

Punishment vs. Discipline

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Perceptual Control Theory, The Responsible Thinking Process, and the Bible

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To Janet, my wife, who married a sailor turned Pastor-Teacher. Saved on the same Sunday morning in the Navy Chapel on the Navy base in Trinidad, West Indies, in 1962, she has given of herself in support of my ministry over the past 48 years in ways too numerous to count. Without her love, her support, and her own dedication to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, this booklet would never have been written. Someone has said, "They say behind every great man there's a woman. While I'm not a great man, there's a great woman behind me." I concur with this statement, and the great woman behind me has been my wife of 55 years.

Moses vs. Christ – Law vs. Grace

John 1:17 **For the law was given by Moses**, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (KJV)

Proverbs 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod , and shalt deliver his soul from hell. (KJV)

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but **grace and truth came by Jesus Christ**. (KJV)

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (KJV)

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. (KJV)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. James A. Brettell, born in Mingo Junction, Ohio, November 2, 1934, graduated Mingo Junction High School in 1952, worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad, the F.B.I., played professional baseball in the Pittsburgh Pirate system, and served nine years in the United States Navy as a Hospital Corpsman. He earned All-Navy recognition for pitching two baseball no-hitters within four days, and pitched in the “world series” finals of military baseball in 1957. He was stationed in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, during the “Castro revolution” and stationed in Trinidad during the Cuban missile crisis. He was saved at age 27 while stationed at the U.S. Naval Station, Trinidad, W.I. His academic background is diverse. He studied at George Washington University, College of Steubenville, Kent State University, Akron University, Oklahoma University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Luther Rice Seminary, and University of Arkansas at Little Rock. His earned degrees: B.S. in Ed. from Akron University; MDiv and DMin from Luther Rice Seminary. His pastorates: North Maple Baptist Church, Stuttgart, Arkansas; South Highland Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas; Bible Doctrine Church of Little Rock; Bible Doctrine Church of the Deaf; and presently pastors the Little Rock NetChurch. He has made twenty missions trips to Mindanao, and two to Seoul, Korea. He has been a Youth Camp speaker and has hosted an annual Arkansas Winter Family Retreat. He has hosted several of his own radio programs and a television program. He presently hosts a ninety minute daily radio program, a weekly Monday Night Home Bible Study, two one hour Little Rock NetChurch worship services every Sunday morning, and a weekly Sunday evening Webex meeting. He has streamed ten “live” video services a week to the internet. He has previously authored two books: *“Christianity in Spiritual Perspective: Are You Sick-and-Tired of Being Sick-and Tired?”* and *“The Neutrality of the Soul: the Neutral Soul Reckons the Old-man Dead.”* He has been married to Janet Shawhan Brettell since 1956 and has three adult children, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

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Foreword (1)

Jim Brettell has written well on a subject that is most difficult to understand. Punishment has been thought by most people to be a part of discipline. To a few, punishment is not part of discipline, but rather as something antagonistic to it because causing pain to another does not teach them to think.

Discipline is teaching people how to think. We do this by asking them the type of questions that lead them to think of how they are dealing with the various problems and difficulties they are presently having. And the kinds of questions we ask, lead them to think in those areas and in ways they can use in their thinking. Quite simply, it is teaching another how to think.

This may sound strange, but it is not. You have them look at what is important to them, their priorities, the standards or rules they place on people and things, but they are doing it. When someone is telling you what to do, who is doing the thinking? We have to learn to do our own thinking. Discipline teaches this process. The human mind or soul is what does our thinking. We have to learn to use it. And Jim Brettell has learned this well. First, in the school he established, and also with people with whom he has come in contact.

And that is why this book is so critical, it addresses the very issue of human life that is so important to our salvation. We have to guide ourselves in the direction God designed us to take and revealed to us through Sacred Scripture. Thinking is the process we use, and discipline teaches this process.

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Foreword (2)

Jim Brettell has an interesting way of bringing science and religion together. The principles of perceptual control theory which I have been studying for most of my life seem to lead to conclusions that are highly compatible with the conclusions that Jim is able to draw from careful reading of the Bible. By careful reading, I don't mean interpretations forced to fit a preconceived idea, but scholarly reading based on knowledge about the original languages of the Bible's writers.

One important conclusion from this work is that punishment and reward are Old-Testament roots which are transformed in the New Testament into an approach to discipline and human error that is more mature and (in my view) more effective than those that went before it. Whether it is the message that has changed according to changes in human circumstances, or our understanding that is becoming more complete is still a matter for conjecture and I gladly leave such judgments to others. But I can see that the Brettell reading leads in directions that many scientists have been led through their studies of real people, toward a more humane, forgiving, and hopeful way for we human beings to deal with each other. It also makes the aim of discipline a matter of justice here and now, rather than a threat of eternal horror as a kind of revenge for misdeeds. In short, the message Jim Brettell is finding is one that says love rather than fear is the best principle for living with other people and oneself.

As a scientist and as a human being, I find that message believable and encouraging, as well as being (as far as I can tell) quite correct.

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Preface

The thesis of this booklet is as follows: There is no scriptural authority to employ any form of punishment, including corporal punishment, to bring about a change in a person's behavior, including a child's behavior, during the New Testament Christian era.

While it may not be deemed journalistically appropriate to write in the first person, there are occasions when I will do so throughout this booklet. So distorted is the modern-day practice of dealing with disruptive behavior, that it is my desire to set my thoughts apart from all others so as to make it clear who is believing what and saying what.

It is the opinion of this author that the Responsible Thinking Process® (RTP) based upon the Perceptual Control Theory (PCT) is the method of choice in dealing with disruptive behavior in any environment, and that both PCT and RTP are biblically based concepts.

This booklet is divided into three sections: 1) PCT and the Bible; 2) RTP and the Bible; and 3) Punishment vs. Discipline. In section 1, the connection between PCT and the Bible will be developed, followed by a listing of several principles related to PCT. In section 2, the connection between RTP and the Bible will be developed, followed by a listing of several principles related to RTP. Section 3 will support the notion that punishment was never biblically authorized as a method to change disruptive behavior. In fact, this author believes that PCT and RTP are both biblically based concepts, and that RTP based upon PCT is the method of choice when dealing with disruptive behavior in *any* environment.

Throughout Church history, major doctrines have become lost from church practice only to be rediscovered at some later date. It is this author's opinion that *discipline* as the biblical method of dealing with disruptive behavior has been lost from both secular and church practice throughout his lifetime, dating back seven decades, but has been rediscovered by Mr. Ed Ford who was encouraged by

the work of William T. Powers who developed PCT that became the foundation from which RTP was launched.

I first became aware of RTP in 1997 after I established the John T. Goad Christian School (JTGCS) as a ministry associated with my pastorate at the Bible Doctrine Church of Little Rock. With children enrolled from K5 through grade 12, for the next seven years RTP was the method used to deal with disruptive behavior in the school. From the time RTP began to be employed, disruptive behavior virtually diminished to the point of rare existence. Both students and teachers were happier.

Because of the success resulting from the use of RTP at the JTGCS, its use was extended into the arena of Christian youth camps in which I've been involved. So successful has RTP been in these camps that parents began to seek counsel regarding the possible use of RTP in their homes. In every environment where RTP has been employed, the results have been magnificent. Rules and operational procedures have been established; children have been granted freedom of choice; the consequence for rule or procedure violation has been carried out; disruptive behavior has diminished; and the goals for which each environment was established are now being reached with a minimum of disruptive behavior. The net result -- everyone involved is happier -- thanks to RTP based upon PCT.

