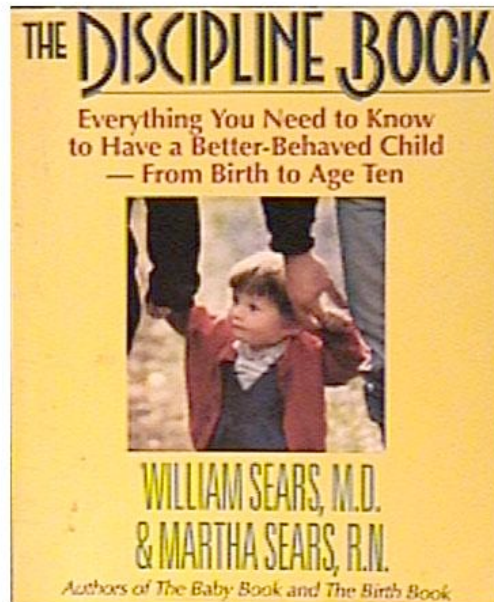


***The Discipline Book***  
**William & Martha Sears**



William and Martha Sears are a husband and wife team who have published several books in the area of parenting and child care. My first encounter with the Sears philosophy was through an article written by the couple in the March, 1995, *Redbook* magazine titled *You and Your Child*. In large letters on the first page was the wording *8 Reasons Spanking Doesn't Work - And 5 Hands-Off Techniques That Do*. Amongst the usual arguments that children who are spanked turn out aggressive and that time-outs are more effective than spanking as a form of discipline, the Sears give some techniques that they believe are more effective than the use of corporal punishment. One of these techniques is to make the child laugh instead of punishing him. They write in the article, "Humor can defuse a willful child. It catches her off guard, sparking instant attention. You don't have to be a brilliant comic: Simply putting a toy on your head as your child starts to protest can change the mood." Well, I know now why all of us in the field of law enforcement have been so unsuccessful in solving the increasing problem of children physically assaulting their parents. I should suggest to my chief that the officers in our domestic violence response team wear rubber ducks on top of their police hats!

The Sears team professes to believe in child discipline. It's the KIND of discipline that they advocate that is in question. Their latest effort, *The Discipline Book*, states on its cover "Everything you need to know to have a better-behaved child - from birth to age ten." Since I have always considered these years the most impressionable in a child's life, I was interested in learning more about the Sears ideology.

Much of the child rearing advice by the Sears is common sense and applicable to the raising of today's children. Several of the discipline concepts are effective and have been used by loving parents for thousands of years. There is just enough of this common sense mixed in with the usual NSA rhetoric to make it believable. But the underlying theme in the Sears method of

discipline is the same as that of most of the NSA. Children are basically good, and the parent will make them bad if improper disciplinary measures are used. The Sears make it very clear from the beginning that they are not crazy about the traditional forms of child discipline. In fact, as I read chapter one, *Our Approach to Discipline*, I got the feeling that they held in disdain the traditional role of the parent as the authoritarian. Read for yourself what the Sears say, and decide if I am on the right track.

**The traditional way of disciplining, authoritarianism, focuses on parents as authority figures whom children must obey or face the consequences. As one authoritarian father put it: “I’m the dad, he’s the child, and that’s that! I don’t need this modern psychology stuff. If he gets out of line, I’ll show him who’s boss.” With this style of parenting, spanking is considered appropriate, even necessary. Many problems can occur with authoritarian parenting. For one, the child can fail to feel the parent’s love. The child can also internalize fear of the parent’s power to the point that it controls her life, even in adulthood.**

I can say without reservation that my parents were authoritarians. I was expected to do what I was told when I was told to do it. When I disobeyed, I got the belt. I knew better than to talk back or to display any attitude of defiance. Yet, unlike the claim made by the Sears, I felt loved by my mom and dad. The Sears do make a very important claim here. Although the Sears claim that the fear of the parents during childhood affects a person in a negative way during adulthood, I contend that the fear of authority is what is missing in many of today’s adolescents and young adults. Never fearing authority as a child, the adult has no fear of his boss, the police, and the judge. The Sears continue with their attack on the authoritarian style of parenting.

