



## Foundations of Faith A Biblical Approach to Parenting #4 Teaching Your Children

What do you think of when you hear the word “teach” or “teaching” or “instruction”? For some, teaching means “cramming in the facts” or “lecturing” students about a specific subject. Well, while that may qualify as “teaching” for some, that is not what God was talking about 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.”***

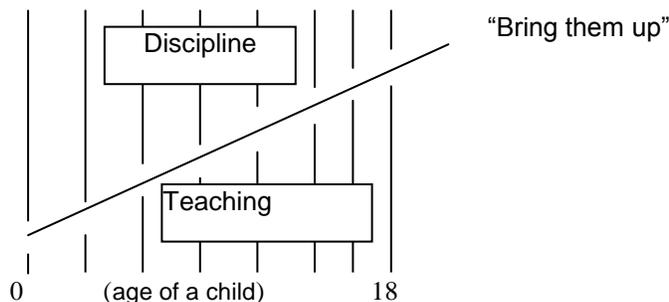
The word for “*instruction*” simply means “*putting into the mind*” or “*building inner convictions.*” Specific methods for teaching our children will be discussed later in the lesson, but one point needs to be made here: Each parent has a responsibility to teach his/her child what is right and wrong, to help a child to build some inner convictions based on God’s Word and not simply on what Dad or Mom says. The issue is not, “*Are you a teacher?*” The issue is “*What kind of teacher are you?*” Parents can be hopeful because it is “*the instruction of the Lord.*” that they are to be giving. God stands ready to give all the grace, wisdom, and insight that parents need to get the job done!

Thankfully, teaching a child God’s Word does not take a college degree. In fact, what are some **basic** things that should be true of a parent if he or she is to fulfill Ephesians 6:4?

---

If you had to choose which typically gets more attention in the average home, discipline or teaching, which would you choose? Probably, discipline would be the correct choice. However, there must be a balance of discipline and teaching if a child is to grow up to be like Jesus Christ.

What observations could a parent make about the following chart that illustrates Ephesians 6:4?



Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Consider these questions:

1) What will happen if a child receives all discipline and no teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) What will happen if a child receives all teaching and no discipline?

---

In this study, we need to answer three questions: “*Why do parents need to teach their children?*”, “*How do parents teach?*”, and “*What do parents teach?*”

## I. Why Do Parents Need To Teach Their Children?

- A. A parent is responsible to God and must give an account.

How do the following verses help parents understand their responsibility to teach their children?

Deuteronomy 4:9 “***Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.***”

Psalms 127:3-4 “***Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.***”

---

---

- B. Each child has a sin nature and therefore needs to be taught.

Romans 5:12 “***Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.***”

Proverbs 22:15 “***Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.***”

Note: When you hear the term “total depravity,” it does not mean that a child is as bad as he/she could be, but that *every aspect* of that person (thinking, motives, emotions, actions, etc.) are affected by the curse of sin. As a result, Proverbs warns “*a child left to himself brings his mother to shame.*”

- C. God’s way of life is best and essential for a blessed life.

Psalms 1:1-3 “***How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.***”

---

---

- D. A parent is a “disciple-maker.”

Matthew 28:19-20 says, “***Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.***” These verses have discipling applications to the church AND to the home!

Why is the home both the *starting* place and *most effective* place for discipleship?

---

---

Unsaved children are to be won to Christ and then disciplined as they seek to become like Christ. Parents must help their children to think through decisions from God’s perspective so when the child is on his/her own, he/she will make biblical choices.

Regardless of disability, handicap, personality, family history, or family make-up, none of these issues change the disciple-making responsibilities of every Bible-believing parent.

What are some potential consequences if parents do not teach their children?

---



## II. How Do Parents Teach Their Children?

Training disciples requires time and involvement, modeling the teaching—not just giving information. Deuteronomy 6 emphasizes using the *everyday* opportunities to teach about God and about life from God’s point of view.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 **“And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”**

What are the times mentioned in these verses when a parent can do some teaching?

---

---

Here are some specific ways a parent can teach a child:

### A. By question and answer

Parents need to help their children think through an issue biblically by asking good questions and working at helping a child to “sharpen” his/her answers. For example, a parent may ask questions like these:

- *What are some possible reasons God allowed this trial?*
- *What is going to happen when you have a job and don’t obey authority?*
- *What did your friend do to make you think that about him/her?*
- *What’s going to happen if you make that decision? What will happen if you don’t?*

### B. By normal life situations

Think about how the following situations could be used as “teaching opportunities” by a parent:

1. Crises such as school problems (fights, peer pressure to drink or be sexually active, rebellion)

Teach: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Considering options, decisions (which college, taking a job, best use of time, places to go)

Teach: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Contentment versus complaining (handling materialism, coveting certain clothes, etc.)

