

**Sovereign Christ Bible Fellowship**  
**Sermon Supplement**

From a message preached January 14, 2018

**Ephesians 6:4**: “Fathers do not exasperate your children (Or, “do not provoke them to anger/wrath”); instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

Supplemental Verses:

Colossians 3:21: “Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.”

Genesis 18:19: “For I have chose him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just...”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7: “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Proverbs 22:6: “Train/Start and child in the way he should go, and when he’s old he will not depart from it.”

What is the “anger” in Ephesians 6:4. Or ask another way, how does the exasperated child manifest the anger or bitterness that is produced? First, this anger is not something temporal or easily soothed. It is a deep seated anger or resentment common to all unredeemed flesh, that during the critical years of childhood development has been nourished through provocation mostly by well-meaning parents. Even in Christian homes this exasperation can become core to the child’s identity and person and often is expressed through apathy or boredom, hostility toward family and others, indifference to parental concerns, an outright rejection of christian upbringing (if there was one), self-injury, eating disorders, anxieties, depression, compulsive behaviors, feelings of failure, worthlessness and inadequacy, and other mental disorders, promiscuity, and even suicide.

Although every human being born is responsible for their own sin, the Bible puts a high importance on the role of parents, and in particular, fathers in the teaching and training of children. You can go online and do your own research, but the evidence is clear and unquestionable, fathers are needed at home. What’s more, godly fathers are needed at home, involved with the family affairs including but not limited to building a solid marriage, and overseeing the teaching, training and nurturing of the children.

A comment needs to be made concerning single parent households. A single parent is at a disadvantage. In most cases the whole burden of being both mother and father

rests on the parent. However, we believe that with God's help and the help of the local church there are an abundance of resources available to help aid in raising children to become godly, mature, responsible adults. We have biblical counseling available. we have the fellowship of other mature believers, both men and women. We have the friendship of other children as well.

The following tables contain summary notes taken from John MacArthur's Ephesians commentary from pp. 316 - 319.

First we compare two studies. The left column is a Harvard study from the 40's and the second is a study published by a Christian psychiatrist. Both studies came to similar conclusions and found several key factors that contribute to an overall good outcome in the lives of children as they reach adulthood. The Harvard study states the negative, the christian psychiatrist is stated in the positive. (Again, taken from MacArthur)

<b>Harvard: Glueck Study: failures of parents which contributes to delinquency of children</b>	<b>Christian psychiatrist: Dr Meier: positives which produce right parent/child relationships</b>
a father's failure to implement fair and consistent discipline.	firm and consistent discipline by both parents
a mother who fails to provide supervision and companionship during the day. (this is hard for working single parents or where both parents need to work.)	a father who leads as true head of the home (involved and positively influential)
failure of parents to show open and genuine affection for each other and for the children	Genuine love of the parents for each other and for the children
failure of the parents to bring the family together to spend time in activities which involve every household member	Parents setting a good, biblically driven example before their children in various settings both at home and in public
	consistency of standards for parents and for children

We recognize that a single parent home has challenges. But some would argue that a home where one parent (often the husband and father) is present but disengaged in the affairs of the home, that that home is putting children at risk for exhibiting the anger warned against in Ephesians 6:4. But, nevertheless a single parent has a challenge to bring the necessary balance to the home. Again, the church is a great resource for help.

And fathers, as hard as it is at times, your leadership matters. Don't punt on the responsibility! "With God you shall do valiantly!" Ps. 108:13

Next, Pastor MacArthur states 8 ways well meaning parents exasperate their children:

<b>When well-meaning parents:</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Over-protect their children	smothering, over-restrictive, not allowing failure, not giving age appropriate responsibilities, doubting or constantly questioning age appropriate decisions.
Show Favoritism	Decidedly giving preference of one child over another. Isaac favored Esau; and Rebekkah favored Jacob. Both were frustrated.
prioritize achievement	parents are often driven to see children achieve for their own fulfillment; fear of failure to please the parent; parent offers little affirmation unless success.
withhold encouragement	parent more often points out weaknesses or failures; child receives little appreciation or approval.
express irritation toward child	child feels like an inconvenience, or a financial drain
berate their child	a parent that berates a child for acting according to their age instead of leading them and guiding thru the difficulty.
punish out of sinful anger	leaves a child frustrated and can build anger. Punishment looks back; discipline looks forward.
Verbally and physically abuse	Often well-meaning parents that get to this point have failed to deal with problems when they were small. God gives us wisdom in the Scripture that encourages us to handle problems before anger and frustration boil over.

If you as a parent feel a need for counseling please don't hesitate to ask. To do nothing puts yourself, your spouse and your children at risk for more frustration, discouragement, bitterness, loss of joy, loss of peace, fear and anger, etc.

One other observation: (Not from John MacArthur)

There are other factors which can provoke children to anger. One is found in what is being called the "free-range parenting movement". Although the definitions are still be formulated, "free-range parenting" expresses the belief that children are able to take ultimate responsibility for their lives with little or no parental intervention. Lessons are learned as the child experiences any activity they wish, again with little or no parental guidance or intervention. Obviously, some parents would be more involved than others as each person of a particular family defines his or her role in the family as well as his or her own moral and intellectual compass, from which a wide range of limits can be set depending on ones desires or experientially derived conclusions.

I would encourage you to test the viability of "free-range parenting". Decide if this parenting model is consistent with Scripture. If you don't agree with "free-ranging" why not? If you see some helpful aspects of "free ranging" what are they? Finally, how pleasing to God is your parenting? What are you doing well? What needs to change?