**Most important, however, is that when it is used as the sole method of discipline, authoritarianism simply doesn’t work. Worst of all with authoritarian discipline, children behave more out of fear of punishment than the desire to please. As a result, they develop no inner controls. They may not throw their toys on the floor as adults, but they will lack the inner discipline needed to motivate and control themselves when there is no threat of dire consequences.**

The Sears contend that this type of parenting destroys the “relationship” between the parent and child. They write,

**Authoritarianism creates a distance between parent and child, for two reasons: It is based on punishment, which can easily create anger, and thus distance the child from the parent, and it makes little or no allowance for the temperament and developmental level of the child. Wise disciplinarians become students of their children and work to know their children well. Controllers often find this consideration demeaning to their authority and therefore do not believe it belongs in their discipline package. Because authoritarian parenting is not geared to the child as an individual, this style of parenting seldom brings out the best in parents and child, even when a warm heart is behind the heavy hand.**

What the Sears are advocating here is what much of the NSA is trying to accomplish, the elimination of parental authority. Although the Sears contend that they believe in discipline, they are telling parents that punishment does not work. Most of the parents that I see in my office whose child is out of control have swallowed this rhetoric and feel that punishing their child will drive the child away. Instead, the LACK of punishment drives the child away from the parent. Then when the child stops obeying, the parent wonders what went wrong.

The Sears advocate something they call the “attachment” approach to discipline. They state,

**With an attachment approach to discipline, you can have confidence that your child will (for the most part) behave well and develop the inner controls needed to have a happy, productive life. Where the authoritarian approach says “I’ll tell you what to do,” our suggestion is to give your child the attachment message “You can trust me to help you know what to do.”**

**Our Matthew at age two was a very focused child. He would become so engrossed in a play activity that it was difficult for him to let go when it was time to leave. One day when he was playing and it was time for us to depart (we were late for an appointment), Martha scooped Matthew up and carried him to the door. Matthew protested with a typical two-year-old tantrum. At first Martha had the usual “Hey, I’m in charge here” feelings and felt that she was justified in expecting Matthew to obey quickly and be willing to leave his toys. But as she was carrying the flailing child out the door, she realized that her discipline gauge was out of balance and that she was not handling things in the best way. Her actions were a result of her need to leave, but they didn’t take into account Matthew’s need for advance warning and a more gradual transition. She realized it wasn’t in Matthew’s nature to click off his interest in play so quickly, even if we did have a deadline. He was not defying her but was just being true to himself. He needed more time to let go of his activities. So she calmly took him back to the play setting, sat down with him, and together they said “Bye-bye, toys, bye-bye, trucks, bye-bye, cars,” until he could comfortably release himself from the activities. It only took a couple of minutes, time that would otherwise have been wasted struggling with Matthew in the car. This was not a “technique” or “method”: this disciplinary action evolved naturally from the mutual respect between parent and child and the knowledge that Martha had about Matthew. That’s what discipline is all about.**

Do we have an accurate picture now of what the Sears think about discipline? Correct! What the Sears feel is discipline is nothing of the sort. This concept of discipline evidently has “evolved” from the “knowledge” Martha has about Matthew. Face it folks, Martha doesn’t know Matthew very well, and has very little knowledge of what God says about our human nature. The Sears contend that Matthew “was not defying her,” that he was just being “true to himself.” Martha realized (almost too late, mind you) that her “discipline gauge was out of balance,” and although she at first felt that “she was justified in expecting Matthew to obey,” she realized that “her actions were a result of her need,” and she was not taking into account “Matthew’s need.”

Let me offer these circumstances in the setting of my childhood. My parent's need to arrive on time at a very important appointment would have superceded any "need" that I had as a two year old child, let alone playing with toys. I am sure I tried a few temper tantrums as a youngster, and I'm sure that my parents dealt with them in the traditional way. Smack, right on the bottom. If I didn't learn the first time, they certainly didn't waste any time "struggling" with me in the car, I got another whack! Did it take me very long to figure out that my parents were in control? The Sears have offered a solution to a problem that many readers will adopt into their discipline plan. It may take years for those parents to realize that anything but immediate cooperation and compliance with their demands has bred a child who does not listen unless their "feelings" are considered. I see this attitude more and more on my job. When I tell someone that they are under arrest, the law states that they are obligated to comply with my order and to immediately succumb to the arrest. Nowadays, kids are demanding to know what the reason is for the arrest and are even refusing to be arrested unless they receive a full explanation from the officer. I have had teenagers and young adults fight with me, demanding in loud tones that they have the "right" to know all the facts. This is a direct result of a child who was taught that his "need" to be treated with respect was more important than the parent's "need" for immediate compliance to their authority.

