



Foundations of Faith- A Biblical Approach to Parenting #3

The Father's Change

It has been said that *"Everything rises or falls on leadership."* That statement is especially true in the home. God's Word has some very direct statements for husbands, fathers, and situations where a single parent has the main leadership role in the home. Think about the implications of Paul's words in Ephesians 6:4:

"And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Later in this lesson, we will study some specific applications of this verse, but God makes it very clear that He wants fathers involved in the parenting process. We all understand that parenting is not a piece of cake. In fact, parenting is a lot of hard work!

What are some words or phrases that you would use to describe the parenting process?

Godly leadership from the father is a key to having a home that pleases God. However, even if a father will not take the responsibility that God has placed on him, then one parent who is seeking to please God and be biblical is better than neither parent seeking to do what is right.

In this lesson, we want to lay a biblical foundation for the father's part in the parenting process.

I. The Father's Responsibility!

God has given fathers a very large piece of authority and responsibility as a parent. Since the father is also the *"head of the home"* (Ephesians 5:23 **"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church"**), it is the father who will stand before God and give an account for the leadership (or lack of it) that he provides in his home.

There are certain attitudes that a father cannot have about his responsibilities if he is going to please God in this important role. For example, what is wrong with the following ideas that a father may have about his parenting responsibilities?

- *"I work all day to provide for my family. I've earned the right to take it easy when I come home."*
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- *"I believe in parenting: I delegate it to my wife."*
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- *"I'm too busy to take the time to deal with these 'petty' issues like diapers, poor grades, etc.."*
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- *"My daddy didn't spend much time with me, and I turned out okay."*
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What are some reasons a father might say some of the statements above?

What do the following verses imply about a father's role or responsibility in the parenting process?

- Proverbs 1:8 **“Hear, my son, your father's instruction.”**

Implies: _____

- Proverbs 3:12 **“For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, even as a father, the son in whom he delights.”**

Implies: _____

- Proverbs 13:1 **“A wise son *accepts his father's discipline*, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.”**

Implies: _____

- Luke 1:17 **“And it is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, **TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**”**

Implies: _____

When it comes to child rearing in our culture, dads tend to neglect. Our culture does not train fathers to function biblically in their role. What are some modern examples of poorly trained fathers?

A father fulfilling his responsibilities has an impact on his ability to serve in leadership positions in the church. The qualifications for a deacon (and a pastor) are given in 1 Timothy 3.

- 1 Timothy 3:4-5 **“He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)”**
- 1 Timothy 3:12 **“Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.”**

Can a man biblically serve as deacon or pastor if his children are out of control? _____

Every man in the church ought to be growing to be the kind of leader described in 1 Timothy 3!

The point of this section is simple: A father cannot leave the rearing of the children to the mother. He may delegate some of the authority and responsibility, but the father is to be checking up on the process and growth of each person involved. The father should be very involved because he is ultimately responsible for what happens in the home.

II. The Details of a Father's Responsibility

A. Remember the goal.

The goal of this command (Ephesians 6:4) is POSITIVE, not negative.

It is too easy to get caught up in making sure a child doesn't do this or that! That would be a *negative* goal.

God's goal is a *positive* goal: **“Be bringing them up.”** This simply means to help them to please God by being like Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:28 **“And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.”**

A father doesn't “*slap the child back up on the tracks*” when the child makes mistakes. Instead, a father must “*lay the tracks*” of life in front of his child by offering a godly model in his own life and biblical direction and advice in all other areas.

B. Don't provoke a child to anger!

Please read the following verse very carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Ephesians 6:4 **“And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”**

Why would God “single out” fathers and direct these words to them?

It would be incorrect to say that mothers are “*excluded*” by Ephesians 6:4. The emphasis is to make it very clear to fathers that they are expected to provide the leadership in the parenting process.

Colossians 3:21 “**Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.**”

1. What these verses do NOT mean:

- Never oppose, cross, deny, or upset the child.