My prayer is that all who read this booklet will prayerfully consider its content and become persuaded that *discipline* rather than punishment is the biblical means of dealing with disruptive behavior. Punishment is out, and discipline is in. May God our heavenly Father grant that this booklet bring honor and glory to Himself whose heart is filled with joy when His plan is followed in obedience by His children.

Acknowledgements

There are many people who have made significant contribution to my Christian life, and one is Ed Ford. From him, I have learned to set aside punishment as the means of dealing with disruptive behavior in favor of RTP. He has strongly encouraged me to place my thoughts about the connection between PCT and RTP and the Bible in writing. Without his encouragement, this booklet may never have been written.

Another person is Mr. William T. Powers. I want to thank him for his dedication to control theory that led him to develop the perceptual control theory that provided the platform for Ed Ford to develop RTP.

I want to thank Kitty Braswell for recommending Ed Ford and RTP to me prior to my organizing the John T. Goad Christian School.

Abbreviations

KJV	King James Version
NAU	New American Standard Update
NIV	New International Version
NKJ	New King James
NKJV	New Kin James Version
PCT	Perceptual Control Theory
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RTC	Responsible Thinking Classroom
RTP	Responsible Thinking Process
TEV	Today's English Version
TLB	The Living Bible

SECTION 1

PCT AND THE BIBLE

The Perceptual Control Theory (PCT) developed by Mr. William T. Powers is said to be a theory founded in the belief that human beings are organized to self-control. There are six definitions for the word “theory” listed on <http://www.m-w.com/>, Merriam-Webster On-Line.

- 1: the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another;
- 2: abstract thought: SPECULATION;
- 3: the general or abstract principles of a body of fact, a science, or an art <music *theory*>;
- 4a: a belief, policy, or procedure proposed or followed as the basis of action <her method is based on the *theory* that all children want to learn>
- 4b: an ideal or hypothetical set of facts, principles, or circumstances -- often used in the phrase *in theory* <in *theory*, we have always advocated freedom for all>;
- 5: a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena <wave *theory* of light>;
- 6a: a hypothesis assumed for the sake of argument or investigation;
- 6b: an unproved assumption: CONJECTURE;
- 6c: a body of theorems presenting a concise systematic view of a subject <*theory* of equations>.

Take your choice. How would you define PCT as a *theory*. Would you choose definition 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6? I won't choose any of the above because it is my opinion that PCT is not a theory. It is a principle of life decreed by God the Father in eternity past and revealed as such in Holy Scripture. It can be said, then, that perceptual control is the belief that man was created by God to control himself. He is designed for self-control rather than control by someone else. Self-control can only be self-control if a person is in

control of his own life. Self-control must mean just that -- self-control!

Self-control implies freedom of choice. It doesn't determine the nature of a person's choices, good or bad, right or wrong. It determines only that an individual is free to choose. If anyone or anything limits a person's choices, whether the choices are good or bad, right or wrong, then freedom to choose and self-control have been turned over to another source.

God has created man to control himself with freedom to choose right or wrong, good or bad. I'll use the term *volition* to denote freedom of choice. Volition is one of man's five soul characteristics: self-consciousness, mentality, *volition*, emotion, and conscience. It is the characteristic of the soul that enables self-consciousness to make decisions. Volition has a positive pole and a negative pole. The positive pole is used to make choices that are deemed to be right or good. The negative pole is used to make choices that are deemed to be wrong or bad. The fact that right and wrong and good and bad are *relative* terms in the minds of some, this author accepts and acknowledges the existence of *absolutes*. This implies that whatever constitutes God's truth in any period of human history, good and bad, right and wrong are distinguished from one another by comparing them against God's divinely revealed standard. To force man into right choices destroys the very nature of volition. To deny man wrong choices also destroys the very nature of volition. If volition is tampered with in any way, freedom of choice as man's God-given right to self-control is destroyed.

Man's God-given right to self-control is first evidenced in the Garden of Eden when the divine prohibition was introduced in Genesis 2:16-17:

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Properly translated from Hebrew into English, the latter part of this verse should read, “. . . dying thou shalt die.” The word “dying” refers to spiritual death which is defined as separation from

God in time, that is, separation from God while physically alive, not in eternity future. The phrase “shalt die” is a reference to physical death.

With this divine prohibition, man was given choices—obedience or disobedience. So, under the principle of self-control, man chose disobedience and suffered the immediate consequence of spiritual death which is tantamount to separation from God in time, that is, while he is physically alive.

The word “whosoever” is used 183 times in 163 verses in the King James Version of the Bible. Each “whosoever” recognizes a person’s prerogative to control his own destiny through personal choices. This is tantamount to self-control.

The language of the New Testament is basically Koine Greek, and there are four conditional uses of the word “if” in the Greek language. The first class condition says, “If, and it’s true.” The second class condition says, “If, and it’s not true.” The fourth class condition says, “If, I wish it were true, but it’s not.” The third class condition says, “If, maybe you will, and maybe you won’t.” This third class condition recognizes the God-given right of self-control. Man rightfully says, “I’m in control. I’ll decide whether I will or won’t. I’m the captain of my own ship.”

As has been shown in this chapter, it is this author’s belief that the Bible confirms that PCT is not a theory, but a fact, decreed by God in eternity past.

Volition is the issue. It is an issue throughout the entire Bible. Volition means freedom of choice. Freedom of choice implies self-control, and self-control is a basic tenet of the Perceptual Control Theory (PCT). Since volition, self-control, and freedom of choice have been decreed by God, and His decrees are revealed in the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God, there should be no doubt that PCT finds its source in the divine decrees. If these relationships can be confirmed, it only remains to be said, “CASE CLOSED.” PCT is biblically based and the concept has been decreed by God from eternity past.

In the discovery of PCT, William Powers discovered the faithfulness of God as that faithfulness relates to His divine decrees. The concept of PCT was decreed whether discovered or not, but when discovery occurs, man has only discovered what God has decreed.

The principles associated with PCT will demonstrate how we as human beings try to achieve what we want by behaving in ways to change our perceptions until those perceptions match our internal goals. An understanding of PCT will help us to see how little we can know what is actually going on in the mind of another human being.

Consider the following principles associated with PCT, none of which transgress a single biblical principle, promise, doctrine, technique, rule for living, or operational procedure in the Christian way of life.

Some Principles Associated with PCT

1. A human being chooses how he acts to get what he wants.
2. A human being controls his perceptions, not his behavioral actions.
3. A human being is aware of the perceptions he controls, but he may be unaware of the specific actions by which he controls those perceptions.
4. When asked, “What are you doing?” the person being asked usually describes the perception he is controlling, not his behavioral action.
5. The person who asked, “What are you doing?” may be confused by the response since we most often describe what we are trying to control, not how we are going about it.
6. A person can only see the behavioral actions being used by another person to control his perceptions.
7. Since one person may not know what is being perceived by another person, he sees only the behavioral actions being used by the other person to control his perceptions.
8. While a person sees what another person is doing, he does not see what the other person is perceiving.