The Sears are dead set against spanking. The Sears also go that extra step and make a valiant attempt to discredit the Bible as a source of information regarding corporal punishment. The Sears claim that Christians are "devoted parents who love God and love their children, but they misunderstand the concept of the rod." Like all others in the non-spanking movement, it is the Sears who "misunderstand" the concept of the rod. It is very doubtful that the Sears have studied God's word to the extent that they understand it's true meaning. I believe these "experts" have swallowed the rhetoric of others in the NSA that have attempted to discredit the Bible. The Sears are not arguing their case with any genuine insight into Scripture. They are simply repeating information told to them by others totally ignorant of the meaning of God's instruction. The problem is, their readers believe what the Sears say.

Amongst the information contained in chapter one are suggestions on how to *Nurture Your Child's Self-Confidence, Talk And Listen, and Get Connected Early*. Suggestion number three is titled *Help your Child to Respect Authority*. What the Sears advocate here is more of the rhetoric that is causing a generation of teenagers with "no fear." This suggestion claims,

**The child who is told he must obey "or else" may behave, but he does so out of fear, not respect. "Honor thy father and mother" is the wise and time-honored teaching; not fear them.**

Millions of people who have successfully raised children of their own disagree with this theory! I would be unable to count the number of people who, when they were growing up, refrained from talking back to dad because they were AFRAID of him. My dad was a big man who, up to when I was twelve years old, made a living working in the steel mill. When I was a youngster, he expected me to do what I was told, when I was told to do it. I don't recall ever giving my dad any lip. I would guess that I received a few spankings that I don't remember. I also received some I remember clearly, but I do know that by the time I was entering puberty, I knew better than to "disrespect" my dad's authority. My mother on the other hand was a much

more patient parent. Yet, when I defied her authority, she had no trouble grabbing the belt and whacking me a good one on my rear end. But through my entire childhood, I never felt that my parents didn't love me. In addition to the punishment when I misbehaved, I was showered with love and rewards when I acted properly.

The Sears suggest that a child should obey their parent out of respect, not fear. They attempt to use God's word to substantiate their claim that a child should not fear their parents. They quote a passage from the Bible which is repeated in several areas of the Old and New Testament. First mentioned in Exodus 20:12, it is one of the Ten Commandments give to Moses on Mount Sinai. It states "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." According to the Sears, this verse implies that a child should not "fear" their parents, they should "honor" them.

What is more interesting, is that the Sears are using Biblical instruction to convince their readers that God prefers that our children have no fear. This is one of the major problems the NSA encounters. They are aware that most people consider the Bible to be the inspired word of God. They will use portions of scripture and attempt to make it fit into their argument against spanking. The NSA accuses the Christian of taking scripture out of context, when it is the NSA that constantly engages in that practice.

I am doubtful that the Sears have any idea that Jesus expounded on this commandment as he addressed the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 15:4. Jesus said "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death." Jesus went on to explain how the commandments of God were without effect due to the traditions of men. Jesus called those scribes and Pharisees "hypocrites." But the Sears would not dare add these words of Jesus "He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death." They would contend that Jesus was being too brutal.

I would enjoy seeing the Sears making fools of themselves if it wasn't for the fact that most of the secular world knows very little about the Bible and will fall for their gobble-dee-goop. The Sears have attempted to use scripture in their effort to convince parents not to spank their children. Chapter twelve of *The Discipline Book* is devoted entirely to the subject of spanking. It is titled *Spanking - No? Yes? Sometimes?* It doesn't take long reading this chapter to realize that the answer expected by the Sears is "No." It is in this chapter that the author attacks the credibility of the Bible.

Of the ten reasons the Sears list not to spank your children, number six grabbed my attention. It is titled *Hitting Is Actually Not Biblical*. The Sears begin this section with a command, "Don't use the Bible as an excuse to spank." The following paragraphs explain the Sears viewpoint on the use of the Bible as a reference tool for daily living. I have included most of the text from this section.

