



Colossians 3:21 | Leading Without Deflating

Written & Preached by John Cole

FOR GOOD

We all need a good provoking at times.

Provocation *can* be for good.

How many of us would too often find ourselves doing the thing of least resistance if it were not for the healthy provocation of others?

A feeling of apathy can be overturned by provocation.

Sometimes, this can almost feel like someone blowing air into you...

| ILL—Blow up a balloon to make it float instead of lay flat and lifeless.

People can provoke us to good through an encouraging word, a rebuke, or even simply through a faithful, inspirational testimony.

We'll come back to the balloon later...

The only other time in which the NT uses the same Greek word as we have in [Col 3:21](#) for “provoke not” is when it is used in a positive sense in [2 Corinthians 9](#).

We won't turn there, but let me summarize:

[2 Corinthians 9:1-3](#); [Hebrews 10:23-25](#)

By the church of Corinth's commitment to give, one church provoked many other churches toward being generous to the needy church of Jerusalem.

And, by Paul sending brethren with letters, the church universal was provoking this local church to greater faithfulness.

Provocation can be good.

In Hebrews, we have the instruction for Christians to assemble and provoke one another to love and good works.

So, we know that provoking one another can be good and that it is even instructed by God that we do so.

But, like most things, it can be taken too far and even done wrongly.

It is possible to be “overmuch righteous” with our provocations.

And that is what today's sermon is about:

How can we lead strongly without leading harmfully?

“Leading Without Deflating”

The letter to the church in Colosse brings us to such a point in 3:21.

Colossians 3:21

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

While this is addressed to fathers, I am confident that today's message will leave no one “unscathed” or without application!

Our text comes right on the heels of the instruction directed toward children in verse 20, which we addressed and applied last week.

So, before we address this verse, let's just run through a quick review from last week in order to see how the instruction in verse 21 is counter-balancing the instruction of verse 20.

PLEASING OBEDIENCE

Colossians 3:20

Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

1. Children are directly addressed with the expectation that they be responsive and responsible to the Lord.
2. Children are commanded by God (with promise) to “obey” their parents in all things because this is pleasing to the Lord.
3. Parents are the immediate authority of children being raised up in the home.
4. Believing parents are instructed to teach their children in the way and word of the LORD, praying that their children learn to fear the LORD.
5. Children need to learn the basic practice of obeying instruction, while also being trained to think wisely.
6. Children in the home (and womb) are vulnerable and in need of a healthy church and righteous government to intervene in cases of abuse.

If you share a concern that a *singular* focus on “children obey” can be harmful, please remember that in the letters to the churches of both Ephesians and Colossians, God makes it clear that He does too.

This brings us back to verse 21...

HARMFUL PROVOCATION

Have you ever been harmfully provoked?

I am not referring specifically to abuse, but that would be included as well.

As stated in the sermon last week: All abuse is to be swiftly addressed, never covered up, and always dealt with justly.

Harmful provocation can come in many forms:

mockery, belittlement, intentionally ignoring, neglect, lack of acknowledgment and affirmation, anger, being overly strict, or even being too light-hearted and casual about wrong behavior.

Provoking is simply doing something that “stirs up” a response so as to incite a challenge.

When we provoke wrongly or for the wrong things, we can stir up a response that itself is discouragement... or a response that *then* calls for correction that *then* leads to confusion and discouragement.

Like when grandparents or parents stuff young children with candy or soda and then get frustrated when the sugar starts kicking in!

In my senior year of high school, I played basketball for a small-town high school in PA for my one and only year with that school.

Our family had moved around a lot throughout my childhood years, so I changed schools and sports teams all the time.

I was working for a spot within a team in which most all the other players had been brought up through the school's sports program.

Even though I made the tryouts, the coach treated me with little respect. I was an outsider to his program. In response, I let my insecurities get the best of me, and I completely altered how I played.

To give you an illustrative anecdote, the coach once mockingly told me to prove my capabilities by bringing the ball up with a good defender in front of me. As he handed me this opportunity, he scornfully belittled my past experience of playing in various small “Christian schools.”

Mockery or not, he still gave me an opportunity!

However, I had heard that the coach did not like any form of “hotdogging” or what I would consider skillfully protecting the ball as you get around your defender.