9. A person's actions may produce unintended consequences.
10. One unintended consequence of a person's behavioral action is the disturbance of another person's perception and possibly a violation of his rights.
11. A disturbance that disrupts an established function in any environment is referred to as a disruption.
12. A disruption is a behavioral action that disturbs a perception of another human being.
13. Behavioral actions are attempts to correct the difference between what we presently WANT and how we presently PERCEIVE we are doing in terms of getting what we currently WANT.
14. We do what we do to get what we want. Our perception tells us whether we have it or not.
15. When our perception tells us we don't have what we want, we do whatever is necessary to get what we want, and we will change what we are doing as often as necessary until our perception tells us we have what we want.
16. Point 15 implies three things: 1) a want or a goal; 2) a perception, and 3) a behavioral action.

a want: what you are trying to achieve, obtain

a perception: the way you view what you want

- I have it
- I don't have it
- I'm trying to get it

a behavioral action:

- doing nothing because I have what I want
- continue doing what I did to get what I want so that I can hang-onto what I want

- doing what I deem necessary to get what I want
- doing what I deem necessary until I get what I want

SECTION 2

RTP AND THE BIBLE

It is the opinion of this author that the Responsible Thinking Process (RTP), developed by Mr. Ed Ford, is biblically based and divinely decreed. It is my further opinion that the Perceptual Control Theory (PCT) is equally biblically based and divinely decreed. Mr. Ford stated the following in an e-mail to this author: “RTP, *using PCT as a basis*, is a method of teaching others how to look within themselves, decide the way they want to be, and how to restructure their own lives so they can get what they want while respecting the rights of others.” The following statement appears in Mr. Ford’s Book, *DISCIPLINE for Home and School Fundamentals*, p. 1: “Perceptual control theory (PCT), *the theoretical framework that supports RTP, . . .*” If, then, RTP is based upon PCT, and PCT is biblically based and divinely decreed, then RTP is as biblically based and decreed of God as is PCT. As a child bears the nature of its parent, so RTP bears the nature of its foundation, PCT. And why should it not? Both operate on the principle of freedom, and when and where freedom is denied, both concepts are destroyed.

One remaining question might be this: If PCT and RTP are biblically based and divinely decreed, are there any stated principles associated with either PCT and RTP that can be found contrary to any divine decree? At this time the answer is no.

Consider the following principles associated with RTP in the home environment, none of which transgress any Christian principle, promise, doctrine, technique, rule for living, or operational procedure in the Christian way of life.

1. RTP is a discipline process that teaches a child to take responsibility for himself by learning to think on his own, respect the rights of others, make effective plans, and by doing this he builds self-confidence.
2. RTP is based on perceptual control theory (PCT).

3. This unique *discipline* process is both non-manipulative and non-punitive.
4. It creates mutual respect between parent and child by teaching the child how to think through what he is doing in relation to the procedures and rules in the home or in whatever environment he is functioning.
5. Rewards do not build confidence in our system's ability to achieve goals.
6. A child behaves for the purpose of satisfying individual goals.
7. A child is often unaware of his actions and the consequence of his actions upon other people.
8. RTP gives a child personal accountability for his actions.
9. The key component of RTP is its focus on how a child can achieve his own goals by reflecting on what he is doing in relation to the current standards or rules in whatever environment he finds himself.
10. In short, RTP teaches a child how to respect others by teaching him to think.
11. The purpose of RTP is to teach children how to think by asking them to look at what they are doing in terms of the current standards and rules of the environment in which find themselves.
12. RTP is designed to create an atmosphere of respect.
13. RTP helps children to build within themselves the confidence to resolve their problems. Thus, everyone in the home or any given environment must be part of this respectful climate.
14. Within a respectful climate, disruptions are reduced, and the integrity of the environment is protected.

15. When a child resolves his problem in such a way that it doesn't disturb others, he is showing respect.
16. RTP teaches a child how to resolve his problems without intentionally or unintentionally disturbing others.
17. Thus, there will be an ongoing need to use RTP to help a child experience and apply what he learns from these experiences.
18. It is a worthy goal in the home or any environment to create a community where everyone in that environment shows respect for the rights of others, thus allowing others to satisfy their own personal goals while in that environment.
19. RTP helps build that community.
20. RTP is a continuous process and parents have the responsibility for teaching their children how to think for themselves and how to deal effectively with their problems through creative and effective plan making.
21. Teaching a child how to think for himself is not accomplished by lecturing or threatening, but by asking specific key questions respectfully.
22. Most management programs place the burden on the parent or staff to deal with a child's disruption by asking the staff to "do" something to the child or to "satisfy the child's need."
23. RTP, instead, gives a disrupting child the choice of either following the rules and staying in the environment in which the disruption occurred or going to the Responsible Thinking Classroom (RTC).
24. The disruptive child will stay in RTC until he decides that he wants to return to wherever he was disrupting and follow the rules in that area from which he went to RTC.

25. This preserves the integrity of the environment from which the child was sent.
26. In the home, it is a basic policy that a parent has a right to teach and a child has a right to learn.
27. RTP is applied from the time a child disrupts, through his stay in RTC where he is taught effective plan-making. (Effective plan making must not be taught until the child has committed himself to follow the rules in the environment from which he was sent.) RTP continues until the child returns to the environment and negotiates his return with the parent who has authority over the environment in which the disruption occurred.
28. Questions for your consideration: When you tell a child what he is doing or you warn him, who is doing the thinking? When you ask a child what he is doing, who is doing the thinking?
29. The key to teaching a child to take responsibility for his actions is to ask questions that will teach him to think.

What are you doing?

What is the rule?

What happens when you break a rule?

Is this what you want?

What will happen if you disrupt again?

There is no reason to believe that any of the principles just stated would do anything but enhance the home environment while training a child to respect the rights of others. RTP, however, requires the development of parenting skills, and when parenting skills are applied in the home, it is time consuming. Yes, it is time consuming; and most parents do not want to take the time. It's much easier and less time consuming for parents to threaten a child with punishment, the severity level being such that compliance is certain in younger children, but this parent will rue the days of punishment by the time the child reaches puberty--and perhaps even before. Dear parent, listen to what I am saying, and decide today to seek an understanding of RTP based upon PCT, both of which are founded

in the divine decrees of God. It is never too late to reorganize your own thinking on the subject of punishment vs. discipline.

SECTION 3

Punishment vs. Discipline

Working Definitions

Ed Ford, in his book, *Discipline for Home and School, Book One*, provides working definitions for both discipline and punishment. He defines discipline as teaching children to respect the rights of others through responsible thinking by learning to obey rules, (p. 13). He defines punishment as trying to change what children do by hurting them, either physically or verbally, or by giving them no options or choices, (p. 14). Mr. Ford adds, “With discipline, none of the options may be what a child currently wants, but there are no other options available to the person in charge of the child,” (p. 14).

A Place for Corporal Punishment?

Is there a place for corporal punishment to alter behavior, today? Nowhere in Scripture since the first advent of Christ is corporal punishment advocated to change behavior. Christians are enjoined to raise their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord?” (Ephesians 6:4 KJV)

The Book of Proverbs contains verses of Scripture that deal with corporal punishment. These verses link child rearing to corporal punishment under the Mosaic Law. The Christian parent should not appeal to the Mosaic Law for guidance in child rearing. Why? Quite simple - the Mosaic Law was designed solely for the nation of Israel and has no jurisdiction over the Church. The Bible itself establishes the fact that the Mosaic Law was never given to anyone other than the people of Israel: Deuteronomy 5:1; Romans 2:14; 9:4; John 15:25; 18:31; Acts 18:14-15; 23:29; 25:8. In fact, L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology, Volume IV*, p. 164-165, correctly writes that the reign of the law was terminated by the death of Christ.

