Mark 8:36  And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?

Rob Jansens: Kids will learn the majority of what they know about God from their parents. Not in Sunday School, not from the preacher, not in Christian School. Who God is, and what godly character is all about, is taught to us more by our parents than by anyone else in our lives.

Kids either spend the rest of their lives trying to unlearn the errors passed on from their parents,
or they spend the rest of their lives living up to the godly standards given to them by their parents.

Proverbs 22:6
6 Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Rob Jansen: We car pool and sign our kids up for twelve different activities instead. Consequently, we have kids who play an instrument, kick a good ball, know how to use a computer -- and tell their parents where to go.”
Thomas Haller As an ordained minister I spent 8 years learning the Hebrew and Greek language so as to study the Bible in its original language. Since that time, almost 20 years ago, I have spent many laboring hours preparing sermons and writing Bible studies on topics of marriage, love, money, miracles, gifts of the Spirit, parenting, and most importantly the Grace of God as seen through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was with great respect for the scriptures that we undertook our call to raise the consciousness of parenting. It is with this same respect and conviction that we offer a look at a Biblical perspective on spanking.

Christian parents frequently seek the Bible in their effort to raise godly children. They believe that there is a biblical mandate to spank and they fear that if they don't spank, they will commit the sin of losing control of their child. They believe that God has commended them to spank and they take “spare the rod and spoil the child” literally, but in doing so they misunderstand the concept of the rod. The following are the biblical verses which have caused the greatest confusion:

“He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.” (Proverbs 13:24)

“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child. But the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.” (Proverbs 22:15)

“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.” (Proverbs 23:13-14)

“The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to itself disgraces his mother.” (Proverbs 29:15)

At first glance these verses seem to be in strong support of the use of corporal punishment, but do they really?
Through a closer examination of the Hebrew word for “rod” (shebet) one can see that in the Hebrew dictionary it has various meanings, a stick for walking, writing, fighting, ruling, and punishment.

The word “shebet” is most frequently used when referring to shepherds who are tending their flocks. The Shepherds used the stick to fight off prey and to gently guide wandering sheep, not to beat them.

Please remember that these verses come from a book of poetry. Writers of poetry use familiar words of the day to represent concepts that the people to whom they are writing can create an image of what they are writing about. The image that we are to extract from these verses in Proverbs is one of creating a culture of accountability.

The point that God is making is that we as parents are to hold our children accountable for their choices and actions.

There are many ways to hold a child accountable and corporal punishment (spanking) never has to be one of them.

Reread the passages above and replace the references to punishment and the use of the rod with the word “accountability” and the meaning stays the same.

For example:
Proverbs 13:24 would read, “He who spares accountability hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”

Proverbs 22:15 would read, “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child. But holding him accountable will drive it far from him.”
Proverbs 23:13-14 would read, “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you create a culture of accountability he will not die. Create accountability and save his soul from death.”

Proverbs 29:15 would read, “The culture of accountability imparts wisdom, but a child left to itself disgraces his mother.”

The rod was constantly in the shepherd's hand as he walked in front of the sheep and led the way.

The rod corrected the course for the sheep. Because the sheep were distracted the rod was used to push and guide them back into the way they were supposed to go.
Striking the sheep would actually be counter-intuitive, as it may slow down the animal, or make it wary of the shepherd.

A rod was used to remove sheep from harm or corral stubborn sheep.

A rod was used as a weapon against predators - it was not to hit the sheep, but rather to hit the wolves and mountain lions that threatened the sheep.
A rod was as an extension of the hand - it was sometimes used to lift and carry a sheep, or to push back the wool to examine the skin for injury.

We lead our children by teaching and modeling the behaviors and values we expect. If you want to see or change an attitude, action, or behavior in your child, change it in yourself.
Explain the expectations you have of them, telling them why.

And, like the sheep in the front of the pack who gets to the feeding trough first, catch your kids doing right and affirm it.

Furthermore, the parents as the primary care-givers need to also be the primary influencers. We have made the mistake that thinking kids need more time with friends, to the point that we think teens "need their space."
But it is adults, those who have become wise with age and experience, who should be the primary influencers through the entire journey to adulthood.

We correct the course. Stay firm with your kids and stick to the boundaries you set. The phenomena of parents giving empty threats, not following through, and not actually meaning what they say seems to be an epidemic.

Children have learned to get just what they want via whining, tantrums, crying, or just ignoring. Parents are supposed to be the ones in charge.
But real life is filled with consequences, both good and bad. Your children's bosses and teachers will all keep their word. Instead of physical correction, we discipline by giving natural consequences - just like life.

We keep a watchful eye. Parents watch and encourage and teach their children how not to stray.
The shepherd couldn't form a permanent moving fence around the sheep as they walked in order to always keep them safe, but neither did they leave them alone for long, especially in places of potential danger. Parents shouldn't shield their children from everything, that doesn't prepare them for life.

But there are places and situations that need your direct intervention and clear boundaries, otherwise children will be going in the wrong direction, perhaps following along behind the other strays.
The most practical example today, I think, is the amount of online and screen time kids have today. Kids are losing their imagination and their ability to interact with live people because of over-consumption.

We protect. Every situation is different, but it is a universal that children need protection from something. Sometimes it is protection from a bully. Sometimes it is protection from bad friends. Sometimes it is protection from their own poor choices. Sometimes it is protection from garbage on the internet. Whatever it is, have your rod in hand, ready to protect.

We make parenting an everyday and everyday process. Jesus’ 12 disciples learned what he taught and eventually learned to be like him by hanging out with him for 3 years. They ate with him, ministered with him, traveled with him.
To discipline a child is to mold a disciple. Your children are to be your disciples, learning from your everyday walk how to live, how to act, how to treat others, how to treat themselves.

It is both a blessing and a curse that the majority of what my kids learn from me is not from the lectures I give but the everyday simple choices I live out. “Do as I say but not as I do” is a command that children simply cannot and will not follow - and they shouldn't have to.

Give yourself a break.

Do not be legalistic.
Don't be so lenient that your kids won't know what it means to follow Jesus.

Pray and Trust