Well, full of insecurities and in response to his mockery, I did the opposite of what I should have done: I backed the ball up the court.

I tried to bring up the ball while utilizing as little “skillfulness” as I knew how. You know how that resulted? Of course, more mockery and me never being asked to bring the ball up.

As a senior in high school, I should have known better than to let those head games get the best of me, but also, the coach should have known better than to provoke one of his own players to discouragement.

Instead of challenging me with instruction and inspiration, he challenged me with mockery and with his expectation of my failure.

I lived up to his communicated expectation.

While I positively learned from his failure to lead well, I negatively lived only up to his leadership.

We don’t want to create that experience for those God has entrusted us to lead—especially our children.

Even if we have not fully succeeded in this area in our past, let's determine to hear God's instruction to us and learn to lead in a Christlike way now in the present.

21 [Subject]**Fathers**, [Imperative][Active][Present] **provoke not** [stir not up] **your children to anger, lest they be discouraged** [disheartened, loss of heart, to lose spirit].

Colossians 3:21

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

"Pateres: Fathers" is the same Greek word as translated "parents" in [Hebrews 11:23](#).

[Hebrews 11:23](#) "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents..."

However, our text obviously moves from using "geneis: parents" in verse 20 to "pateres: fathers" in verse 21.

Colossians 3:20-21

Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.
Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

This shift places a *clear* emphasis on fathers. The same exact shift occurs in [Ephesians 6](#). While the instruction is applicable to both fathers and mothers, the emphasis is made to fathers. Why?

Well, the Scripture does not directly say why God specifically addresses fathers with this instruction. However, both Scripture and experience give us enough insight to have a generalized idea.

The very way by which God designed women and motherhood lends to women and mothers being instinctively nurturing.

A mother literally carries her child in her womb as it develops and grows off her very nourishment.

Then, children often feed directly from their mothers after birth.

No matter how much societies of rebels want to deny this divinely given reality, women have been made by God with these unique, glorious characteristics and physiological abilities.

As seen in verses 18-19 in connection with Genesis, Husbands on the other hand have been given by God the instruction to exercise loving and gentle leadership.

And, men in general have been designed by God with *inherent physiological capabilities* to strongly protect—which is another gift of God that is rebelled against in society today.

But, God firmly establishes this for us in Scripture, and honest science bares witness to this truth.

All this being established, women and mothers in general are designed by God with a natural advantage and bent toward *nurturing*, and men and fathers are designed by God with a natural advantage and bent toward *provocation and challenging*.

The purpose of today's message is not to Scripturally prove these points to be true. Much of this was already established in the sermon from [Colossians 3:18-19](#) and Genesis, which you can find on our website.

Rather, today we will simply accept these realities and move on to the instruction that is built upon them.

What is the instruction?

Fathers, do not provoke your children to make them become discouraged.

Illustrate each of these with the balloon:

- **Instruct them, but don't *obstruct* them. (hold it down)**
- **Shape them, but don't squeeze them. (squeeze)**
- **Channel them, but don't *crush* them. (press on)**
- **Develop them, but don't *redesign* them. (distort)**
- **Lead them, but don't *deflate* them. (pop)**

Accept the responsibility God has given you to lead each child as a unique individual created to image God as he or she follows Christ.

Embrace and give thanks for their particularities as you lead your children and followers to submit their entire selves to God.

Remember, provocation and challenging can be used for good:

- Corinthian church in their generous giving to other churches
- Paul in his admonition to the Corinthian church
- Instruction for all believers to provoke one another to love and good works

However, like most things, a powerful tool can be used for both good and evil. The difference is usually in who wields it and how they do so.

So, we have established that both parents, and especially fathers, need to be careful, responsible, and wise in how we provoke and challenge others—especially children.

The instruction toward fathers here is instruction for absolutely every believer to apply in our lives in a variety of contexts, so let us all learn from this instruction to fathers.

Provoke not... lest they be discouraged:

It means to not misuse your authority by overly or wrongly challenging your children and pushing them toward *active* responses of discouragement.

Other ways we might say it is: be sure that you do not stir up resentment and rebellion in your child.

Or, be sure you do not crush the spirit and personality of your child.

Don't incite resistance by a harshly authoritarian posture and treatment.

Don't make your children become convinced that it is impossible for them to please you.