Teach: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Dating and friendships (offending someone or being offended, personal dating standards, etc.)

Teach: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Other situations a parent might have an opportunity to do some teaching:

- *Work situations (work ethic, working conditions, expectations, etc.)*
- *Homework and school projects (completing assignments on time, being organized)*
- *Birth of a sibling (opportunity to serve, be a good example, etc.)*
- *Vacations (who gets to do what and when, places to go, purpose of the trip, cost, etc.)*
- *Death of a loved one or physical illnesses*

### C. By your example

Philippians 4:9 **“The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.”**

How would a parent’s bad example affect a child’s behavior and thinking in the following areas?

Anger: \_\_\_\_\_

Giving: \_\_\_\_\_

Thankfulness: \_\_\_\_\_

Returning good for evil: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Parents should present a “unified front” in teaching and discipline. Genesis 2:24 says, **“For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”** Children need to see Dad and Mom agreeing to come down on God’s side in an issue. If parents differ, the differences should be discussed privately. If that is not possible, then parents must model how to solve problems biblically in front of the children.

D. By formally conducting a family “worship time”

Here are some guidelines to follow:

1. Be sure to get the spouse’s help – communicate about the best time, methods, etc.
2. Settle any unresolved conflicts before you begin (Matthew 5:23-24).
3. Choose a good time along and have some alternatives in mind.
4. Provide something for each age.
5. Study – prepare to talk about some specific verses that will help to address some specific needs and goals in mind. List each child’s strengths and weakness. Praise the strengths and offer practical suggestions for changing the weaknesses.
6. Make sure there is a variety of worship (singing, testimonies, Bible verses, current events, etc.).
7. See this time as only a part of the whole parenting process and not the “cure all” for every spiritual problem.

Note: Call the church office for suggestions for family and personal devotional guides.

E. Parents can get help from the church and others.

Teaching responsibility may be delegated, but accountability for the teaching remains with the parents. Whether academic education takes place in the home, private school, or public school, the parents remain primarily responsible. Even though the Sunday School may teach spiritual lessons, the home remains the *primary* site for biblical instruction.

### III. What Is A Parent To Teach?

Joshua 1:8 **“This book of the law [i.e. God’s Word] shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”**

A. Salvation and Christian growth

1. How to be saved – Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; Romans 10:9-13
2. How to grow – James 1:13-15; Ephesians 4:22-24; Romans 6:11-13; 1 Timothy 4:7

B. Foundational truths

1. There is a God (building a “God-consciousness” within the child).

There already exists a “*God-consciousness*” within each person (Romans 2:12-16). Parents simply have the responsibility to *cultivate* the awareness that there is a God and that He is our Creator and Judge.

2. The Word of God is the standard of truth (determines right from wrong).

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Psalm 119:9-11; John 17:17

3. Someday, each person will stand and give an account to God.

- 2 Corinthians 5:10 (*Judgment Seat of Christ*—for all believers)
- Revelation 20:11-15 (*Great White Throne*—for all the unsaved)

C. Practical truths for everyday life

The following breakdown of ages and focus comes from Shepherding a Child’s Heart (Tedd Tripp) and The Age of Opportunity (Paul Tripp). However, the “*primary focus*” of each age group is simply “*the*

*big picture*” or the “*key area*” to be emphasized. There is some degree of overlap of emphasis for each age.

Parents can take hope: God didn't write two books for a guide to pleasing Him – one for young people or teens and another for adults. The same Bible God intends for the parent is the same Bible He intends for the youth.

1. Teens (13-18: 18 being considered as when a child would leave his/her home permanently)

Focus: **Opportunity in the struggle!**

Proverbs has much to say about a “youth” – that could be a person of any age group other than an adult. The emphasis on areas in which a youth struggles gets repeated over and over. Therefore, parents ought to be especially concerned about these common struggles and seek to help their teens to overcome them.

a. *To really hunger for wisdom and correction*

This is seen in the struggle of the “foolish” son and the “wise son.” Parents need to teach their teens the value of seeing life from God’s point of view and how correction for a wrong can teach them something that will change their lives forever and help them be more effective.

b. *To see the “spirit of the law” and not just the letter of the law*

Example: A teen asks if he/she can go to a friend’s house and the parents agree. The teen goes, but after arriving, he/she leaves and goes to another friend’s house. The parents didn’t say he/she couldn’t, but neither did they grant permission to go elsewhere. The teen becomes “baffled” when the parents get upset after Mom tries to call him/her at the friend’s house where they thought he went.

c. *To make wise choices in the area of friendships and companions*

The teen needs to see his/her identity in Christ and not in acceptance by others.