There are two examples from Scripture where the father failed to fulfill his God-given responsibility:

#1: *King David with his son Adonijah.*

1 Kings 1:6 “**His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, ‘Why have you done so?’**”

As a result, Adonijah wanted wrongfully to take David’s place as the king. 1 Kings 1:5 “**Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, ‘I will be king.’ So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him.**”

#2: *Eli, the High Priest, suffered for not rebuking his sons.*

1 Samuel 3:13 “**For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them.**”

2. What Colossians 3:21 and Ephesians 6:4 DO mean:

- Do not *provoke* a child to a *wrathful lifestyle*.
- Do not *exasperate* them and *discourage* them by taking away any hope of changing and doing right.

3. There are two things a father needs to know about these verses:

- 1) These instructions are NOT OPTIONAL. These verses are COMMANDS. A father is to obey them whether he feels like it or not or whether it is convenient for him.
- 2) These commands are also given in the PRESENT tense (continuous action). Do it and keep on doing it!

Summary: Rather than making Colossians 3 and Ephesians 6 say to a father, “*Do not upset them,*” the teaching is “*do not allow them to become habituated to sinful anger*” or to an “*impulsive lifestyle.*” {Specific examples of violating this command will be discussed under **III.**}

C. Recognize anger when you see it.

There are two kinds of anger:

1) Open rebellion (against God, parents, church, state, etc.)

What does this type of anger look like in every-day living?

2) Stubbornness, passive resentment, apathy, indifference, sub-par performance, and even silence.

Example: What are some different ways that “Johnny” can respond when asked to take out the garbage?

D. Avoiding the extremes

“**Bring them up**” is not passive; it requires action, and it requires effort. How would a “biblical parent” respond to each of the following extremes of parenting?

The Passive Parent:

- “*It’s no big deal. It’s just a passing phase.*”

Biblical response: _____

- “My child wouldn’t do that.”

Biblical response: _____

- “He’s too young to learn.”

Biblical response: _____

- “I know its wrong—but it was so cute.”

Biblical response: _____

The Impatient Parent

- “Why me?”

Biblical response: _____

- “I deserve a problem-free child.”

Biblical response: _____

- “This child has no right to bother me.”

Biblical response: _____

- “Why can’t he figure this out? What is so hard about this? He’s just not getting the point!”

Biblical response: _____

- “It’s not his fault.”

Biblical response: _____

E. What’s next? Building or rebuilding the relationship!

1. Ask God to help you understand your child(ren). Remember that each child is different.

- James 1:5 **“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”**

2. Be a goal-oriented father.

Don’t get caught up in simply stopping sinful thinking and action (“putting off”) and fail to remember your goal is to help your child to be more like Jesus Christ. Dealing with sinful thinking and action is just the first step—you have to replace the old habits (“put on”) with obedience to God’s Word.

3. When a child tests the parent the most, the child needs help.

- 1 John 4:11 **“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”**

4. Commend the character strengths.

- Romans 13:7 **“Render to all what is due them: . . . honor to whom honor is due.”**

How will commending a child’s character strengths help in the parenting process?

5. Be willing to ask forgiveness when you are wrong.

- Matthew 5:23-24 **“If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”**

6. Develop a God-consciousness in the child.

How will this help a child to avoid developing an angry lifestyle?

7. Teach the child special skills: do projects together.

8. Express love in ways your child can understand, as well as verbally.
- 1 John 3:18 **“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”**
- What are some things (routine and sacrificially) a father can do to show his love for his child?
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9. Be reasonable and sensitive to the needs around you.
- (NIV) Philippians 4:5 **“Let your gentleness be evident to all.”**
10. Consider how you can provoke your children to love and good works
- Hebrews 10:24 **“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”**
11. Communicate with them about problems, solutions, and the goal of parenting: All you do for them is for their benefit and for God’s glory and that parents will give an account to God for each decision.
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 **“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”**
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10 **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

III. Some Special Situations

Some families are fatherless due to illegitimacy, divorce, abandonment, or death. Children in these situations do not have to turn out badly. God has provided the grace to overcome in *all* circumstances.