**There is confusion among some people of Judeo-Christian heritage who, seeking help from the Bible in their effort to raise good children, believe that God commands them to spank. They take "spare the rod and spoil the child" (which is not found in the Bible) seriously and fear that if they don't spank, they will commit the sin of losing control of their child. In our counseling experience, we have found that these people are devoted parents who love God and love their children, but they misunderstand the concept of the rod.**

**Rod verses - what they really mean. The following are the biblical verses that have caused the greatest confusion:**

**Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. (Prov. 22:15)**

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

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

**The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. (Prov. 29:15)**

**At first glance these verses may sound pro-spanking. But you might consider a different interpretation of these teachings. “Rod” (shebet) means different things in different parts of the Bible. Our Hebrew dictionary defines it as a stick, whether for punishment, writing, fighting, ruling, walking or other activities. While the rod can be used for hitting, it is also used to protect vulnerable sheep. Shepherds don’t use the rod to beat their sheep - and children are certainly more valuable than sheep.**

**The book of Proverbs is one of poetry. It is logical that the writer would have used a well-known tool to form an image of authority. We believe that this is the point made about the rod in the Psalms: Parents, take charge of your children. When you re-read the “rod verses,” use the concept of parental authority, rather than the concept of beating or spanking, when you come to the word “rod.” It rings true in every instance.**

Let’s consider the claim by the Sears that the word rod does not mean “spanking,” but instead means “nurturing” or “teaching.” Let’s consider that this concept “rings true in every instance.” Even the person with limited Bible knowledge can conclude that this theory is wrong, as long as the Sears give the reader all of the information they need to draw their own conclusion. But they don’t. We are not supplied with all of the information we need because *the verses are not quoted correctly!* And I do not believe that the examples that they provide as “spanking verses” are misquoted by mistake. This is an excellent example of how the NSA changes the meaning of Scripture in order for the text to fit their teachings. Take for example the last verse in the examples that they have given. The verse is quoted by the Sears as such. “The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. (Proverbs 29:15)” The suggestion by the Sears that we substitute a word like “teaching” where the word “rod” appears, might work in this case, if the verse was correctly quoted. But it is not.

The original verse in the King James version of the Holy Bible is as follows. “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.” We have already discussed the delicate nature of this verse, and the importance of each word contained therein.

Now, if we substitute the word “rod” with the word “teaching,” the actual verse would sound something like this. “Teaching and teaching give wisdom . . .” In the Sears version of Proverbs 29:15, they have conveniently left out the part of the verse that refers to “reproof,” the portion of the verse that refers to teaching, a lecture, a lesson given. If the word “rod” in this verse meant “teaching,” there would be no reason for the word “reproof” used in the same context. It is clear from the wording in this verse that the word “rod” means the physical discipline of the child. Simply put, a spanking. The word “reproof” holds the meaning that the Sears attempted to convey in their explanation, which is “teaching.” Unfortunately, most people reading the Sears book, unfamiliar with the delicate meaning contained in God’s word, will believe what the Sears have proclaimed, hook, line and sinker. This is an excellent example of the methods used by the NSA to twist the meaning of God’s word to accommodate their agenda.

The Sears have also misquoted another Bible verse. You’ll notice in their list that they quote Proverbs 13:24 as “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.” It is possible that the authors read this version of the verse in some modern translation, but many of the “easy reading” versions of the Bible being published today are sorely lacking in accuracy. The text may be easy to read, but the real meaning is lost completely in the secondary translation. The first portion of the Sears version of this verse is fairly accurate, “He who spares the rod hates his son.” This version is a close parallel to the original Hebrew translation “He that spareth his rod hateth his son.” It is the second part of the Sears version of the verse that concerns me a bit. The Sears quote the second half of the verse as “he who loves him is careful to discipline him.” This is a far cry from the original Hebrew translation “he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Why is the Sears version lacking? The word “chasteneth” in the original text is translated as “discipline” in the Sears version. The Sears version basically says “He who loves him disciplines him carefully.” That is not the meaning intended in the original Hebrew text. The original verse reads “He that loveth him chasteneth (disciplines) him BETIMES.” As we have already pointed out, this comes from the Hebrew word “shachar,” which means “to seek, seek early or earnestly” or to “look early or diligently for.” The verse means to diligently correct the child, not carefully correct the child. Why do the Sears use the word “carefully?” I believe it implies a much gentler form of discipline. “Carefully” means without spanking. The Sears go on to say:

**While Christians and Jews believe that the Scripture is the inspired word of God, it is also a historical text that has been interpreted in many ways over the centuries, sometimes incorrectly in order to support the beliefs of the times. These “rod” verses have been burdened with the interpretations about corporal punishment that support human ideas. Other parts of the Bible, especially the New Testament, suggest that respect, authority, and tenderness should be the prevailing attitudes toward children among people of faith.**

The Sears claim that the Bible “has been interpreted in many ways over the centuries, sometimes incorrectly in order to support the beliefs of the times.” It would appear that the Sears, in an effort to criticize the Christian, have indicted themselves. Using the Sears method of interpretation, let us rephrase their statement in this manner. “The Sears have interpreted the Bible incorrectly in order to support the beliefs of the times.” There, that fits! It certainly “rings

true” in this instance. The Sears continue with their “misinterpretation” of scripture.