The following question is offered to stimulate reader thinking. As a parent, would you prefer to *punish* your child's bad behavior and see him change because he is motivated by fear of punishment, or would you prefer to teach your child to *think* about his bad behavior, have him draw a conclusion that his behavior is unacceptable, and then as a matter of his own choice change his behavior to that which is acceptable? The issue in this question is changed behavior motivated by fear of punishment versus changed behavior motivated by right thinking. I know of no rational parent who would choose the former.

Comments: Unger's and This Author's

The following information contains comments by Merrill F. Unger followed by comments made by this author. Unger's comments are excerpts from his popular book, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. He is presently on the staff at Dallas Theological Seminary. My comments will address Unger's comments in view of my thesis based upon my understanding of the Bible.

Starting on page 901, Unger discusses "punishment" and makes the following comments:

"Biblical View. (1) In the Old Testament

Unger's comment: "In the Old Testament the punishments most frequently mentioned, and upon which chief stress is laid are temporal. They were inflicted directly by God, or divinely prescribed to be inflicted by persons duly authorized."

My comment: Note that Unger uses the word *temporal*. This means punishment while people are alive in their physical bodies rather than punishment dealt by God in the after-life, that is, in eternity future. Unger also recognizes that God delegated authority to certain human beings for the purpose of carrying out punishment; however, remember that right now we are discussing the biblical view of punishment in the Old Testament, not the New Testament.

Unger's comment: "The severity of the Old Testament dispensation in this respect has often been made a subject of unfavorable criticism."

My comment: This unfavorable criticism comes from people whose present-day perception of God does not permit a God of wrath. They perceive God as a God of love whose characteristic love excludes any form of divine punishment. They see an “Old Testament God of punishment” vs. a “New Testament God of love.”

Unger’s comment: “But the character of the people, and the condition of the times, and the necessity for impressing the importance of morality and religion, and of developing the right national life furnish the sufficient explanation.”

My comment: The “character of the people”—and who are these people? These are the Old Testament Israelites functioning under the Mosaic Law. Unger is saying that God dealt severely with the people of Israel because of their character. The implication is that these people after 400 years of bondage in Egypt had developed a national character, the nature of which was such that it required the type of punishment described in the Mosaic Law.

“Biblical View. (2) In the New Testament.”

Unger’s comment: “In the New Testament we find a relaxing of the severity of the Old Testament with respect to temporal penalties; but in connection with this the bringing into prominence of the motives and the influences of the Gospel revelation. (Matthew 5:19-48; Luke 7:37-50; John 8:3-11)

My comment: Again, Unger makes reference to *temporal* penalties. This is just another way of saying divine punishment for wrongdoing in the lives of those who are still alive.

Unger’s comment: “. . . The retribution, however, upon which the New Testament lays chief stress is that of the future. Of the fact of future punishment and of the eternal duration in some form the teachings of Christ and the apostles leave no room for doubt. (Matthew 12:32; Mark 3:29; 9:43; Revelation 14:11; 20:10)”

My comment: Retribution? This is a reference to divine punishment for wrongdoing, but note that this is punishment related to failure to abide by New Testament policies. The focus has shifted from temporal punishment to future punishment of eternal duration. This brings into focus punishment associated with hell and the lake of fire, not what happens while someone is alive in a physical body.

It should also be clear that the five biblical references just cited refer to eternal consequences, not temporal consequences. These passages, though New Testament in nature, have nothing to do with temporal punishment of Christians who violate rules or operational procedures in some earthly environment.

“Theological and Ethical”

Unger’s comment: “The primary ground for the infliction of punishment is not the reformation of offenders. In the divine administration a distinction is clearly made between chastisement and punishments properly so called. And in the administration of human government the object of reformation often has a proper recognition, though the reason and warrant for the penal sanctions of the law are deeper than that. The chief end is not the discouragement or prevention of crime or wrongdoing. This is often an important effect, and a proper though still subordinate object. The underlying idea—that most deeply fundamental—is justice.”

My comment: We are now looking at punishment *theologically and ethically* without specific reference to life under Old Testament Mosaic Law or life in the New Testament under Grace. Unger might well have said by way of introduction, “Hey, this is the way it is, now and in the past.”

My comment continued: Look at Unger’s first statement, and learn from it—“The primary ground for the infliction of punishment is NOT the reformation of offenders,” and yet, that seems to be the primary reason why parents and others to whom authority over children is delegated administer punishment, namely, to modify bad behavior. Unger makes it clear what punishment was *never* primarily intended to do, namely, reform bad behavior; and it should be clear that *if* reformed behavior actually occurs in conjunction with punishment, this does not justify punishment associated with child rearing today—*just in case* it might result in modified behavior. That’s unjustified rationalization, and there is no place for such rationalization in the spiritual life associated with the Christian life.

My comment continued: Unger uses the word *chastisement*. This comes from the Greek word “paideuo” meaning “to instruct, train, correct.” Note that punishment is not mentioned.

Unger's comment: "And in the administration of human government the object of reformation often has a proper recognition, . . ."

My comment: This means that when punishment is rendered by duly authorized individuals, it is recognized that reformed behavior *may* result.

Unger's comment: But he adds, "though the reason and warrant for the penal sanctions of the law are deeper than that."

My comment: This means that while modified behavior may result from penal sanctions of the law (which means punishment for wrongdoing), the reason and justification for punishment run deeper than changed behavior. Again, this implies that punishment used to modify behavior is a rationalization based upon a false notion of its primary purpose, namely, *justice*.

Unger's comment [brackets mine]: "The chief end [of punishment] is not the discouragement or prevention of crime or wrongdoing."

My comment: If not, then what is the chief end [objective] of punishment? Here it is! JUSTICE.

Unger's comment: "The underlying idea—that most deeply fundamental—is justice."

My comment: In other words, he's getting what he deserves. Justice has *nothing* to do with modified behavior. Modified behavior is not a guaranteed spin-off from justice, and to deem it so is both rationalization and unrealistic expectation. If it occurs, it occurs, but there is no cause and effect relationship between justice and modified behavior.

Unger's comment [brackets mine]: "This [reformed behavior] is often an important effect [result from punishment], and a proper [meaning "it's good if it occurs"] though still subordinate [to justice] object [objective, goal]."

My comment: Unger is saying that modified behavior is a worthy goal in any person's life, and if modified behavior occurs in conjunction with punishment for wrongdoing, modified behavior is an important result, but punishment was not administered with the intention of modifying the behavior of the one being punished. Here's an illustration: If someone commits a crime, the nature of which demands imprisonment, justice is the motivation for sending the criminal to prison. If, however, the prisoner chooses to become a

believer in Jesus Christ while in prison and chooses to modify his behavior, it must be understood that there is not now, nor has there ever been, a cause and effect relationship between punishment as justice and modified behavior.

Punishment: Mosaic Law.

Important to our thesis is Unger's comments that follow.

