

dangerous place, and it always will be, because there is evil out there in the world. The world is also difficult because it is competitive. There will always be winners and losers. There is an absolute right and an absolute wrong. Children are born bad, in the sense that they just want to do what feels good, not what is right. Therefore, they have to be made good.

What is needed in this kind of a world is a strong, strict father who can:

- protect the family in the dangerous world,
- support the family in the difficult world, and
- teach his children right from wrong.

What is required of the child is obedience, because the strict father is a moral authority who knows right from wrong. It is further assumed that the only way to teach kids obedience—that is, right from wrong—is through punishment, painful punishment, when they do wrong.

This includes hitting them, and some authors on conservative child rearing recommend sticks, belts, and wooden paddles on the bare bottom. Some authors suggest this start at birth, but Dobson was more liberal. “There is no excuse for spanking babies younger than fifteen or eighteen months of age” (Dobson, *The New Dare to Discipline*, 65).

The rationale behind physical punishment is this: When children do something wrong, if they are physically disciplined, they learn not to do it again. That means that they will develop internal discipline to keep themselves from doing wrong, so that in the future they will be obedient and act morally. Without such punishment, the world will go to hell. There will be no morality.

Such internal discipline has a secondary effect. It is what is required for success in the difficult, competitive world. That is, if people are disciplined and pursue their self-interest in this land of opportunity, they will become prosperous and self-reliant. Thus, the strict father model links morality with prosperity. The same discipline you need to be moral is what allows you to prosper. The link is individual responsibility and the pursuit of self-interest. Given opportunity, individual responsibility, and discipline, pursuing your