

THE BEST WAY TO LIGHTEN THE ROD

Some time ago I read of an afflicted person who, upon being asked how he bore his sufferings so well, replied very meekly, "It lightens the stroke to draw near to Him who handles the rod." And I immediately thought of those occasions when as a child my brothers and I were chastened by our parents with a switch from a tree in the back yard. I would humble myself and stand as quietly and as near to them as possible. This made it more difficult for them to apply the switch in their hand. On the contrary my older brother would always protest loudly and try to evade the instrument of punishment and ward it off with his arms and hands. I always observed that this only made his chastisement much more severe.

Let us then consider that when we are chastened of the Lord our stripes will most likely be applied much more lightly if we humbly acknowledge our guilt and draw as near to Him as we can. It never has served God's people well when they have stiffened their necks against His just, yet merciful, chastisements. It has always served them far better when they have "humbled themselves under His mighty hand" (See 1st Peter 5:6) and sincerely sought His kind forgiveness. When they do this "He will exalt them in due time." To be "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29) is to be like Christ, and we should all want to be more like Him in all things. To the extent that we are conformed to His spiritual image, to that same extent our lives will be more worth living.

Elder Ralph Harris, Written Sept. 18, 2014.