Unger's comment: "The law of retribution seems to underlie punishment in all ages."

My comment: Do we understand what he is saying? Retribution implies deserved punishment for wrongdoing, and Unger says that from ages past right up to today, man on this planet has viewed punishment as deserved for wrongdoing. Note that it's the law of retribution, not the law of changed behavior.

Unger's comment: ". . . punishment is found in the form of *blood revenge* among many ancient peoples as primitive (Genesis 27:45) custom, going back for its final basis in Genesis 9:5.

Genesis 27:45 "until your brother's anger against you subsides, and he forgets what you did to him. Then I shall send and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?" (NAS)

Genesis 9:5 "And surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from {every} man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. (NAS)

Unger's comment: "Very naturally, in acting as redeemer, the person would be tempted to inflict greater injury than that which he avenged."

My comment: "Very naturally" means "while acting under the influence of the human sinful nature (sometimes referred to as the old-sin-nature or the Adamic nature), and the context of this statement refers to people of Genesis 27:45 and Genesis 9:5 who historically lived prior to the Mosaic Law. Here, the "redeemer" is the duly authorized person responsible for executing justice. The

statement “tempted to inflict greater injury than that which he avenged” means that the punishment is greater than the crime. Does this sound familiar? Now, Unger is going to take us from pre-Mosaic Law to the Mosaic Law under which an adjustment is to be made. Punishment should now equal the level of the crime. Remember, prior to the Mosaic Law, the redeemer is said to be tempted to inflict greater injury than that which he avenged.

Unger’s comment: “According to the Mosaic code, punishment was made to correspond to the heinousness of the offense, that there should fall upon the culprit what he had done to his neighbor, no more, thus giving no authority for personal revenge.”

My comment: This means that under the Mosaic Law it was intended that punishment for wrongdoing would equal the level of wrongdoing, and the person rendering the punishment was given no room to abuse the wrongdoer by over-punishment.

Unger’s comment: “What is said in Deuteronomy 19:19 in regard to the false witness holds good of all the penal enactments of the Mosaic Law:

Deuteronomy 19:19 then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. (NAS)

Deuteronomy 19:19 his penalty shall be the punishment he thought the other man would get. In this way you will purge out evil from among you. (TLB)

Unger’s comment (continued) [brackets mine]: “This we see, at the root of all the enactments of the Mosaic penal code there lies the principle of strict but righteous retribution, and its intention is to extirpate [to pull up by the roots; root out; to destroy completely; exterminate; abolish] evil and produce reverence for the righteousness of the holy God in the heart of the people.

My comment: Righteous retribution (punishment)—this is at the root of the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law’s goal was not to over-punish people for wrongdoing. In fact, the Mosaic Law when applied properly would have negated that possibility.

My comment (continued): The phrase “to extirpate evil” occurred when the wrongdoer was excommunicated from the community. This is not a reference to the modified behavior of the wrongdoer. When the cancerous cells are removed, the remainder of the body becomes healthy.

My comment (continued): Reverence was produced in the heart of the people for the righteousness of the holy God when they saw evil extirpated from the community by excommunicating the evildoer. When the rest of the community saw the evildoer excommunicated, they would reason that it is better to do right than to be excommunicated from the community. Once again, punishment did not alter the behavior of the evildoer.

Capital Punishment

Unger writes (page 902) with this author’s comments in brackets, “The wide range of crimes punishable by death according to the Mosaic Law may be accounted for by the peculiar conditions of the Israelites. A nation of newly emancipated slaves, they were probably intractable [hard to manage; unruly or stubborn]; and their wanderings and isolation did not permit of penal settlements [plea bargaining] or remedial punishments [something less than the death penalty]. They [the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness] were placed under immediate divine government and surveillance [God was watching]. Willful offenders [people violating God’s law and knowing that they were doing so], under such circumstances [willful disobedience], evinced [manifested] an incorrigibleness [cannot be corrected, improved, or reformed] which rendered death [capital punishment] the only means of ridding the community of such transgressions [those punishable by death], and this was ultimately resorted to in regard to all individuals above a certain age, in order that a better class might enter into Canaan (Numbers 14:29, 32, 35).”

Numbers 14:29 your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.
(NAS)

Numbers 14:32 But as for you, your corpses shall fall in this wilderness. (NAS)

Numbers 14:35 I, the LORD, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they shall die. (NAS)

My Comment: This was punishment in accordance with the Old Testament Mosaic Law. This has no application to New Testament Christian.

Corporal Punishment

If we read further on pages 902-904, we read about the following things associated with the Mosaic Law: Capital Crimes; Capital Penalties; Secondary Punishments: Retaliation, Compensation, Corporal Punishment, and Imprisonment. It is this author's purpose, here, to set forth information only about corporal punishment under the Mosaic Law.

Unger's comment: "Stripes, consisting of forty blows with the rod (Deuteronomy 25:1-3)"

Deuteronomy 25:1-3

- 1 If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked,
- 2 then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt.
- 3 He may beat him forty times {but} no more, lest he beat him with many more stripes than these, and your brother be degraded in your eyes. (NAS)

My comment: We can see that corporal punishment was permitted under the Mosaic Law. The rod was used to administer this punishment, and that's why the rod appears in the following passages in Proverbs:

Proverbs 10:13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding. (KJV)

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. (KJV)

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. (KJV)

Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. (KJV)

Proverbs 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. (KJV)

Proverbs 26:3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back. (KJV)

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. (KJV)

My comment (continued): One of the biblical meanings of the word “rod” is a stick used for punishment. The Mosaic Law authorized the use of the rod for corporal punishment from the time of Moses until the death of Christ on the cross. This is why we read about the rod in these Proverbs passages. It was a biblically valid tool used for punishing evildoers; however, make certain to realize that these passages were authorized in the Old Testament for Israel, not in the New Testament for the Church.

My comment (continued): An important question must be asked. Are we as Christians under the Mosaic Law? The answer is, no. Read the following passage of Scripture with this author’s comments added in brackets:

Galatians 3:19-25

19 Why the [Mosaic] Law then? It was added [added to Inherent Law that preceded it] because of transgressions, having been

ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed [Jesus Christ] should come to whom the promise had been made.

- 20 Now a mediator is not for one {party only} whereas God is {only} one.
- 21 Is the [Mosaic] Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if [and there has been none] a law [that is, any law] had been given which was able to impart [spiritual] life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on [that form of] law.
- 22 But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise [of spiritual salvation] by faith [alone] in Jesus Christ [alone] might be given to those who believe [in Christ].
- 23 But before faith [alone in Christ alone] came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the [type of] faith [alone in Christ alone] which was [much] later [after the giving of the Mosaic Law] to be revealed.
- 24 Therefore the [Mosaic] Law [by providing a list of rules that the Israelites were unable to keep, and thereby pointing out their personal sins] has become our tutor [school bus] {to lead us} [to transport us] to Christ [for spiritual salvation], that we may be justified [made righteous] by faith [alone in Christ alone].
- 25 But now [with the physical birth of Jesus Christ] that faith [faith alone in Christ alone] has come, we are no longer under a tutor [the Mosaic Law]. (NAS)

My comment (continued): The Living Bible puts it this way:

Galatians 3:19-25

- 19 Well then, why were the laws given? They were added after the promise was given, to show men how guilty they are of breaking God's laws. But this system of law was to last only until the coming of Christ, the Child to whom God's promise was made. (And there is this further difference. God gave his laws to angels to give to Moses, who then gave them to the people;
- 20 but when God gave his promise to Abraham, he did it by himself alone, without angels or Moses as go-betweens.)

