

Ephesians 6:4 “The Beauty of Parenting”

Introduction

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:21**: “Be subject to one another in the fear (i.e. a deep honor and respect) of Christ.”

In **Ephesians 5:22-6:9**, Paul makes application of verse 21 by addressing three common areas of life and relationships.

- Husbands and wives (5:22-33)
- Children to parents (6:1-3)
- Fathers to children (6:4)
- Employers and employees (6:5-9)

Today we are going to look at the “Role of Parents” (6:4)

Eph 6:4

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Although this instruction very much applies to both parents, why is it that God singles out the Fathers?

6:4a Why Fathers in particular are being singled out in verse 4?

Eph 6:4a

4 **And you, fathers**, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

What kind of relationship do you have with your Father?

Quotes: John Eldridge in the book “Wild at Heart”.

“The father must be the one to answer the question in each of his kid’s lives”

- To each little boy/man – “Am I enough and do I have what it takes?”
- To each little girl/woman – “Am I lovely and/or am I pretty/beautiful enough?”

Thoughts on the importance of Dads/Fathers.

- For a person to make it through life without the encouragement of a “Father” is very hard!!
- It is very hard to be a courageous person unless you have your Father (in body and spirit) behind you.
- It is very demoralizing for a person not to have the support of a Father.

- If the Father rejects their child or does not make a relationship with their child, it makes the child feel like they are of little worth. A person can recover from it, but it is very, very hard.
- A Father should put the highest standard of behavior on his child, and put pressure on his child to make the best he/she can be.
- But, not too much pressure that he hurts and discourages that Child.
- To get that balance just right between the two, is very hard.

Thoughts on the importance of Dads/Fathers to be the Leader in the Home:

- Men need to lead, and also be the Spiritual head in the home.
- Men are not to be lazy and let their wife lead. Men should not be like a cliché, (i.e. The man is a carnal person uninterested in Spiritual things, that's women stuff; or think they should stay home while the wife is pursuing God.)

Thoughts on how Fathers injure their Kids:

- **Giving distracted time to each child:**
When we as fathers are busy and we run in to ask them about their homework or did they do their chores, but go in to watch the news and sit in our chair. We should be taking time and developing skills to be able to spend time asking them about their life, and sharing with them about our life!!
- **Hypocrisy**
Once they get to 12-13 years old their brains grow to the point that they can reason, that is to be critical and they are now looking at what you are doing, and not just what you are telling them. They are masterful, and sniffing out hypocrisy.
- **Video games**
So many are going to reap bad consequences from being addicted to playing hours on end on video games.
So many failing marriages and neglected kids because of this!!

6:4b ...do not provoke your children to wrath
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Eph 6:4b

4 And you, fathers, **do not provoke your children to wrath**, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

A. “Do not provoke your children to wrath (i.e. anger) ”

In Colossians Paul says,

Colossians 3:21

Fathers, do not provoke your children, **lest they become discouraged.**

- In the pagan world of Paul's day, and even in many Jewish households, most fathers ruled their families with rigid and domineering authority.

- Paul makes it clear that a Christian father's authority over his children does not allow for unreasonable demands that might drive his children to anger, despair, and resentment.

Quote: (Wood)

“The gospel introduced a fresh element into parental responsibility by insisting that the feelings of the child must be taken into consideration. In a society where the father's authority (*patria potestas*) was absolute, this represented a revolutionary concept.”

- This is a major change in the culture!!

In our day I think Parents can bring their kids to anger and frustration by...

- Being unkind,
- Having an over-critical attitude that torments the child instead of training them.
- Being angry in your discipline
- Not giving them time
- Not giving them time to explain themselves

B. Bring them up:

This **ancient Greek word was originally used of 'bodily nourishment'** as in **Eph 5:29**. But the word came to be used for **the nurture of body, mind, and soul**. The form here suggests **"development by care and pains"** or as Calvin translated, "Let them be fondly cherished." (Guzik)

Eph 5:29

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

C. Bring them up Spiritually in the word and in the LORD!!

Significantly, both **training (i.e. correction)** and **admonition (i.e. reproof)** are used to describe the purpose of the Scriptures (**2 Tim 3:16**).

2 Tim 3:16-17

16 **All Scripture is given** by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, **for reproof**, for **correction**, for **instruction** in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Parents are to raise their children on the Word of God.

This calls for systematic discipline and instruction, which brings children to respect the commands of the Lord as the foundation for all life, godliness, and blessing.

