

Sovereign Christ Bible Fellowship
Sermon Supplement

From a message preached January 28, 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.”

It doesn’t seem so radical in our Christian culture to call fathers to obey the commands listed in the previous verses. At least on the surface of things it would seem as though Ephesians 6:4 and the other verses are simply out dated and not applicable to us. However, I would beg to differ.

I think every generation of Christian fathers (and parents) need to be instructed (perhaps a better word would be, indoctrinated) in God’s commands for parents, and in particular, fathers. I think it is still radical to expect fathers to “not provoke” their children “to wrath”. I think it is still radical to expect fathers to train and teach their children in the Lord. I think it is still radical for parents to truly be sensitive to their children.

If you remember, some of the key observations drawn out of the verses listed about are as follows: The verses are commands to fathers to “reject passivity” and take an active role in the training and teaching of their children. Second, fathers have to “lead courageously”. It is not easy to start leading your household especially if you have been very passive in the past. But, God doesn’t indicate in these verses any other way for you to act toward your family. Third, these verses urge fathers to “take responsibility” and train and teach their children. Of course, mother will do a lion’s share of the training and teaching, especially if she is a stay-at-home mom. But father better take responsibility for the overall well-being of the members of his household, especially his wife, then the children.

These three observations, which we just listed are summary principles from the book entitled, “Raising Modern Day Knights” by Robert Lewis, published by Tyndale House Publishing, and they can best be tied together simply by exhorting fathers to be sensitive to the needs of their children. It should be rather apparent to every Christian father that their involvement with their children’s lives is required. The very nature of fatherhood begins with involvement.

But, the Bible shines light on the problem facing every man. In fact it is every man, woman and child’s problem: sin. Every person conceived in the womb is a sinner by nature, with the exception of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every person conceived is a Son of Adam and prone to sin and, therefore, failure to fulfill their role in life in a God-pleasing way. In the arena of manhood, men possess both power and weakness, aggressiveness and passivity, courage and fear, a sense of duty and of desperate irresponsibility. This is woefully sensed when it comes to men being fathers. The extremes listed above show how wayward, unstable and reckless we can be, even as Christian men. But the difference between a son of Adam and a Christian man is that the Christian man has become a son of God according to His grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Sin still lives in a Christian man, but as a son of God, we are not only alive to our calling but also awakened to holy ambitions that move us want to actually reject passivity, lead courageously and to accept responsibility for our families. The Christian father will more and more engage, tune in, stay in the fight, and choose to never give up and never give in to passivity and cowardice. At least he will be more inclined to persevere in his calling to please God in his role as a father.

A God-pleasing man will desire to fulfill his role to “train and instruct” his children. It might help to look at some commonalities of the two. The table does that:

Attitude toward Training: (Discipline/ Structured Control)	Attitude toward Instruction: (To put In The mind)
Training according to the “law of love”	Instruct your children according to love.
You provide loving structured control and discipline with a goal to “bring them up”.	A loving attitude toward your effort of instruction will positively affect their growing up in the Lord.
If love rules your motive you will engage with your children, be sensitive to their needs, and even confront them when they harbor and express sinful attitudes.	If love rules your motive to instruct your children you will know them better, understand their needs, and better speak to their heart.

Attitude toward Training: (Discipline/ Structured Control)	Attitude toward Instruction: (To put In The mind)
You must take responsibility for training your own children because God has given you the responsibility as his representative or agent to influence them through the “structured control”.	You must instruct your children and not leave it to someone else because God gave you the responsibility and holds you accountable as a human agent to influence your children.
God won’t do your dirty work. You are the first line of “training” for your children.	God won’t do your dirty work. You have to teach them.

As you see, training and instruction have to have love at the core and both have similar responsibilities. In the table below I’ve shared some basic principles. Take note of the balance that exists between training and instruction; you must provide both for your children.

Simple Principles for Training: (Discipline/ structured control)	Simple principles for Instruction: (Putting in the mind)
Structured Control will not stifle creativity or personality.	<u>Be a learner</u> yourself. It is difficult to “bring them up in the Lord” if you yourself are not growing up.
Training demands parents set firm limits. They younger the more limits; older the less limits	<u>Be Consistent!</u> When they are young read to them the biblical narratives, the wisdom literature of the Bible, the prophets, the Gospels, and Epistles.
Structured control establishes rules that are reasonable, definable and enforceable.	<u>Be positive</u> in your attitude when you attempt to “put into the mind”. Present instruction as a good thing with a hopeful outcome.
It is wise to differentiate between what Scripture commands and house rules.	<u>Be reasonable.</u> Long lectures to infants and toddlers are inappropriate. It is more appropriate for the young that you provide structured control.
Training your children should be a positive experience for them and for you.	<u>Be reasonable.</u> Heavy structure is less appropriate for the well trained “teenager”. It is more appropriate to provide clear instruction.
Parents set goals. Goals should also be reasonable, definable and having both reward and consequence.	<u>Be wise</u> in what you teach and when you teach it. We all want our children to become mature and wise beyond their years, but remember you can’t bring up a child in just a year or two.

Simple Principles for Training: (Discipline/ structured control)	Simple principles for Instruction: (Putting in the mind)
Not every failure needs to be considered a MAJOR sin problem to solve.	<u>Be Responsible</u> . Your children can't figure <i>everything out</i> without your direct instruction and involvement. Yes, they should learn to think, but the younger they are the more thinking you have to do for them. As you "bring them up" they will learn to think more on their own. .
"A Gentle question pricks the conscience; an accusation hardens the heart."	Don't give up! Never give up. Your children may take steps backwards, miss goals, push back at times, but as long as they are under your roof don't quit.

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.