

Spanked but Not Abused!

by Robert Hempel, Boise, Idaho

Dad having died when I was less than four years of age, and my younger brother less than two and a half, my mother had her hands full. She had a "big time job" being a single parent to the two of us as well as the six siblings who were older. Hugh, the oldest, was just graduating from high school. My dad had had a "black strap" prepared for family



discipline. It hung on the wall just above the family water pail. Being as young as I was, the strap was never administered to me by my father.

However, my mother introduced me to it not to many years hence,

Mom accepted all of the responsibilities that became hers at dad's untimely death. She soon learned where to spank, when to spank and how to do it. I suppose I got as many lickings as any kid did my age. I got a few I didn't deserve, but] know I missed a few that should have had my name on them. I can't remember thinking that Mom was unfair or abusive, though she did not spare the rod.

The black strap disappeared somehow. I did not hide it, I swear!

It's loss didn't stop Mom from using the board of education when it was necessary. She often used a simple wooden lath. She would order me/us (my brother usually got them, too) to kneel down over her bed and keep our hands out of the way. Like every child who has been whipped, we learned to cry quickly hoping she would spare the rod.

I remember the last whipping she ever administered to me. Dean and I were both being given the treatment with a lath. We both wailed loudly until the treatment was over. She left the room with us still on our knees--no, not praying! I remember lifting my head toward Dean and finding that he was lifting his head toward me. We both began to laugh. It was the wrong thing to do! Mother heard us laughing and came back to administer what was no laughing matter—even breaking the board of education into two pieces!

We always did say that our sister, Carol, sweet-talked her way out of many a squabble and subsequent "board meeting", however the good Lord made amends.

The three of us were playing in the freshly piled new hay in the haymow of our neighbor's barn. A brother and sister of the family had invited us to the romp even though we all knew it was not to be done. In the midst of our fun we heard the put put of the family car driving into the yard. Dad Poppke heard the riotous laughter and came to the barn in an ugly mood. Johnnie, his son, and Dean and I hung from the big haymow door and jumped to the ground. Carol, and Johnnie's sister, Irene, were afraid to jump and were forced to come down the ladder into the hands of an angry Mr. Poppke who laid a harness strap upon their rear parts! We have always contended with Carol that it was only the "meeting out of a bit of justice" over her evasive tactics in our family home!



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