

C. Control: The Parental Goad

Control has three motives the obtainment of which require parents to goad their children.

1. **Use of force.** Parents may use whatever force the Bible approves in order to get the child to follow directions.

Note: What is meant by “whatever force the Bible approves?” The maximum goad approved of by the Bible is a rod, or a switch, applied to the backside. This is called corporal punishment and is the most severe physical pressure that is biblically permitted. Anything less than the rod is left to the parents’ discretion. They may use any method they wish in order to force the child to follow directions. All methods utilized however, must be executed under the filling of the Holy Spirit with the lone intent of molding a vessel of honor. Remember, you are not at war with your child. Satan is at war with you for control of your child's soul. He will use your and the child’s sinful natures to win that battle.

Your assignment is to train the child in such a manner that he can eventually sustain himself, physically, mentally, and spiritually in the hostile environment of the Devil’s world.

In order to accomplish these objectives, he must first be controlled and the first order of business in the area of control is to force the child to follow directions.

2. **Authority to restrain.** The child’s conscience is tabula rasa. He has no concept of right or wrong. These things have to be taught. Until they can be inculcated, the child’s sinful nature must be restrained. If it is not, the child will naturally and willingly follow the temptations, the lust patterns, the strengths, and weaknesses of his sinful nature. Therefore, without restraint, the child’s will and desire will be to do what comes naturally. No restraint on the sinful nature means that he will in time take no responsibility for his actions. Thus, the parents must act as the child’s volition, prohibiting him from pursuing his own desires in violation of parental policy.
3. **Imposition of rules and regulations.** Parents may impose any policy they deem necessary to insure the best environment for the child. The environment they seek is one that is protective of the child’s safety, conducive to establishment of parental order, and beneficial to the development of the child’s soul.

The power behind this form of control is found in penalty and punishment clauses attached to the policies. Once a policy is established and made clear to the child, it then becomes a test for his volition and the standard by which the child is punished for noncompliance.

Please note that this forces the parents to become organized as well. By establishing a policy with specific penalties and punishments attached, the parents are able to consistently judge and sentence their children.

Child control therefore includes:

1. The use of power in order to force the child to follow directions;
2. The authority to restrain the child from pursuing his own natural desires; and
3. The imposition of policies by which the child is tested, judged, and punished.

Here’s an example. The parents conclude that the child has a propensity toward sweets. He is unable to restrain the temptation to delve into the cookie jar. In fact, his conscience contains no norm or standard that would cause him to give it a second thought. Such indulgences have caused him to lose his appetite at mealtime. The parents determine that the practice must stop for the good of his health. They inform the child that he may not have a cookie unless given permission which he must seek and obtain and the cookie must be given to him by either mom or dad. If he is caught eating a cookie without permission, he will be penalized—no cookies at all for a couple of days.

Thus, you have the imposition of a policy with a penalty clause.

Five minutes after issuing the policy you catch the child with his hand in the cookie jar. You rebuke him, reminding him of the policy. You cancel cookie privileges for the next two days and then add a punishment clause to the policy—on the next violation he'll also face the prospect of a good switching. This is the power of restraint on the child's will and desire to unlawfully eat cookies.

But, as soon as you turn your back, he's into the jar again. You then use force to motivate the child to follow directions. You cancel cookie privileges for two more days and then order him to retrieve a switch that you administer to his backside.

You do not put the cookies out of his reach or stop making them. This is concession to his rebellion. The cookie jar has its place. It should remain there. The child must be taught to leave it alone. You simply administer the punishment and penalty clauses as often as they are necessary to gain compliance. You continue to administer this use of force until the child resolves to follow your directions.

Incidentally, you would not want to go through this training process with your good bric-a-brac. Go to Wal-Mart and buy cheap stuff and place them around. But treat them as expensive antiques. Go through the same training process until the will is broken to touch the bric-a-brac. Then the good stuff can go back out.

This set of parents has used both *ab initio* and *ex post facto* methods of pressure to control their child.

Ab initio is a Latin term which means “*from the beginning.*” They imposed control over the child by establishing a policy before he was aware of wrongdoing. The policy carried with it the threat of penalty and punishment for noncompliance.

Ex post facto is a Latin term which means “*after the fact.*” They imposed control over the child by executing the penalty and punishment clauses following violation of policy.

The *ab initio* policy served as a challenge to the child's volition and his orientation to parental authority.

The *ex post facto* imposition of discipline is necessary to establish in the child's mind the parents' right to rule.

If the policy is not followed by the child and the parents do not impose penalty or punishment, then they have abdicated their right to rule. The child knows this instinctively and will exploit the weakness under the leadership of the sinful nature which now controls his soul instead of his parents.

The battle is for control of the soul. The issue is, will the parent's rule or will the sinful nature rule?

Since the child is born with a conscience which is *tabula rasa*, and since every cell of his body is infested with a sinful nature assembled from a gene-pool crapshoot, then, left to his own devices, he will veer out of control.

Therefore, the parents must act as the external command post for the child until one can be constructed internally. Therefore, the parental command post imposes restraints, establishes boundaries, and limits freedom until proper conduct can become part of the child's internal command post.

The need for restraints, boundaries, and limitations becomes immediately evident to the parents when, after arriving home with the child, he has his first bowel movement. There is a conspicuous need for an “*external restraint.*” So, they first decide to go to the store and buy diapers and then second, they pray for the day they successfully instill internal controls through potty training.

No parent wishes to change diapers any longer than is absolutely necessary. But the baby simply does not care. He loves his poop and has no problem with carrying it around with him wherever he goes.

Dave Barry, a keen observer of the obnoxious, gives us insight into diapers and potty training in his best-selling book:

Barry, Dave. Babies & Other Hazards of Sex. Emmaus: Rodale Press, 1984. Pages 46-49: “Changing Your Baby’s Diapers.”

Pages 73-75: “Potty Training.”

Pages 75-76: “The Traditional Potty Training Technique.”

To not place restraints on a child’s decision-making functions would be the same as to not place restraints on his biological functions and with similar results.