**Christ preached gentleness, love, and understanding, and seemed to be against any harsh use of the rod, as stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:21, “Shall I come to you with the rod, or in love and with a gentle spirit?” Paul went on to teach fathers about the importance of not provoking anger in their children (which is what spanking usually does). “Fathers, do not exasperate your children” (Eph. 6:4), and “Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will be discouraged” (Col. 3:21). In our opinion, nowhere in the Bible does it say you must spank your child to be a godly parent.**

Here again, the Sears use scripture to try to convince the reader that the Bible is condemning spanking, yet they have again contradicted themselves. They refer to this passage to make their point that Paul was advocating peace (a gentle spirit) rather than violence (the rod). They have interpreted the “rod” in this passage as an instrument of physical discipline. That’s fine. That is what the word means. But it also means the same thing in all of the other verses that the Sears have listed in their book, including Proverbs 22:15, “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him,” It means the same thing in Proverbs 13:24, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes,” or Proverbs 23:13-14, “ Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell,” It also means the same thing in my favorite child rearing verse, the verse that is “parenting in a nutshell,” Proverbs 29:15, “ The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.” A simple comparison of the Hebrew and Greek text will confirm this fact. The Sears also state, “nowhere in the Bible does it say you must spank your child to be a godly parent.” I wonder if the Sears can show me a verse that instructs a parent to use a “time out?” Most of the scriptures dealing with the discipline of children refer to the use of corporal punishment. Why? Because it is a very important element in the discipline plan.

The Sears attempt to convince their readers that Ephesians 6: 4 instructs parents not to spank their children. The verse reads “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” They also quote Colossians 3:21, which states “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” As we have already discussed, these verses deal with the truly abused child and very possibly the child who is never disciplined by the parent. The Sears have not done their Biblical homework on this one.

The Sears spend a considerable amount of effort in their book to argue their case against spanking. Other sections in the book are titled *Hitting Promotes Anger - in Children and in Parents*, *Hitting Brings Back Bad Memories*, and *Spanking Has Long-Term Effects*. One of the problems that I have with many non-spanking publications are the constant references to the “studies” performed that prove spanking is harmful. Very few of these claims can be substantiated. The reader is unable to confirm that “research has shown” as the author claims. Even actual studies against spanking, such as those conducted by Murray Straus, utilize data that is unreliable and sometimes useless. I believe the researchers utilize the practice of corrupting data sets, which taints the results of the research. The Sears begin one of these sections by stating,



**Research has shown that spanking can leave scars deeper and more lasting than a fleeting redness of the bottom. In a prospective study spanning nineteen years, researchers found that children who were raised in homes with a lot of corporal punishment turned out to be more antisocial and egocentric and that physical violence became the accepted norm for these children when they became teenagers and adults.**

**A study of the effects of physical punishment on children's later aggressive behavior showed that the more frequently a child was given physical punishment, the more likely it was that she would behave aggressively toward other family members and peers.**

From my personal experiences as a police officer, most recently in charge of my department's juvenile crime unit, I can say unequivocally that I have found the complete opposite to be true. During the past eighteen years, the rate of children physically attacking their parents has increased almost 350 percent nationwide. In my city alone, the increase is over 700 percent. Of those juveniles arrested in my city for assaulting their parents, only 1.9 percent have been raised with corporal punishment. Without that one element of discipline, spanking, a child grows up with no fear of the parent's authority. Not afraid of pain when they misbehave, they are not afraid to violate the rules. I am convinced that "studies" or "research" that indicate spanked children are more aggressive have been deliberately falsified in order to support the non-spanking advocate's agenda. The Sears go on to say,

**Many studies show the futility of spanking as a disciplinary technique, but none show it's usefulness. Spanking doesn't work for the child, for the parents, or for society. Spanking does not promote good behavior; it creates a distance between parent and child, and it contributes to a violent society.**

In this last statement, the Sears deceive their readers. They claim that there are "many studies" that show spanking is harmful and "none show it's usefulness." Either the Sears are deliberately lying to the public, or they are living in a bubble. There have been numerous studies conducted recently that show spanking is a useful and even necessary form of discipline.

