of factly, consistently, lovingly and usually before anyone has time to become angry. If anger does flare - disciplined parents will give themselves 'cool down' time before dealing with the child.

### **Child Abuse. Anger driven.**

The child is a venting ground for the undisciplined parent's frustrations and anger. The parent often lets the child repeat offences over and over before dealing with it - thereby allowing anger to build into an uncontrolled explosion. To the child this is Russian Roulette - and they are willing to play it. (If every chamber was loaded they would quit the game. In other words, we need to discipline or deal with each disobedience in a very consistent manner. This gives the child security. They know exactly what to expect and will not be constantly testing the waters and gambling with the day which leads to much upheaval for both child and parent.)

### **Discipline. Rooted in deep love.**

The scriptures say much about love and chastening being intertwined. He that loveth his son will chasten him betimes. Prov. 13:24 The parent has the short and long term

happiness of the child foremost in their mind. They know that wrong behaviors will destroy many opportunities for their child and give them much unrest. They also know that it hinders the ability of the child to later come under the authority of God.

**Child Abuse. Rooted in self-centeredness.**

The parent who indulges in child abuse is more in tune with their own feelings at the moment than what is best for the child. They are not working at all toward the long term needs of the child - and often do not realize the repercussions they are setting up for the child. They are too tuned in to their own frustrations or desires. The child begins to view God as volatile, angry and hard to please.

**Discipline resolves ill feelings.**

When done thoroughly and lovingly - all ill will is dissolved between parent and child. Discipline is followed by a concrete and genuine demonstration of unconditional love such as cuddling, hugging etc. The bond between the lovingly disciplined child and their parent is strong and sweet.

**Child Abuse creates hard feelings.**

Abusive punishment creates hurt feelings, unresolved resentment, anger and fear.

**Discipline. Fair.**

The punishment is in proportion to the offence. Also, the child has an understanding of beforehand what is expected.

**Child Abuse. Unfair.**

Many times the punishment is out of proportion to the offence. The punishment is either too harsh - or the offense is ignored allowing upheaval and anger to grow. Because the parent is inconsistent - the child does not know for sure what the rules nor repercussions are and that is not fair.

**Discipline is calm.**

The discipline process involves NO yelling, harsh words or actions.

**Child abuse is volatile.**

Abuse involves raised voices, meaningless threats followed by explosions of anger and out of control punishment.

**A form of child abuse:**

Allowing or contributing to an atmosphere in which there is yelling, arguing, whining and meaningless 'no's'. Our children deserve better.

Conversely: Consistent loving discipline creates an atmosphere which is a little bit of heaven to go to heaven in.

**HOPE for everyone.**

ANYONE can access the power of God to change destructive patterns. Through prayer and the supernatural power of God abusive patterns CAN be broken and replaced by loving discipline.

Many have a mix of discipline and abuse. Prayer and a vigorous pursuit of God will lift us to unmixed discipline.

For the children's sake,  
Esther Ann Morey