Prov 22:6

6 Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Deut 6:6-7

6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Deut 11:19-22

19 "You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

20 "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,

21 "that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

22 "For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do--to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him--

6:4cbut bring them up in the training (i.e. chastise) and Admonition (i.e. correction)

Eph 6:4c

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, **but bring them up in the training** and admonition of the Lord.

A. Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord:

Training is the same word translated ,*chastening*, in **Heb 12:5-11**. It has the idea of training through corrective discipline. **Admonition** has more of the idea of *teaching* – both are necessary, though it may be significant that **training** comes first.

This does not mean merely scolding your children in the sense of **admonition**. It means to *train* and *admonish*.

Encouragement and rebuke must be combined with training and teaching.

B. 10 Ingredients of Good Discipline:

We're going to talk the rest of the morning about raising kids, but I have to tell you that I certainly don't feel like I have all the answers.

Quote:

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-1680) said, "*Before I was married I had three theories about raising children. Now I have three children and no theories.*"

After having raised 4 children I can relate to that.

So the best that I can do is to take us to the Scriptures to begin to see what instructions that God gives us as parents, and I might add as **Grandparents, as well!!**

Quote:

Dr. Dobson – "The parent must convince himself that discipline is not something he does *to* the child; it is something he does *for* the child."

1. Action

One of the greatest problems we have in parenting is a tendency to do nothing. When you don't do anything, it only causes confusion and makes things worse. It can almost seem as if the child were the one in control.

Quote:

The Duke of Windsor (1894-1972) said, "The thing that impresses me most about America is the way parents obey their children."

We see this several times in the Bible where a parent was aware of the sin of their children, but chose to do nothing. When **Jacob heard that his daughter Dinah had been raped (Gen. 34)**, he didn't do anything about it. So his sons decided in anger that they would take matters into their own hands, and ended up massacring an entire city in revenge.

When **David heard that his son Amnon had raped his own half-sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13)**, David at least got angry. But he didn't do anything about it. As a result, Tamar's brother, Absalom, plotted and killed Amnon in revenge. I'd call that "provoking to anger".

Don't confuse "loving" your child with not disciplining him. Take action. Our attitude should be:

Quote:

"I love you too much to let you behave like that." (*James C. Dobson*)

Prov 13:24

24 He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.

Prov 19:18

18 Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.

2. No anger

I think that one of the most difficult hindrances to healthy discipline is our own anger.

Quote: (Lloyd-Jones)

"When you are disciplining a child, you should have first controlled yourself... What right have you to say to your child that he needs discipline when you obviously need it yourself?"

Prov 15:1

1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

When our discipline comes out of anger instead of love, we end up provoking anger in our kids and driving our children away.

3. **Instruction**

When God disciplines us, it's for the purpose of teaching us something, that's the idea of "admonition" (Eph. 6:4).

The goal of discipline is instruction, not punishment.

Instruction often requires words.

But sometimes the things we say don't instruct:

-- Jay Kesler, *Ten Mistakes Parents Make with Teenagers And How To Avoid Them*, Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers, Inc., 1988.

1. Do as I say, not as I do.
2. I'm the adult. I'm right.
3. Because I said so, that's why.
4. You want to be what?
5. This room's a pig sty.
6. Can't you do anything right?
7. Where did you find him?
8. You did what?
9. Do you mind if we talk about something else?
10. I'm kind of busy right now. Could you come back later?

How does instruction work?

With young children:

- Take time to clearly tell the child what was wrong with their behavior.
- Sometimes it may be appropriate to use a Bible verse that fits the situation.
- Don't just spank them with a paddle and think you're done, the child should tell you back what was wrong with their behavior.
- After the spanking, hold them and pray for them.
- Tell them they can come out of the room, when they are finished crying.

With older children:

- You need to talk about why you are concerned.

Questions parents need to ask themselves:

- Have you thought about the rule you've set or the behavior you want changed?
- Are you just upset because they've inconvenienced you?
- Or are you really concerned for them?
- Is your set of rules based on some whim or something that is important?

- Do you have a picture in your head as to what kind of adult you are guiding your child to become?
- I'm not talking about what career you've picked out for them, but what character qualities from the Scriptures you want to develop in your young man or woman.

4. Spanking in particular

This is pretty controversial today. I know that some of you will choose not to spank, but the Bible seems to recommend it.

Prov 22:15

15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Prov 23:13-14

13 Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.

