



Don't Break Their Spirit: A Father's Wake-Up Call

Main Scripture: *"Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."*

Colossians 3:21 (ESV)

Devotional Thought:

I'll never forget the day I wounded my son—not physically, but emotionally. Before I left on a 3 day business trip I gave my son one objective and said "This needs to be done by the time I get home". We had been asking for weeks for some action, and this seemed like a reasonable request from my perspective. Clean your room. It was in pretty bad shape and I have had enough.

On the morning of the day I was supposed to come home I got a text from my son... "Dad, I'm not going to have time to get it all done by the time you get home..." I will admit, I didn't even wait for a reason before I said some things I will always wish I didn't say. It was not a very good parenting moment at all. But what happened when I got home changed the trajectory of our relationship.

When I got home my wife shared with me a message that my son had sent to her about the situation and my heart sank. I was so heartbroken on how I handled the situation. I was before I got home, but as soon as I read that text it amplified by a lot. I was not parenting the way God intended me to parent. I was not treating my son in a way that honored God.

When I was done reading the text I pretty much went straight to my bedroom, spent some time in prayer, and fell asleep. The next morning I spent some time talking with my son. I apologized and took full responsibility for the words I said, and shared with him that it was wrong of me to say it. In that moment, you could see his heart posture change. You could see that he knew I truly did love him, and that I was willing to admit I failed him with the way I handled the situation.

It was at this moment that I realized I had been the problem with my son's behavior for a long time. Paul writes in Colossians 3:21 *"Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."* I didn't realize until that situation that I had been provoking



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my son for a long time. In my mind, I was trying to motivate him, trying to guide him to better behavior but all it did was make him throw in the proverbial towel. He was so discouraged he had given up. He thought “No matter what I do, I get in trouble anyway, so why should I try at anything.” Man, those words stung deep.

That moment was a pivotal moment in my life, and in his. Since then there have been a lot of changes in his life that I truly believe came from that moment.

Additional Scriptures for Reflection:

- **James 1:19-20** – *“Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*
- **Proverbs 15:1** – *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

Reflection Questions:

1. **Have my words or expectations discouraged my child recently, even if unintentionally?** (Take a moment to think about recent interactions—especially in moments of correction. Did you leave your child feeling uplifted, or defeated?)
2. **Am I parenting from a place of control or a place of connection?** (God calls us to lead with love and consistency, not with fear or frustration. Reflect on whether your approach builds relationships or just seeks results.)
3. **When was the last time I modeled repentance to my child?** (Apologizing doesn't diminish authority-it deepens trust. How might your vulnerability actually be the key to restoring or strengthening your father-child bond?)