- 21 Well then, are God's laws and God's promises against each other? Of course not! If we could be saved by his laws, then God would not have had to give us a different way to get out of the grip of sin-- for the Scriptures insist we are all its prisoners. The only way out is through faith in Jesus Christ; the way of escape is open to all who believe him.
- 23 Until Christ came we were guarded by the law, kept in protective custody, so to speak, until we could believe in the coming Savior.
- 24 Let me put it another way. The Jewish laws were our teacher and guide until Christ came to give us right standing with God through our faith.
- 25 But now that Christ has come, we don't need those laws any longer to guard us and lead us to him. (TLB)

My comment (continued): This passage, when properly understood, makes it clear that the Mosaic Law ceased to function with the coming of Christ, namely, with the coming of His death on Calvary's cross. Therefore, if Christians are no longer under the Mosaic Law, then by what scriptural authority do we as Christians use corporal punishment on our children? The answer: absolutely none.

My comment (continued): We cannot disassociate the use of the rod in Proverbs from the Mosaic Law, and since we as Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, we are not authorized to make application of the rod passages to Christian parenting. The basis for the rod was the Mosaic Law, and if someone argues for punishment without the rod, Unger says on page 931 that the word "rod" in Proverbs 13:24 and Proverbs 29:15 is used as a *figure* for punishment, therefore, we are once again pressed to understand that all forms of punishment in the Old Testament are associated with the Mosaic Law—and we as Christians are not subject to the Mosaic Law.

Further Comments by This Author

It is my considered opinion that Unger's comments on punishment as taught in Scripture are an accurate portrayal of what

the Bible teaches on the subject in both the Old and New Testaments. I find his comments quite interesting for the following reasons:

1. Many of my friends vindicate themselves for punishing their children's "bad behavior" by appealing to the Old Testament, primarily, the book of Proverbs.
2. While my friends appeal to the Old Testament for vindication, I find this conflict: parents punish with the primary thought that such punishment will eventuate in a reformed child, and if not, at least they will have absolved themselves of guilt if and when the child grievously fails in life. Let us be reminded that the primary purposes of Old Testament punishment was retribution and justice, not reformation.
3. Regarding the Old Testament, Unger states categorically that "The primary ground for the infliction of punishment is NOT the reformation of offenders." This seems very clear, and it would seem to me that any appeal to Scripture would only be valid if a parent were attempting to justify punishing his child for the sake of retribution or justice—and that makes absolutely no sense to me. Parents don't seek retribution or justice from their child. They seek reform, a purpose for which biblical punishment was not designed.
4. If punishment angers a child, and it eventually does, it seems as though the parent who seeks behavioral change through punishment, and then self-vindicates by an appeal to Old Testament Scripture, has overlooked an important New Testament principle taught by the Apostle Paul:

Ephesians 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (NAS)

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. (KJV)

In the Ephesians 6:4 passage above, the Greek word for “discipline” is paideia (pahee-di'-ah) meaning “tutorage, i.e. education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction” (this is teaching the child to do right, and then he follows through and does it; this does not connote punishment).

5. Ephesians 6:4 is translated from Greek to English in the following manner in each of the following versions of the New Testament:

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (NKJV)

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (NIV)

Ephesians 6:4 And now a word to you parents. Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice. (TLB)

6. THERE IS NO HINT OF PUNISHMENT TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR IN EITHER THE EPHESIANS OR COLOSSIANS PASSAGE.

Concerning Moses vs. Jesus

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (KJV)

John 1:17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. (NAS)

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (NIV)

John 1:17 For Moses gave us only the Law with its rigid demands and merciless justice, while Jesus Christ brought us loving forgiveness as well. (TLB)

This passage teaches us that Moses is associated with the Mosaic Law, but Jesus is associated with grace and truth. Christians are not subject to the Law of Moses. We are subject to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ. Remember, the rod passages of Proverbs are associated with Moses and the Mosaic Law, not with Jesus Christ and grace.

The “My Commandments” of Jesus

John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (NAS)

John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." (NAS)

John 15:10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. (NAS)

Jesus is not asking that we keep the commandments of Moses. He says that we are to keep *His* commandments, and there is a vast difference between the commandments of Moses and the commandments of Jesus Christ. It is the difference between law and grace. Christians, we are not under the Mosaic Law.

For behavioral change, we, as Christians, need to get out of Proverbs and get into Ephesians and Colossians:

Ephesians 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (NAS)

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. (KJV)

Punishment and the Word “paideuo”

The following underlined words translate some form of the English verb “chastise” by the Greek word “paideuo.” Four different versions of the Bible will be used to show how the same Greek word has been translated in these versions.

It should be noted that where there is more than one possible meaning of a specific Greek word, the translation of that Greek word demands that the context first be interpreted by the translator, followed by a translation consistent with the translator’s contextual interpretation of the verse or passage. This explains why one Greek word can be translated “chasten,” “discipline,” and “punish” in the same verse in three different versions, and “chastened,” “disciplined,” and “trained” in another verse in three different versions. Translators are often required to interpret before translating, and when one translator interprets differently from another, different translations may result. That’s why you and I may have differing opinions regarding what God thinks about a subject, especially if we are reading from different versions of the Bible.

The purpose of the following discussion is to show that the scriptural use of the Greek word “paideuo” grants no basis for punishing a child to alter his behavior.

chasten (KJV)

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. (KJV)

Revelation 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. (NAS)

Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. (NIV)

Revelation 3:19 I continually discipline and punish everyone I love; so I must punish you unless you turn from your indifference and become enthusiastic about the things of God. (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, it is the Lord Jesus who will do the chastening, not human beings.

chastened (KJV)

1 Corinthians 11:32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (KJV)

1 Corinthians 11:32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world. (NAS)

1 Corinthians 11:32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 11:32 Yet, when we are judged and punished by the Lord, it is so that we will not be condemned with the rest of the world. (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, it is the Lord doing the chastening, not human beings.

Hebrews 12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. (KJV)

Hebrews 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He {disciplines us} for {our} good, that we may share His holiness. (NAS)

Hebrews 12:10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. (NIV)

Hebrews 12:10 Our earthly fathers trained us for a few brief years, doing the best for us that they knew how, but God's correction is always right and for our best good, that we may share his holiness. (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, the Jewish author of the Book of Hebrews refers to his own Jewish father under the Mosaic Law and other Jewish fathers under the Mosaic Law who chastened their children. This Jewish reference is an illustration, not a doctrinal injunction for Christians to follow.

chasteneth (KJV)

2 Corinthians 6:9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; (KJV)

2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, (NAS)

2 Corinthians 6:9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; (NIV)

2 Corinthians 6:9 The world ignores us, but we are known to God; we live close to death, but here we are, still very much alive. We have been injured but kept from death. (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, the Apostle Paul is talking about things that have happened to him as a result of serving God. There is no reference here to a *valid* use of corporal punishment upon human beings to change bad behavior.

