**Research on Spanking**

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Recent research goes against many of the current views warning against spanking our kids.

Diana Baumrind, an influential figure in the psychology of parenting, followed children starting in preschool up through their twenties. She found that, overwhelmingly, occasional or even frequent swats used in discipline did not cause major adjustment problems for those children. Though she doesn't advocate spanking, she recognizes that the evidence is clear.

Many parents will feel vindicated by this. But please don't see this as permission to start hitting your kids as you please.

We need to remember that discipline is ultimately about teaching the child-not winning an argument or proving a point. And let's take into account the reasons why so many experts do not advocate spanking: it's easy to go too far, or discipline out of anger or on impulse. In those cases, spanking really does more harm than good.

A sensible approach takes into account the child's individuality. Whatever method of correction we use, we should do it because it's the best way of teaching that child to be responsible. In many situations, spanking isn't the best approach. And even when we believe it is, it's only part of the process. There needs to be a time of talking and listening and healing the relationship with the child.

I think Ms. Baumrind's big picture observations are useful here. She encourages parents to be "authoritative"-setting clear limits and explaining their rationale to their children. According to her study, that's the best way to raise healthy, well-adjusted adults. And I agree.

On the other hand, kids of parents she described as "authoritarian"-who are aggressively rigid and demanding-as well as kids whose parents are overly "permissive," tend to have poorer mental health by their twenties.

Dads, spanking can be a useful tool in the right situation. But if that's the first or only response that comes to mind when a child needs correction, or if you're overwhelmed with emotion when doing it, then maybe you need to reconsider.

Pray about it. Talk to your wife. Commit to doing what's best for your child.