

Training Without Provoking

Today’s Reading: Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6 | Audio: Day 2

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

— Ephesians 6:4 (KJV)

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

— Proverbs 22:6 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Paul gives parents—and all spiritual leaders—a two-sided instruction: do not provoke, and bring them up. Correction is necessary, but the way we correct matters.

DO NOT PROVOKE	BRING THEM UP
Driven by frustration	Shaped by love and the Word
Rules by mood	Rules by what God has said

To provoke someone to wrath is to push them toward anger, bitterness, or resentment. Maybe you have seen it: a parent has a hard day, and by the time they get home every small thing becomes a major issue. The issue may need correction—but the spirit of the correction matters.

The same is true in discipleship, leadership, marriage, and friendship. We can say the right thing in the wrong spirit, using truth like a hammer instead of a shepherd’s staff. Love corrects, trains, warns, and gives structure—but love does not tear down just because it is tired.

Real discipline is structural, not merely reactionary. It teaches what we value, how we speak, how we worship, how we treat people. A home should not be a place where God is mentioned only on Sunday morning; it should be a classroom of faith all week—and that classroom is built through example more than lecture. Children notice how we pray, how we talk about people, whether we apologize, whether our church life and home life match.

So before we correct someone, we pause and ask: is this coming from love and from the Word, or from my frustration? That pause changes everything. A gentle answer is not weak. A firm correction need not be harsh. Structure does not require shame. Jesus is full of truth and full of grace, and training people takes both.

DAY 2 • JOURNAL & RESPONSE

REFLECT

1. *When you correct others—children, disciples, coworkers, peers—are your words coming from love and the Word, or from personal frustration?*

2. *What does your example teach the people watching you most closely?*

RESPOND: TODAY'S PRACTICAL STEP

- Before correcting someone today, pause. Take a breath.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you respond with the character of Christ.
- Then choose words that build up, even if they also challenge.

A correction I need to handle differently, and how:

DAY 2 • PRAYER

PRAY

Father, help me to train and correct with Your heart. Forgive me for the times I have spoken out of anger, frustration, or pride. Teach me to build structure with love. Help my words bring clarity, not confusion. Help my example reflect Jesus, not just my emotions. Give me patience, wisdom, and consistency. Let those under my influence experience both truth and grace through me. In Jesus' name, amen.

My own prayer:

REMEMBER THIS

Correction should never crush what God is trying to cultivate.

Going Deeper: Colossians 3:21 • Proverbs 15:1 • Deuteronomy 6:6–7

This devotional is a tool for reflection, not a substitute for pastoral care or professional counseling. If what surfaces feels too heavy to carry alone, please reach out to a pastor or a trusted, qualified counselor at New Life Tabernacle Carrollwood.