

SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION (Part 2)

Awhile back I preached a sermon entitled Shaping The Next Generation. I want to go back and elaborate a bit more on that subject today.

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.

Ephesians 6:4 Bible In Basic English

And, you fathers, do not make your children angry: but give them training in the teaching and FEAR OF THE LORD.

It's not enough to simply 'bring up' children. We're expected to 'bring them up' (raise them) in the fear of the Lord. What is meant by the phrase 'fear of the Lord'? And why is it so important to raising children?

Proverbs 9:10

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: And the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

According to this verse, the 'fear of the Lord' is the beginning of wisdom. Typically, wisdom is something you learned through over time and, often, after great difficulty. However, the fear of the Lord teaches a person to comply to God's commands before they learn the value of doing it. This helps them to avoid difficulty in life. Therefore, a parent that does not teach their children to 'fear the Lord' (or to obey before learning why) is basically setting their child up to learn the hard way!

Proverbs 1:29–31

29 For that they hated knowledge, And did not choose the fear of the Lord:

30 They would none of my counsel: They despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, And be filled with their own devices.

In addition, a parent that teaches a child to 'fear the Lord' is teaching that child to fear (obey) ALL forms of authority.

1 Peter 2:17

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Notice, respect for authority begins with fearing God. Show me someone who has little respect for authority, and I'll show you someone who has little to no fear of God. This is because all authority is simply an extension of God's authority!

Romans 13:1–2

¹ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. ² Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

We still haven't answered the question, "What is the fear of the Lord?"

WHAT IS THE FEAR OF THE LORD?

When we talk about the 'fear of the Lord' we're not talking about that feeling of extreme fear or terror. Therefore, 'raising children in the fear of the Lord' is not about making your children afraid of you. When we talk about the 'fear of the Lord' we're talking about that feeling of deep respect that causes a person to not want to do anything that displeases or disappoints God. Thus, 'raising children in the fear of the Lord' is about instilling a reverence within your children that causes them to not want to do anything that might disappoint or displease God or you.

Again, the key is learning how to discipline children without discouraging or provoking them anger.

Ephesians 6:4 Bible in Basic English

And, you fathers, do not make your children angry: but give them training in the teaching and fear of the Lord.

This principle is so important that the Bible records it TWICE.

Colossians 3:21

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

Parents must learn how to instill discipline, respect and fear WITHOUT it resulting in their child becoming discouraged or resentful. A parent can accomplish this by simply avoiding the following...

- Unjust punishment.

In other words, make sure your correction is fair and matching the crime. You must never use correction as a tool to exact revenge (or take out your anger).

- Punishing a child until you are sure they know how to obey or self-correct.

Sometimes a child's misbehavior is the result of inexperience or weakness. You should only punish willful disobedience or rebellion.

- Setting impossible standards or expectations.
- Being a hypocrite.

Stop requiring your children to do what you're unwilling to do yourself.
Be an example to your children.

Romans 4:12 KJV 1900

¹² And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

The word "father" in this verse not only means an ancestor, but it also means or model. There are people who want to carry the title of father, but do not want to stand in the role of father. Besides, sometimes the best way to teach a child 'work' is to show them work. Or, sometimes the best way to teach a child 'respect' is to show them respect.

These things I just mentioned (unjust punishment, punishing mistakes, setting impossible standards, etc) are all examples of overcorrection. Overcorrection can cause a child to become discouraged and angry. Again, as parents we want to avoid discouraging our children because it can open the door to the devil.

Ephesians 4:26–27

²⁶ Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ²⁷ Neither give place to the devil.

Anger (discouragement) can open the door to feelings (and even a spirit) of rejection. Moreover, it's nearly impossible to correct a child once rejection has entered their heart because they will view ALL correction as rejection! At this point, a parent can no longer rebuke or speak authoritatively to a child without them becoming offended. Thus, they are limited to simply encouraging or complementing the child.

The problem with this is you can't always encourage children out of misbehaving!

Isaiah 26:10

10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: In the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, And will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

If you encourage a child but never correct them, they will never learn responsibility or what is right.

Ecclesiastes 8:11

11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Although correction is a ‘tool’ (and a very effective tool) parents use to raise and discipline their children, it’s not the ONLY tool they should use. In fact, a good parent will utilize a number of different tools to teach and train their children.

1 Thessalonians 2:11

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

In this passage, Paul points out THREE things he does to discharge his duty—he exhorts, comforts and charges them. Moreover, he compares these three things to that which a ‘father’ does to his children.

- A good ‘parent’ EXHORTS his children. In other words, he knows how to communicate in such a way that his children are willing and motivated to obey!
- A good ‘parent’ also COMFORTS his children. This means, they know how to introduce sympathy and create an environment where the child knows that mistakes are fatal. Moreover, this shows a child that you know how to allow their feelings and emotions to be in the forefront without bringing attention to your feelings. Finally, a good ‘father’ (parent) knows that there are times when they must ‘charge’ or speak authoritatively to their children. Not every situation calls for understanding. Some situations calls for action. At times a parent must insist that a child perform a certain action. However, a good parent knows how to speak authoritatively without breaking a child’s spirit.