William Kilpatrick, a Boston College education professor and author of *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right From Wrong* says "In our therapeutic society, we've paralyzed parents into believing that any kind of punishment will indelibly mark a child for the worse. Because of all the stress on egalitarianism, adults have lost confidence that they have the right to subject a child to the normal consequences of their behavior." I couldn't have said it better myself!

A study by Dr. Diana Baumrind of the Institute of Human Development at the University of California, Berkeley, published in the October issue of *Family Relations* magazine, finds that "mild disciplinary spanking . . . used rationally on children between eighteen months and six years old and in the context of a warm and engaged parent-child relationship - can be effective in shaping socially constructive behavior and does not necessarily lead to delinquency." The study by Dr. Baumrind concludes that rational spankings may even be "a necessary tool in the disciplinary encounter with young children."

Then there is Dr. Henry Harbin and Dr. Denis Madden, whose research contradict what liberal psychology is teaching. These two psychiatrists studied the circumstances surrounding

vicious attacks on parents by their own children. Working at the University of Maryland's Medical School, they found that "parent battering" usually occurs when one or both parents have abdicated the executive position, and when the parents are not in charge. They concluded that permissiveness and appeasement are related to violence in youth, exactly what I have been saying for years! The Sears statement that there are no studies that support spanking is totally false.

Another section in *The Discipline Book* deals with punishment. One of the major objectives of the NSA is to eliminate punishment from our culture. This humanistic attitude is beginning to take root in every aspect of our culture, from child rearing (no spanking) to the criminal justice system (no death penalty) to the medical profession (no punishment for one with a psychological disorder). It is a movement based on the philosophy that man is not responsible for his own actions, therefore he should not be punished for his wrongdoing. The Sears section of their book titled *The Problems With Punishment* details this philosophy. Although the Sears do indicate that they believe punishment is part of a balanced discipline package, I'm not sure what definition of punishment the Sears are using. They state,

**Our goal is to create an obedient attitude within the child and a structured environment around the child so that punishment is less necessary. Yet when it is needed - and it will be- the attachment approach to discipline will help you use punishment wisely, so that it helps the child obey without becoming angry or fearful.**

There is one part of the Sears "punishment" plan that is made very clear. They state "By now you should realize that our position on spanking is clear: don't." In chapter thirteen, the Sears state,

**The main ways to shape a child's behavior are through the use of praise, selective ignoring, and time-outs; through teaching an understanding of consequences; through the use of motivators, reminders, and negotiation; and through the withdrawal of privileges.**

The Sears attempt to convince their readers that punishing a child is harmful in the *Problems With Punishment* section.

**The child who is punished too much (or too severely) behaves more out of fear of punishment or the punisher than for the satisfaction of behaving right. For the child, fear and anger become part of his personality. A distance develops between the punisher and the child, and the parent-child relationship becomes a power struggle. Sometimes the child whose behavior is punishment-controlled seems "so good." (He knows better than to get out of line. I'll ground him.) This child doesn't know better, he only knows that punishment will occur if he misbehaves. Underneath this facade of goodness simmers an angry child ready to explode into uncontrolled behavior once the threat of punishment is lifted. If punishment overtakes the whole atmosphere on the home, fear overcomes trust and the child is at risk of becoming angry, aggressive, withdrawn, and unhappy. He is also deprived of the opportunity to be a kid, make**

**mistakes, and realize the natural consequences of his actions.**

When reading this portion of the book, I realized that the Sears were describing much of what I had been taught in law enforcement about the abused child. Their statement begins by saying “The child who is punished too much.” This is an example of what I have been attempting to point out about the information being spread by the NSA. The Sears are describing a child who is being truly abused, either with unwarranted physical punishment or unwarranted verbal insults. Yet they have tied the emotional responses of this child to a spanked child by stating that they believe spanking is an inappropriate form of discipline. Spanking is wrong, therefore it is “too much” punishment.

The Christian should have no trouble seeing that the information and advice being given by the Sears is in direct conflict with the manner in which God would have us raise our children. The Sears have a limited knowledge of Biblical truths. With that limited knowledge of God’s ways, their knowledge of man’s nature and his purpose on earth is also limited. Psalms 58:3 says “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” God tells us that we are born with a sinful nature. We don’t have to learn to be “bad.” We already are! The Sears have concluded that God is wrong. The Sears believe that their life experience and wisdom authorizes them to contradict what God teaches. Like those described in Romans 1:22, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”