Be sure not to aggravate or exasperate your child toward discouragement.

There are a variety of ways by which we can do this, and there are a variety of ways by which a child (or adult) can express discouragement.

We are about to consider a number of those, but before doing so, I will give this summary statement:

Christlike leadership as parents calls for a healthy balance of patient instruction, loving affection, and gentle discipline.

1. Patient instruction: long endurance in your teaching and instruction
2. Loving affection: selfless, self-giving care and devotion that is obviously known

3. Gentle discipline: appropriate training and correction that forms the heart without breaking the spirit

Much of what we will say today can be boiled down to these three ingredients.

Just as this advice to fathers is applicable to many other areas of our lives and relationships, so also, other relationships give us good examples for fathers to follow.

I want us to consider two now:

1. Instruction given to pastors/elders in how they are to lead the church
2. Prophecy of how the Servant of the LORD, the Messiah, will lead and bring the justice of His kingdom to the nations

[2 Timothy 2:24-26](#); [Isaiah 42:1-4](#)

2 Timothy 2:24-26

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Do you see all these descriptions in this instruction to Timothy and all elders?

- must not strive
- be gentle unto all
- able to teach
- patient
- Instructing in meekness/gentleness

- relying on God to give the grace to repent from sin toward the knowledge of the truth
- knowing that working with people is a spiritual battle of which the enemy is the devil, not the captives

Do you see any relevancy of this instruction with that which is directed toward fathers?

Instruct, lead, but do not provoke to discouragement or strife!

Now, let's consider the Servant of the Lord, or promised Messiah:

Isaiah 42:1-4

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, Nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, And the smoking flax shall he not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, Till he have set judgment in the earth: And the isles shall wait for his law.

When Jesus came, He made clear that, in His life and ministry, He was revealing to us the Father. What did God tell Isaiah His life and ministry would look like?

1. Just judgment on those Who reject and rebel against YHWH
2. Quiet, gentle, Spirit-led leadership of the weak
3. Patient rulership until the isles and ends of the earth hope in His torah/teaching/instruction/law

That sounds pretty similar to the way pastors are to shepherd God's flock—the church.

1. Condemn anti-Christ teaching and rebellion
2. Gently lead the sheep
3. Patiently lead the church as God brings the increase and advances the Gospel against the gates of hell into all the earth

And, this all sounds a lot like the instruction given to husbands/fathers:

1. Love your wife
2. Do not be harsh with your wife
3. Do not provoke your children to an active response of discouragement

So, all that is pretty much the point of the text, having now been illustrated by instruction to pastors and by prophecy of the promised Messiah.

This last summer, I broke our pool plumbing while trying to “force” PVC.

Has anyone ever tried to “bend” PVC? It’s not very pliable!

Q: If God did not lead us gently, how well do you think we would respond to His full strength?

Now, we are going to go through six principles to help us follow this instruction:

We must be careful not to unwisely challenge and stir up discouragement, anger, bitterness, and the “loss of heart” in our children.

How might fathers and mothers do this? To answer this, we are going to enter the realm of wisdom and other biblical principles since this passage does not answer that question for us.

Just as the verses on obedience that we looked at last week, this instruction relies heavily on a knowledge of other Scriptural application.

We can wrongly provoke children through numerous means, more than we will cover today. But, hopefully this will expand our understanding and application of this necessary instruction.

This chapter has already instructed us to “put off” such abusive, hostile attitudes and behaviors toward others in the church, which certainly and vitally includes the home!

[Colossians 3:8](#)

Colossians 3:8

⁸ But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Ever been provoked to some level of rebellion by an authority who was “covered” with these characteristics?

I have. I must admit a sin here.

I had a teacher in middle school that lost her temper all the time in class, so we wrongly pushed her buttons to see **fireworks!** And boy could she make fireworks!

It was wrong, and I should not have done that.

Looking back, I can see that the teacher cultivated this to be a normative response to her expression of authority with students.

If we always have to remind the follower that we are the leader, something is wrong!

Controlled anger can be a tool to be used sparingly, but uncontrolled anger becomes a trouble that spares not.

[Proverbs 16:32](#); [18:7](#); [29:8](#), [22](#)

Proverbs 16:32

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

Proverbs 18:7

A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul.

Proverbs 29:8

Scornful men bring a city into a snare: But wise men turn away wrath.

