

SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION

Ephesians 6:4

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The word that is translated “nurture” in this verse comes from the Greek word ***paideía***. At it’s most basic level *paideía* simply means training or discipline. However, in the Ancient world this word took on a much broader meaning.

PAIDEÍA

The **WHOLE** training and education of a child, including the *cultivation* of their mind and morals.

Paideia isn’t just limited to the cultivation or training of those living in a culture. It’s also associated with the culture itself. (When we talk about *culture* we’re talking about ***the shared beliefs, values, and practices of those in a society.***) According to our passage, fathers are expected to “bring up” children (prepare and *shape* them) for the culture!

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Fathers (men) just might be the biggest influence in a child’s life. In fact, research shows that children with involved dads are *less likely* to engage in risky behavior (drug/alcohol abuse, violence, criminal activity), and *more likely* to have better communication skills and academic performance. Overall, fathers help to provide more stable homes, safer neighborhoods and better churches!

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Notice, fathers aren’t just expected to bring children up in *any* culture (or *paideia*). They are expected to bring children up in the culture (*paideia*) of *the Lord*. In other words, fathers are expected to shape and prepare the next generation to be responsible members of *God’s society* or kingdom!

Genesis 18:17–19

17 And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; 18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

God looked favorably on Abraham not just because he reared children, but also because he reared them *in the ways of the Lord!*

Today we celebrate men for their accomplishments and achievements in society. However, what we really should be celebrating men for is their ability to cultivate and shape their children in the ways of God. A man's ability to cultivate is much more important than his ability to create or procreate.

When God placed the first man in the earth, He did not say to him, "Go create a world for yourself." Instead, He said, "Go subdue and cultivate (dress and keep) the world I have made." The McDonald Bros. may have created the hamburger, but it was Ray Kroc who transformed McDonald's into the most recognizable restaurant in history. That's because he took the idea that the McDonald Bros. had and cultivated it into something that has changed society.

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"Bringing up children" (cultivating/shaping children) requires at least two things: **nurture** and **admonition**. What's the difference?

Well, the easiest way to distinguish two words is to remember that...

- **ADMONITION** is training that comes by way of your words (the mouth).
- **NURTURE** is training that comes by way of action (and also discipline).

Therefore, when it comes to "bringing up" children, there's a time to correct them with words, and there's a time to correct them without words! Moreover, when it comes to correcting children without words, it's important to distinguish discipline from punishment. Many people confuse as to what discipline truly is. As a result, they often confuse it with punishment.

DISCIPLINE vs. PUNISHMENT

There's a vast difference between punishment and discipline. For example,

1. You punish someone with the intent to make them *suffer* for their behavior. However, YOU DISCIPLINE SOMEONE TO *CHANGE* THEIR BEHAVIOR.

This means that if your intent is to discipline a person, you should withdraw your discipline once that person repents or changes their behavior. Else, you will end up discouraging them through your overcorrection!

Colossians 3:21

21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

2. Punishment is something you perform on enemies. DISCIPLINE IS WHAT YOU PERFORM ON CHILDREN. Therefore, don't feel the need to correct enemies. Instead, reserve correction (discipline) for those in the house!

1 Corinthians 5:12–13

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

If you try to correct 'strangers,' it will just come across as condemnation or judgment.

3. Punishment is only used when someone commits an offence. However, IT'S POSSIBLE TO DISCIPLINE SOMEONE EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG!

Hebrews 5:8

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Although Jesus never sinned, He *learned* obedience (received discipline) through the things He suffered. How? Well, Jesus submitted to the Father's will (i.e. going to the cross) even though it would involve suffering. Thus, Jesus learned obedience by agreeing to do something hard. You don't really know how obedient/submitted a person truly is until you require them to do something hard. Moreover, parents don't just require children to do something hard because they've done something wrong.

Sometimes parents require children to do something hard as a way of teaching them discipline.

4. Punishment flows from anger. However, DISCIPLINE FLOWS FROM LOVE.

Hebrews 12:6

⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

The word “chasten” is the word for discipline. Thus, you should never discipline a child when you’re angry. Instead, you should wait until you have cooled off first.

Genesis 3:8

⁸ And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

Pay close attention to how you respond when you’re angry because you are teaching children what to do when they are angry.