

American Family Advocacy Center

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The Christian Broadcasting Network
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Pat Robertson addressed the issue of slapping a child as a form of discipline in his "Bring it On" segment of the 700 Club today (see this at <http://www.cbn.org/> it is played at approximately the midpoint of the program). Samantha had written in saying that her mother considered slapping her children a good form of discipline and wanted her mother to know how much it hurt her physically and emotionally.

Pat Robertson's response began with a comment that sometimes people get mad and "swing at the closest thing at hand. This sometimes results in a slap on the face." He described it as an act of anger and made a passing reference to some act of rebellion in the child as a trigger. He referred to a slap on the face as 'lashing out.' In his opinion, ". . .to make it a regular thing is wrong. It's a wrong form of discipline."

Robertson advised this child to enlist the aid of an adult who the mother trusted and who 'knew better' to convince the mother that slapping 'is not appropriate.' He called it demeaning and humiliating and referred to slapping as 'abuse.'

Robertson's lukewarm comments are symptomatic of the misinterpretation and application of child abuse legislation which is destroying parental authority and the family in America. Well-intentioned busybodies are forever advising us to practice *their* favorite method of parenting in spite of the fact that they have no knowledge of the dynamics of the subject family or the behavior of the tattle-tale child and without regard for the cultural or religious practices of the family.

Robertson is clearly *personally* opposed to slapping and therefore ignorantly assumes that a disciplinary slap is an act of anger and a form of abuse. This conclusion is not supported by any evidence. A slap can be and often is, a deliberate act to serve a specific design.

He is not opposed to 'moderate spanking' but declines to draw the line that defines 'moderate.' We are fortunate that we do have statutory guidelines regarding the use of force and physical discipline. Mr. Robertson, a slap on the face, or a couple of slaps on the face, do not constitute child abuse under any state statute. Additionally, your comments are not Biblically accurate when taking examples and admonitions pertaining to parenting in their entirety. Look at the instruction regarding rebellious children who were instructed to be stoned. Look at Eli and his punishment for indulging his sons. The Bible has not mitigated any parental responsibility or authority in any instance nor has it authorized the substitution of State or 'expert' judgement and authority for

parental judgement and authority. You have overstepped your bounds in this instance.

Furthermore, most experts and parents recognize that punishment often contains an element of humiliation as well as physical pain which is necessary to correct and guide our children. The concept that humiliation or pain should never be a part of punishment or discipline is absurd. Your advice to this child should have been, "Honor your mother, respect and obey her and she won't have to slap you." Instead, you validated her rebellion and disrespect, elevating her rights over her mother's authority.

Your ill-considered comments regarding the child enlisting the aid of a government snitch to 're-train' the mother regarding discipline have empowered this child to escalate her rebellion against her mother by holding the hammer of the state over her head. If mother slaps her again, Child Protective Services will undoubtedly remove this child and her siblings and place them in dangerous foster care (where they stand a 10 - 40% greater change of more horrible abuse than a minor slap on the face), alienating their affections and respect for their mother, and destroying this family that God created. The harm caused by this kind of 'protection' is overwhelming and permanent. By your comments, this mother has been rendered impotent to direct and control the upbringing of her children, including this rebellious teen. You have led this little one astray, all because she didn't want to obey her mother and didn't like the discipline her mother practiced. In so doing, you have reinforced the destruction of the traditional family in America which is escalating at a horrifying rate.

Please, redeem yourself. Examine this issue in-depth and support the parents who are doing the best they can to raise their children in a very parent-hostile environment.

Sincerely

Suzanne Shell
Director
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