

## **Bright-eyed Babies**

We have friends in a foreign country who run an orphanage for abandoned or surrendered infants. We've enjoyed watching their ministry from afar through their well kept website. Our children know many of the babies by name and we rejoice when their new families come to get them.

Last fall, these friends were in the States visiting supporters and adoptive families, so we made arrangements to see them. The night before, as I lay in bed pondering the next day's activities, God dropped a thought into my mind: "Ask them how they handle discipline." As I considered this, my mind scanned the pictures of the little ones on the website and the DVD's we'd seen of their ministry. And I knew already what the answer would be. You see, the type of discipline was visible through the children's eyes! They were bright, sweet, interested, content.

The next day, on the way to see these friends, I told my older children that I was going to ask about the orphanage's discipline, but that I already knew the answer. "Think about the pictures and DVD's we've seen," I said. "How do the children look? How do they interact with the staff and the other children? What do their eyes tell you? Do you think they spank them?" My children thought a while and nodded yes! "I think you're right." I answered. "We'll see what they say."

Later that day, at an appropriate point in the conversation, I asked, "How do you discipline your little ones?"

"Well....." started my friend. "We don't really talk about it much when we're in the United States..." My heart sank, frustrated at a culture that shrouds this important topic in fear. "However..." He went on and to my delight shared this anecdote of God's faithfulness:

"When the babies are around six months of age, we put them on a large mat that we have for them to play on. As they crawl toward one edge, we give the command in our language for "off limits." If the child puts a hand off the mat, he receives a little spank on the back of the hand."

"With a rod?" I asked.

"Yes. This is perhaps the child's first experience of pain. We pull him back from the edge and he goes about with his play. A few minutes later, he's on the other side of the mat and tries it over there. We calmly give the command. If he doesn't pull his hand back, he gets another smack with the rod. It usually only takes two spanks for the child to learn that when he's put on the mat, he is to stay there. The harder ones take three!"

Wow, I thought, a playpen without sides! The babies at 6 months are already learning self-discipline.

"As the children grow, " he continued, "they receive spankings as needed for their training. We want them to be ready for their adoptive parents. The new parents may have different styles, but we believe this is the way God wants us to train these children, so they'll be pleasant, happy children and a blessing to their families and those around them."

What a testimony! We could see the good discipline through the babies' eyes! What an encouragement this has been to me and to others with whom I've shared this story. God has given us a very specific training tool for raising our children. It's called a rod. I'll write more about this topic another time. But for

now, check out Scripture! God's word is pretty specific:

- Discipline with the rod shows love. Proverbs 13:24
- Withholding the rod shows hatred. Proverbs 13:24
- Discipline with the rod gives wisdom. Proverbs 29:15
- Discipline is painful. Hebrews 12:11
- Discipline yields peace. Proverbs 29:17
- Discipline with the rod saves a child from foolishness. Proverbs 22:15
- Disciplined children bring delight. Proverbs 29:17

God's grace and strength to you as you seek to accurately apply God's word in your family,  
Sharon Duke

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