- Psalm 146:9 **“The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow.”**
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 **And He (the Lord) said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.**

Additionally, God has provided the local church, which is to be ministering to the fatherless.

- James 1:27 **“This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”**

What are some things that other men in the church can do to reach out to a young person who is fatherless?

IV. 25 Ways to Provoke a Child to Anger (from How to Help an Angry Child, by Lou Priolo)

1. Lack of marital harmony	14. Not having time to talk
2. Establishing/maintaining a child-centered home	15. Not praising the child
3. Modeling sinful anger	16. Failing to keep promises
4. Consistently disciplining in anger	17. Chastising him in front of others
5. Scolding	18. Giving too much freedom
6. Being inconsistent with discipline	19. Not giving enough freedom
7. Having double standards	20. Making fun of the child
8. Being legalistic (Making man-made rules equal to God’s law, or a test of spirituality)	21. Abusing them physically
9. Not admitting when you are wrong	22. Calling them names
10. Constantly finding fault	23. Having unrealistic expectations
	24. Showing favoritism toward one child over

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Parents reversing God given roles 12. Not listening to the child's opinion or side of the story 13. Comparing children to others 	<p style="text-align: center;">another</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Employing child-training methodologies that are inconsistent with God's Word
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Application: Take the following steps:

- 1) Identify the specific ways you have been provoking your child to anger.
- 2) Confess these sins to God. Ask His forgiveness and the child's forgiveness.
- 3) Develop a plan with your child's assistance (if possible) to replace those sinful behaviors with biblical ones.

25 Ways to Provoke a Child to Anger

(from How to Help an Angry Child, by Lou Priolo)

1. Lack of marital harmony
 - Genesis 2:24 “For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”
2. Establishing/maintaining a child-centered home
 - Colossians 1:18 “He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.”
3. Modeling sinful anger
 - Proverbs 22:24-25 “Do not associate with a man *given* to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Lest you learn his ways, And find a snare for yourself.”
4. Consistently disciplining in anger
 - James 1:20 “For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”
5. Scolding
 - Ephesians 4:29 “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, that it may give grace to those who hear.”
6. Being inconsistent with discipline
 - Proverbs 13:24 “He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.”
7. Having double standards
 - James 1:8 “A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.”
8. Being legalistic (Making man-made rules equal to God’s law, or a test of spirituality)
 - Colossians 2:20-22 “If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ‘Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!’ (which all *refer to* things destined to perish with the using)-- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?”
9. Not admitting when you are wrong
 - Proverbs 28:13 “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.”
10. Constantly finding fault
 - Matthew 7:5 “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”
11. Parents reversing God given roles
 - Ephesians 5:23 “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.”
12. Not listening to the child’s opinion or side of the story
 - Proverbs 18:13 “He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.”
13. Comparing children to others
 - 2 Corinthians 10:12 “For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.”
14. Not having time to talk
 - Ephesians 5:16 “Making the most of your time, because the days are evil.”
15. Not praising the child

- Romans 13:7 “Render to all what is due them: . . . honor to whom honor.”

16. Failing to keep promises

- Matthew 5:33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.’”

17. Chastising him in front of others

- Matthew 18:15 “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”

18. Giving too much freedom

- Proverbs 29:15 “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.”

19. Not giving enough freedom

- Matthew 23:4 “And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with *so much as* a finger.”

20. Making fun of the child

- Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind one to another.”

21. Abusing them physically

- James 1:20 “For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”

22. Calling them names

- Ephesians 4:29 “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

23. Having unrealistic expectations

- 2 Peter 3:18 “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

24. Showing favoritism toward one child over another

- James 2:9 “But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors.”

25. Employing child-training methodologies that are inconsistent with God’s Word

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Application: Take the following steps:

- 1) Identify the specific ways you have been provoking your child to anger.
- 2) Confess these sins to God. Ask His forgiveness and the child’s forgiveness.
- 3) Develop a plan with your child’s assistance (if possible) to replace those sinful behaviors with biblical ones.