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. (KJV)

Hebrews 12:6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." NAS)

Hebrews 12:6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." NIV)

Hebrews 12:6 For when he punishes you, it proves that he loves you. When he whips you, it proves you are really his child." (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, it is the Lord who chastens, not human beings.

Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (KJV)

Hebrews 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom {his} father does not discipline? (NAS)

Hebrews 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? (NIV)

Hebrews 12:7 Let God train you, for he is doing what any loving father does for his children. Whoever heard of a son who was never corrected? (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, it is the father who chasteneth his son. Note that the (NAS) and (NIV) use the word discipline and (TLB) uses the word corrected. There is no reason to believe that corporal punishment is intended in this verse.

chastening (KJV)

Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (KJV)

Hebrews 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom {his} father does not discipline? (NAS)

Hebrews 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? (NIV)

Hebrews 12:7 Let God train you, for he is doing what any loving father does for his children. Whoever heard of a son who was never corrected? (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, it is God who is chastening, not human beings.

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (KJV)

Hebrews 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. (NAS)

Hebrews 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (NIV)

Hebrews 12:11 Being punished isn't enjoyable while it is happening - it hurts! But afterwards we can see the result, a quiet growth in grace and character. (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, the reference is to both earthly fathers (vv. 9-10) and God as our heavenly Father (vv. 9-10) who are chastening us. Since both earthly father's and Father God are included in this verse as chasteners, the issue is what method of chastening would each use that would be similar. Since God the Father does not literally spank us personally, it seems unlikely that corporal punishment is an issue in this verse. Remember again, this is the Book of Hebrews, a book written to Jewish Christians who have a Mosaic Law frame of reference, therefore, the reference to a father's *chastening* is illustrative only, and certainly not an injunction for Christians to use corporal punishment on their children to bring about reformed behavior.

chastisement (KJV)

Hebrews 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (KJV)

Hebrews 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (NAS)

Hebrews 12:8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. (NIV)

Hebrews 12:8 If God doesn't punish you when you need it, as other fathers punish their sons, then it means that you aren't really God's son at all-- that you don't really belong in his family. (TLB)

Conclusion: Here, God, again, is the One doing the chastising, and if one would argue for corporal punishment to be included as an indirect method (God authorizing a human being to administer His chastising), there would need to be a biblical reference that granted authority to Christians to use corporal punishment, and the question arises as to whether that authority exists. It seems as though the answer is no.

Other Verses Using Paideuo in the New Testament Strong's Number 3811 (KJV)

Luke 23:16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (KJV)

Conclusion: This is Pontius Pilate, an unbeliever, having Jesus beaten with leaded thongs—certainly not intended to authorize Christians to punish for the purpose of bringing about reformed behavior.

Luke 23:22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. (KJV)

Conclusion: This is Pontius Pilate, an unbeliever, having Jesus beaten with leaded thongs—certainly not intended to authorize Christians to for the purpose of bringing about reformed behavior.

Acts 7:22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. (KJV)

Acts 7:22 "And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds. (NAS)

Conclusion: Here the word “paideuo” is translated “learned” (KJV) and “educated” (NAS). Punishment is not in view, especially, corporal punishment.

Acts 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. (KJV)

Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today. (NAS)

Conclusion: Here, the word “paideuo” is translated “taught” (KJV) and “educated” (NAS). If corporal punishment was used in Paul’s upbringing, it is very clear from this verse that it was in accordance with the Mosaic Law, and therefore, justified under the Mosaic Law; however, there is no basis for transferring legitimate Mosaic Law function to Christian function without New Testament scriptural authority for doing so.

1 Corinthians 11:32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (KJV)

1 Corinthians 11:32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world. (NAS)

Conclusion: This is chastening directly from the Lord. Corporal punishment is not in view. The form of chastening is seen in 1 Corinthians 11:30: “That is why many of you are weak [physical weakness] and sick [physical sickness], and some have even died [physical death].” (TLB)

2 Corinthians 6:9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; (KJV)

2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, (NAS)

Conclusion: In this passage, the Apostle Paul speaks of things that happen to a Christian in service for the Lord, and implies that this chastening of a Christian is accomplished at the hands of unbelievers. No legitimate Christian authority can use this verse to validate the use of corporal punishment to reform the behavior of anyone under his authority.

1 Timothy 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. (KJV)

1 Timothy 1:20 Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme. (NAS)

Conclusion: Here, the same word “paideuo” is translated “learn” (KJV) and “taught” (NAS). Delivering a person over to Satan is not associated with any form of corporal punishment. Delivering a person over to Satan is a matter of excommunicating that person from the Christian community, leaving him with no Christian support.

2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (KJV)

2 Timothy 2:25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, (NAS)

Conclusion: Here, the word “paideuo” is translated “instructing” (KJV) and “correcting” (NAS). Obviously, punishment, and certainly corporal punishment, are not meant to be the means of getting the thinking of these Christians back on track.

Titus 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (KJV)

Titus 2:12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, (NAS)

Conclusion: Here again, “paideuo” is translated “teaching” (KJV) and “instructing” (NAS). Obviously, punishment, and certainly corporal punishment, are not in view in this passage.

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. (KJV)

Hebrews 12:6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." (NAS)

Conclusion: This is chastening directly from the Lord. Corporal punishment is not in view.

Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (KJV)

Hebrews 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom {his} father does not discipline? (NAS)

Conclusion: This is chastening directly from God. Corporal punishment is not in view.

Hebrews 12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. (KJV)

Hebrews 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He {disciplines us} for {our} good, that we may share His holiness. (NAS)

Hebrews 12:10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. (NIV)

Conclusion: Here, the children of God receive “paideuo” from both earthly fathers and God Himself. Please note that earthly fathers “paideuo” for earthly father benefit—“after their own pleasure” (KJV), “as seemed best to them” (NAS), “as they thought best” (NIV)—but God “paideuo’s” his children for *their* benefit. The conjunction of contrast—BUT—indicates a difference in purpose, namely, who would benefit from “paideuo.” In the case of our earthly father’s “paideuo”, the father benefited. In the case of God’s “paideuo,” the child of God benefits.

Conclusion: The fact that earthly fathers “paideuo” for their own benefit--“after their own pleasure” (KJV), “as seemed best to them” (NAS), “as they thought best” (NIV)—seems to be very consistent with the Old Testament idea of punishment rather than discipline, and the use of “fathers” in this verse refers to Old Testament fathers.

Conclusion: The use of the “rod” as a means of punishment in Proverbs 13:24 is authorized in the Mosaic Law. Punishment

was used primarily for justice, and reformation was a secondary consideration, whether reformation actually occurred or not.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. (KJV)

The fact that a father used the rod in love does not imply that reformation was the primary goal of punishment. The purpose of the rod was to teach the Jewish child that there is a just God who will execute justice upon His people – Israel - for disobedience to the law.