Proverbs 29:22

An angry man stirreth up strife, And a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

Q: Beyond anger, mockery, and abusive language and actions, how else might we “provoke” our children?

Let's consider that question as we continue in the sermon...

Authority

without instruction, affection, affirmation,
and love often provokes rebellious responses in children.

This goes along with our first statement on Christlike leadership, but here I want to emphasize each of these words a little differently:

1. Without instruction, no one knows how to do right or why they are being corrected. It is impossible to lead or correct well without giving clear instruction.
2. Affection that is known by children makes clear why you exercise your authority—you love them. This can be expressed through words, hugs, fun memories, times of laughter, a look in the eye, etc. Children need to know affection is there.
3. Affirmation lets children (and others) know when they get the instruction right or are getting close. **Determine to “catch people doing right!”**
4. Love as learned from Christ governs all your authority. Different than affection but not far from it, I am referring here to the selfless deeds you do.

Love may not always be understood. Sometimes the most loving things you can do is to say no, lead children in devotions and church ministry together, guard your children from foolish or evil influences, work long hours, spend quality time together, hold your children accountable, expose your children to things that may not be their preference but that helps develop them more broadly for life, lead them in times of prayer, take them on a vacation, sacrifice to help them step into their next stage of life, work to give them a *wise* inheritance of more than money but not without it... the list goes on!

Authority without instruction, affection, affirmation, and love can be detrimental.

This would be an authority that mostly or only gives expectations and consequences without the other necessary elements of parental training.

If we have leadership positions in any sphere, we should prayerfully work to cultivate positive, *volunteer* responses to our leadership.

As I emphasized on Wednesday evening, we should **aim at the heart of our children.**

Mere conformity and obedience in behavior is not the goal of parenting or leadership in general.

We should want obedience of heart out of love and respect—like God calls of us.

[Proverbs 23:22-26](#); [Ephesians 6:4](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:7-8](#)

Proverbs 23:22–26

²² Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, And despise not thy mother when she is old.

²³ Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *Also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

²⁴ The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: And he that begetteth a wise *child* shall have joy of him.

²⁵ Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, And she that bare thee shall rejoice.

²⁶ My son, give me thine heart, And let thine eyes observe my ways.

See that last verse: *give me thine heart... and eyes.*

Ephesians 6:4

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

The word here for “nurture” is translated as instruction, discipline, or chastisement in all its other NT uses.

So, in the parallel passage of [Colossians 3:21](#) found here in [Ephesians 6:4](#), fathers are instructed to “provoke not,” using a different Greek word that is more directly related to anger, and then to conversely “bring them up” in the “discipline” and “admonition/instruction” of the Lord.

To “bring them up” sounds a bit like a farmer bringing up crops.

You cannot force the crops; you have to give them the environment and nutrients for growth.

Children need to be given a godly environment and the nutrient of the word of the Lord as we pray for the Lord to grow them up in Him.

This is also why engaging our children in church gatherings, teaching, activities, and ministry is central to bringing up our children in the Lord.

There is no replacement for it.

While I am a firm user of sports, sports can be replaced with things like yard work, learning a trade, and a little “stick ball” with the family and with neighborhood friends.

While Martha and I place high investment into our children getting quality education and taking all the AP classes they can, it is far more important to us that they receive training in the Lord and live in His way.

I would rather they learn from us to honor the Lord with a tithe or faithful giving than to learn how to make lots of money, from which they do not honor God.

Teach your children to honor the Lord with their time, talents, and money early, or they may never learn to honor Him!

But, with all this zeal, we have to give heed to the instruction in Colossians: *provoke not.*

Once again, we can learn from faithful pastors and ministers to get another glimpse of what this looks like:

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

Our children and followers have to see their parents and leaders giving their very souls for the people they dearly love.

One primary way I work to give myself to you, the church, is through sermon preparation. This is the main time when all the church sets aside time to gather and hear God's Word, so I invest a large percentage of my time into preparing for this—a good 20-30 hours for each Sunday.

I hope you see that these sermons are far more than fulfilling a duty. They are an act of love toward God and you.

Authority that lacks these other ingredients may likely prove to “bring down” instead of “bring up.”

Q: What might be lacking in the way you exercise authority?