14 You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell.

Let me answer questions that are usually asked on this subject:

- Age – How old should a child be when you start spanking?
Old enough to understand what's going on and why they're being spanked. If they're not old enough to tell you why they're being spanked, they're not old enough to be spanked. A three month old baby doesn't know why it's being spanked. A two year old has the capacity to understand.
- Paddles – A paddle is better than the hand. The Bible talks about the "rod".
Some have suggested that if you spank with your hand too often, your hand becomes something your child is afraid of. If you use a paddle, keep it in a special "paddle place", and out of sight. It shouldn't be out in the open like some kind of constant threat. Often all we need to do is to start walking towards the "paddle place" for a child to get the message.
- Anger – Never use the paddle or spank when you're angry.
If you can't control your anger, don't spank your child until you calm down. Try listening to yourself. Are you yelling? Then slow down. Never open the door to abuse. Never hit anything but their bottom with a paddle. The paddle is a tool for instruction, not a weapon for punishment.
- How often should a child be spanked?
There have been times when we've spanked a child once or twice in a week, but we found that the more consistent we were in discipline, the less spanking they needed. When a child is clear where the lines are, they tend to cross them less often.

5. **Beyond spanking**

Discipline is more than spanking. Some kids don't respond to spanking. One of the toughest challenges to parents is finding what is appropriate and what works.

There are other negative punishments like "time outs" or taking away privileges.

In the Old Testament, there was more than one type of punishment for a crime. As your child gets older, you need to be a whole lot smarter than just spanking.

Note: (people change from the positive, not the negative)

Sometimes our children can learn a whole lot more if we focus on giving them encouragement for doing good things instead of always focusing on the negative.

6. **Pick your battles**

I think that as your kids get older, you need to be careful about what you ought to be "fighting" over.

Important helpful instruction from Ruth Graham:

Ruth Graham (in *Homemade*, Vol. 16, No. 11, November 1992) writes, "With our five children I had to decide what was a moral issue and what was non-moral and simply a part of growing up.

Tracking mud into the house is a no-no, but it's not a moral issue.

Children tend to be noisy when they're playing, and you feel like saying, "Hush!"—but it's not a moral issue.

However, I would call disobedience a moral issue. I would call respect a moral issue. Of course, stealing and lying are moral issues."

Look at it this way – you've got \$100 to spend on what's important for your kid. Don't spend it all in one place. Don't spend the \$100 of influence you have on the things that aren't all that important.

7. **No public humiliation in the discipline**

There's an interesting passage about corporal punishment in Israel, that they get lashes but NOT humiliated!!!

Deut 25:3

3 "Forty blows he may give him and no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and **your brother be humiliated in your sight.**

Deut 25:3 (NLT) would publicly humiliate your neighbor.

I think that sometimes we get so intent on disciplining our kids that we don't realize we're humiliating them before others at the same time.

- When a serious thing occurs, take the child away from the public view.
- If you're in a restaurant, take them to the car.
- If they're at church with their friends, wait until they get home.
- If you're at the dinner table, take them into their bedroom.
- Others don't need to see what happens. This can't always be done, but I think it needs to be a part of our discipline.

8. Apologies and restitution

If another person was harmed, teach your child to apologize.

If something was broken or stolen, it needs to be fixed or returned.

Teach your kids to get along with each other.

While they are still small children don't allow them to stay angry with each other.

But require the offender to apologize and require the victim to say "I forgive you".

Eph 4:31-32

31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Note:

Parents – if you've made mistakes in disciplining your children, you should apologize as well. If you've disciplined in anger, you need to apologize.

9. Sometimes grace is enough

Occasionally, a child will do something that is really, really bad, and amazingly enough, they will also be struck with the fact that they did a horrible thing.

It's not a bad idea that from time to time we not only teach our children the consequences of their bad behavior, but we also teach them grace.

Instruct them what it's like to get what you don't deserve. God does this all the time for us.

10. Love & Forgiveness

Try to never allow discipline to end on a sour note.

Your child needs to know that you are disciplining out of love, not out of anger.

Whether we realize it or not, when God disciplines us, He ALWAYS disciplines us because of His love for us.

Rev 3:19a

19a "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten....."

Our kids need to know that we're going to forgive them, and that we do forgive them.

A story by Ernest Hemingway makes a humbling and great point:

Ernest Hemingway wrote a story about a father and his teenage son. In the story, the relationship had become somewhat strained, and the teenage son ran away from home. His father began a journey in search of that rebellious son. Finally, in Madrid, Spain, in a last desperate attempt to find the boy, the father put an ad in the local newspaper. The ad read: "Dear Paco, Meet me in front of the newspaper office at noon. All is forgiven. I love you. Your father." The next day, in front of the newspaper office, eight hundred Pacos showed up. They were all seeking forgiveness. They were all seeking the love of their father.

Conclusion