Leviticus 26:3-4

- 3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;
- 4 Then I will . . . (blessings are listed from verse 4 to verse 12)

Leviticus 26:14-16

- 14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;
- 15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant:
- 16 I also will do this unto you; . . . (the cursings of God under five cycles listed in verses 16-39)

The rod taught justice, not reformation. Unger states that reformation, if it ever occurred because of punishment, it occurred as a secondary effect, not the primary effect, and if the child never reformed, he still had the basis for understanding why Israel as a nation was being dealt with by God, namely, because of His justice associated with Israel's failure to be obedient to the Mosaic Law.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. (KJV)

Revelation 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. (NAS)

**Conclusion: This is direct chastening by the Lord Jesus.
Corporal punishment is not in view.**

Thought #1 (Curtailing Excessive Human Punishment)

Interestingly, with the giving of the Mosaic Law, it was ultimately placed in writing. It was not in writing during the period from Adam to Moses. With the coming of the Mosaic Law, the law was very specific so as to curtail excessive levels of punishment during the period from Adam to Moses, wherein the level of punishment might have exceeded the nature of the wrongdoing. With the coming of the Church in the New Testament, capital punishment is permitted, but the offense or offenses for which capital punishment might be used are not specified. Of this we can be certain: In God's eyes, the primary purpose of punishment was not and is not to *reform* bad behavior.

Thought #2 (Capital Punishment: Murder vs. Killing)

The question might arise concerning incorrigible children during the New Testament period of the Church. Should corporal punishment not be used to bring about reformed behavior? The answer is, no, because it won't work, and the reason it won't work is that the very nature of incorrigibility is that it can not be corrected. That is why incorrigible people in Israel functioning under the Mosaic Law were put to death.

This raises another question. If Israel functioning under the Mosaic Law put to death its incorrigibles, what is the Christian means of handling its incorrigibles? The Apostle Paul, writing to the Church at Rome, in Romans 13:1-5, recognizes the use of capital punishment.

Romans 13:1-5

- 1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.
- 2 Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.
- 3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same;
- 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.
- 5 Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. (NAS)

“Bearing the sword” in verse 4 is a reference to capital punishment.

While not stated specifically here, the answer for incorrigibles during the Christian era *might be* the same as that for incorrigibles under the Mosaic Law, namely capital punishment, but only as a final measure at the end of a series of isolations and excommunications from various levels of society that end with no remaining alternative other than death by capital punishment.

Capital Punishment Is Not Tantamount to Murder

Look at the following verse in several versions of the Bible:

- Exodus 20: 13 Thou shalt not kill. (KJV)
- Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder. (NAS)
- Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder. (NAU)
- Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder. (NIV)
- Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder. (NKJ)
- Exodus 20:13 "You shall not kill. (RSV)
- Exodus 20:13 "You must not murder. (TLB)
- Exodus 20:13 “Do not commit murder. (TEV)

In the preceding verses, the Hebrew word rendered “kill” and “murder” is the Hebrew word RATSACH (raw-tsakh') and has the following meanings: a primitive root; properly, to dash in pieces, i.e. kill (a human being), especially to murder.

The common argument that capital punishment is “killing” and killing is forbidden by Exodus 20:13 is a bogus argument because the intent of this commandment is to forbid murder, not killing. Killing and murder are distinguished from one another in the Hebrew language by the use of different words for each. For example, the Hebrew word HARAG means “to kill, slay, destroy,” and RATSACH (raw-tsakh') means “to murder.”

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words says of HARAG, “This term is commonly used in modern Hebrew in its verb and noun forms to express the idea of “killing, slaughter.” The fact that it is found in the Old Testament some 170 times reflects how commonly this verb was used to indicate the taking of life, whether animal or human. Harag is found for the first time in the Old Testament in the Cain and Abel story. (Genesis 4:8, 14-15).

Vine’s continues, “Rarely suggesting premeditated killing or murder, this term generally is used for the ‘killing’ of animals, including sacrificially, and for ruthless personal violence of man against man. Harag is not the term used in the sixth commandment (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17). The word there is ratsach, and since it implies premeditated killing, the commandment is better translated: “Do not murder,” as most modern versions have it.

Vine’s continues, “The word harag often means wholesale slaughter, both in battle and after battle (Numbers 31:7-8; Joshua 8:24; 2 Samuel 10:18). The word is only infrequently used of men's killing at the command of God. In such instances, the causative form of the common Hebrew verb for ‘to die’ is commonly found. In general, harag refers to violent ‘killing’ and destruction, sometimes even referring to the ‘killing’ of vines by hail (Psalm 78:47).”

Our Lord's rebuke to Peter in the garden was a warning against capital punishment because of criminal action (Peter's), not a warning about military killing. Matthew 26:52, "Then Jesus said to him, `Return your sword to its scabbard, for all who draw the sword [in crime], shall die by the sword [capital punishment].”

Killing in battle is not murder. Psalm 144:1, "Blessed be the Lord who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle." 2 Samuel 22:35, "He [God] trains my hands for battle."

In Isaiah 37:36, Jesus Christ Himself killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in battle, and the biblical indication is that He will *kill* far more than that at the Second Advent when He returns to terminate the Armageddon campaign. Revelation 14:20; 19:11, 15; Isaiah 63:1-6; Ezekiel 39:11-13; and Joel 2:20.

Fear Produces Counterfeit Spirituality

2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)

When punishment is used to change behavior, any change in behavior is most often motivated by fear of future punishment. When a measure of punishment is severe enough to bring about a desired change in behavior, that change is brought about because the one being punished fears the punishment more than he wants the desired change. His motivation is fear of punishment, not desire for reformation.

When a person's behavior changes because of fear, the resultant behavior is a counterfeit spirituality. It appears as though the person is doing the right thing, but the omniscience of God knows he is doing it for the wrong reason. God knows that the changed behavior is motivated by fear, and 1 Timothy 1:7 teaches us that fear does not come from God.

Punishment forces changed behavior that cannot be approved by God because the motivation is wrong, and motivation is an important factor to God.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts [what you do is the result of what you think] and intents [motivations] of the heart. (KJV)

The word “thoughts” refers to the thinking behind an action. The word “intents” refers to *motivation* behind what is being thought or done. If *motivation* is wrong, the righteousness of God cannot approve what is being done, even if what is being done is right. God honors only the right thing done *for the right reason* where *the right reason* refers to the *motivating factor* behind the right behavior.

Let me illustrate. Let’s suppose that for the first time in months you meet a long-lost friend at church. Your immediate thought might be how wonderful it is for him to be back in church after having been gone for an extended period of time. Certainly, you think, this will be to his spiritual benefit. You later learn that God is not nearly as pleased to see this person as you are because God knows what you didn’t know—why he returned. Your friend is recently engaged to be married and will be in need of a Pastor to perform the wedding ceremony, and his fiancé is demanding a church wedding. Not only does the friend come back to church, I see that he has answered the today’s invitation to unite with the church in church membership. You say, “Hallelujah.” God says, “Wait a minute. Your friend has done the right thing, but he has done it for the wrong reason, and for this wrong reason I cannot place My stamp of approval on what he has done.”

Fear is a powerful motivator, but it is an invalid motivator within the plan of God for Christians, young or old, therefore, those who punish for the purpose of changing behavior do a disservice to God and to the one being punished. Punishment should not be used as a means of changing behavior during the New Testament Christian era. It is *discipline* that should be used, not punishment. Remember, discipline is defined as teaching children to respect the rights of others through responsible thinking by learning to obey rules; and punishment is defined as trying to change what children do by hurting them, either physically or verbally, or by giving them no options or choices.

Conclusion

Thesis restated: There is no scriptural authority to employ any form of punishment, including corporal punishment, to bring about a change in a person's behavior, including children's behavior, during the New Testament Christian era. Biblical evidence has been set forth to support the thesis. Punishment is out, and discipline is in.