Having established the need for instruction, affection, affirmation, and love, now let's move on to consider yet another important set of ingredients to combine with these:

Clear, trustworthy expectations and consequences, along with acts of mercy, cultivate an optimal environment for healthy, trusting relationships.

Strangely, the very thing we often rebel against is also what we want—expectations and consequences.

School structure

Military structure with strong units

A sports game

A good work place

We want freedom, but we also desire healthy structure.

The alternative creates confusion, misunderstanding, disappointments, and apathy. What might this look like?

- **Neglect** with little expectations and consequences can result in the feeling of being unloved and unprepared for new stages of life.

Like in dysfunctional homes or homes in which the parents have bit hook, line, and sinker into the teachings of our world that children are just “little” people who should be treated as adults and not as children under your authority.

- **Confusion** is often created by unclear, vague expectations and consequences. Sometimes this happens out of a desire to not have “rules” in the home.

Like trying to work in an environment in which there are little to no SOPs.

- **Frustration** can come from constantly changing expectations and consequences. This can occur from a lack of time commitment or maybe due to disunity between parents

Like working for an organization in which there is no clear mission statement or organizational structure.

- **Distrust** of parents can be cultivated by the failure to follow through with our expectations and consequences. There may be a lot of “bark” with no “bite.” The home becomes filled with warnings that children come to learn do not mean anything. This often breeds *resentment and distrust* especially in the ones *who are or were obeying*.

Like working in a team that rewards the unproductive employees and deflates the motivation of the productive ones. The culture in the home rewards dishonesty and non-productivity, so those ways are what become prominent.

- **Rebellion** against rules can be encouraged when it seems that rules are merely for the sake of having rules. **When mercy is never exercised alongside rules and authority, this communicates that the children exist for the rules instead of the rules existing for the children.** The witness of God is full of an abundance of mercy, delayed correction, and clear calls to repentance.

Have you ever been offered a merciful pathway after deserving a clear consequence? Did that motivate you to do better next time?

Maybe a warning instead of a speeding ticket?

How about the opposite? Have you ever received a rigidly strict consequence that seemed like the person in authority almost *reveled* in carrying out the punishment?

Mercy has impact.

[Romans 2:4](#)

Romans 2:4

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Notice the fatherly leadership from God and the childlike responsiveness of the psalmist in these two strophes of [Psalm 119](#).

See with me how the psalmist's response is based on the trustworthiness of the LORD to "deal well with him according to His word."

[Psalm 119:65-80](#)

Psalm 119:65-68

TETH. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: For I have believed thy commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray: But now have I kept thy word. Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

God's trustworthy expectations in His word gave confidence to the psalmist, even when it brought temporary moments of "affliction."

God's law and instruction is clearly loved by the believing psalmist.

Trustworthy expectations and consequences are obviously seen in this psalm.

Q: Do those you lead or influence know what you expect of them? Do they know the results of not meeting your expectations?

Speaking of clear instruction...

Irrational, uncontrolled, and angry responses toward children without confessing and repenting from such behavior may lead to resentment and distrust.

This is a very important principle.

These commands that are given in Colossians are to imperfect people, though they have the Spirit.

Parents and authorities in general will make small and big mistakes. We will sin.

**What should we do about that?
Confess, repent, and reconcile!**

Covering sin or flaws only leads to justifying them, and that usually leads to passing the sins and flaws on to others through either exposure or indoctrination.

We must humbly confess, even before our children and “subordinates.”

[Proverbs 11:2](#); [12:16-18](#); [James 5:16](#)

Proverbs 11:2

When pride cometh, then cometh shame: But with the lowly is wisdom.

Proverbs 12:16–18

A fool’s wrath is presently known: But a prudent man covereth shame. He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: But a false witness deceit. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: But the tongue of the wise is health.

James 5:16

¹⁶ Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

So, confession of sin and flaws along with self control is vital.

Q: Do you have sins or flaws that you need to confess to people you lead or to people who are close to you?

The next principle is one that takes two to do effectively:

A lack of unity in marriage seen by children through parenting often encourages children to pick sides and manipulate one or both parents.

It is more important for fathers and mothers to remain in unified agreement before their children than it is for them to do everything right each time with their children.

Less optimal ways in the home can get smoothed out over time, but disunity in the home promotes instability, distrust, and more disunity.

[Colossians 3:18-21](#); [Proverbs 6:20-23](#)

Colossians 3:18–21

¹⁸ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love *your wives*, and be not bitter against them. ²⁰ Children, obey *your parents* in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

Proverbs 6:20–23

²⁰ My son, keep thy father's commandment, And forsake not the law of thy mother: ²¹ Bind them continually upon thine heart, *And* tie them about thy neck. ²² When thou goest, it shall lead thee; When thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; And *when* thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. ²³ For the commandment *is* a lamp; and the law *is* light; And reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life:

Notice the unity implied between the father's commandment and the mother's law.

The unity of fathers and mothers instills much stability and confidence in children.

The whole world may be in an upheaval, but the unity of children’s parents provides a safe haven amidst instability.

The same applies to other areas of life and leadership.

Teams, organizations, and nations need leaders to do what is necessary to establish unity on matters for everyone’s good.

Moments of conflict on ideas and policies can be healthy, but where there is nothing but conflict, it is destructive.

For instance, our nation is wisely structured with checks and balances to keep the power more in the hands of the people, but if all we have is disunity, we become a very confused, deflated, and imploding nation.

Q: How can you strengthen your unity as parents? How about in other relationships and areas of leadership?

Lastly, being in a role of leadership necessitates leading.

A vacuum of loving, parental authority can provoke children into resentfully seeking to fill the void with alternative sources—good or bad.

The combination of love and authority is something we all inherently crave. It is how God made us.

We all want both, even though sin tempts us to rebel against it at the same time.

ILL:

Strong coach

Motivational teacher or mentor

Good supervisor or boss

Inspirational military leader

Compelling campaign leader

Foolish pier leader

Motivational gang leader

We don't want to leave a void to be filled by someone else not who was not the one made responsible by God.

Incorporate others to help you, like church members, coaches, teachers, etc.

But, don't leave a parental void. Children need leadership just like how followers of the LORD need His leadership.

[Proverbs 3:11-12; 29:15-18](#)

Proverbs 3:11-12

My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; Neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; Even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.

Children are not to be left to themselves...

Proverbs 29:15-18

The rod and reproof give wisdom: But a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame. When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: But the righteous shall see their fall. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: But he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he.

Children need leadership and correction.

People in general need instruction, especially as revealed from the Lord, so that they can live in the blessing of God's law/revelation/instruction/will.

Q: Do you see why a void of leadership is harmful for us all?

All this talk on parenting is based upon being followers of God and obeying His Fatherly leadership over our lives.

OUR FAITHFUL FATHER

In God, we receive all this and so much more ever perfectly.

He has proven His love in the giving of His Son, Who sacrificed Himself for our sins.

His affection is seen in His tender care and readiness to hear our prayers.

His instruction has been supplied in all forms: narrative, poetry, wisdom, apocalyptic, letter, sermon, parable, conscience, Spirit, Son, church.

His discipline is always for our good and never for our harm.

And as said last week, God gives us in Jesus the perfect Way and Example of living as a child of God...

[Hebrews 12:1-7](#)

Hebrews 12:1-7

¹ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset

us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

⁴ Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

⁵ And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

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

⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Oh, the riches of having a Heavenly Father Who has come to us in His Son and Who supplies us with His Spirit and Who personally disciplines and trains us into living as representatives of King Jesus to a world of people who need to know the Lord.

Are you a born again child of God?

Is Jesus the author and finisher of *your* faith? Have you been forgiven of your sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus?

Have you turned with repentance from your sinful way and on with trust in Jesus as your risen Messiah, Savior, and Lord?

If not, don't wait. Respond now instead of facing God's good just, eternal judgment on your sin.

If you have questions about that, let us sit down and talk together about Christ.

If you know you are saved in Christ, let's give thanks for our Father's good, loving leadership.

Fathers and mothers, let's follow in the Father's example with our children and show them the Father in our leadership.

All the church, let's point people to Jesus and the Father as we live by the Spirit and lead wisely.

Remember how I responded to my basketball coach's leadership in PA?

I unfortunately lived up to his leadership.

Remember my pool PVC pipes?

I unfortunately broke them.

Remember the balloons?

Q: How will your children or those you influence do if they live up to your leadership? Is your leadership gently pointing others to the Father?

Colossians 3:20–21

Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.