- Galatians 1:10 ***“For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”***
- Psalm 119:63 ***“I am a companion of all those who fear Thee, and of those who keep Thy precepts.”***
- 1 Corinthians 15:33 ***“Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’”***

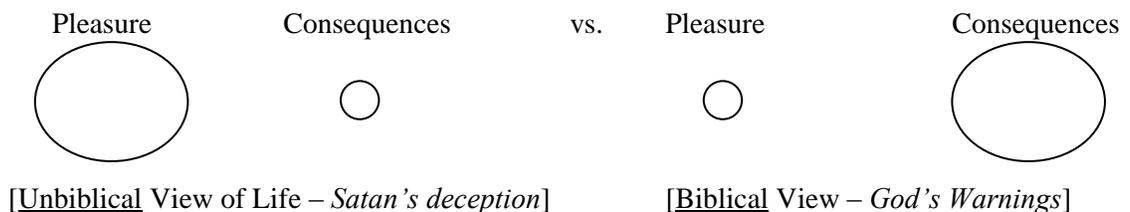
d. *To be strong against sexual temptation*

Proverbs has much to say about avoiding the immoral person. In addition, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 is a very helpful passage along with Romans 13:14 and James 1:13-15. Remember: *Simply being a “virgin” doesn’t meet Christ’s call to purity of heart and loving your neighbor!*

e. *To develop and maintain an “eternal” view of life (long-range) vs. the “immediate”*

Parents can help their teen look at the consequences of a choice (harvest mentality – i.e. you reap what you sow). Also, parents can help their teen to have an “investment in eternity” mentality. Teens need to see the circle of consequences for sin as being *larger* than the circle of pleasure.

Moses is a great example of this -- Hebrews 11:24 ***“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”***



1 John 2:15-17 ***“Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.”***

f. *To consider their actions in light of heart issues (inner man issues or “idols of the heart” - Lesson #2)*

Proverbs 4:23 *“Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.”*

2. Youth (age 6-12)

Focus: **Character qualities**

This could also be called the age of communication. Children in this age group are capable of learning quickly and learning a lot. Their communication and ability to understand are at a very high level. They have a lot of questions and can interact and apply truth. Habits can be quickly established and/or broken.

The following is a brief list of qualities parents can emphasize in the life of their young person (cf. Lesson #2 for a complete list of character qualities):

- a. Attentiveness = Showing respect for a person by giving undivided attention to what he is saying

Opposite: Unconcern

- b. Initiative = Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it

Opposite: Unresponsiveness

- c. Contentment = Realizing God has provided everything I need for my present happiness

Opposite: Covetousness

- d. Gratefulness = Making known to God and to others in what ways they have benefited my life

Opposite: Unthankful

Note: In the event that parents have not established proper respect and obedience toward authority in the child, there will need to be some remedial work done.

3. Children (1<sup>st</sup> 5 years)

Focus: **Authority** (being a person under authority)

Ephesians 6:1-2 **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise).”**

- a. The circle of blessing (or under the umbrella of authority)

- **Obedience** = submission to God’s authority that causes a child to do what he/she is told – immediately and without excuse, complaint, or question.
- **Honor** = submission to God’s authority that causes a child to speak to his/her parents with respect for their role as God’s agent for change, direction, and discipline.

Note: Children should not be allowed to talk in the “command mode” to parents, call them names, speak in an unloving or bitter tone of voice, or show facial expressions that communicate disrespect or a lack of submission.

- b. The implications of failing to be under authority

Under God’s Authority = **Protection**

*Obedience*  
*Honor*  
*Humility*  
*Spiritual Growth*  
*Learning*  
*Grace*  
*Stability/Assurance*

Not Under God’s Authority = **Reproofs of Life**

*Disobedience*  
*Dishonor*  
*Pride*  
*No Spiritual Growth*  
*Stubbornness*  
*Wrath*  
*Uncertainty/Fear*

## Additional Truths to Teach

Remember: No one can change ten things at once. Look over the list and pick 2-3 of the ones the child(ren) need(s) the most over the next several weeks. Work at communicating those truths and build upon that process. All of these are important, but a parent can't teach all of these every day to every child. Of course, parents need to model these principles to their child(ren).

1. To be attentive, obedient, and to honor parents – Ephesians 6:1-3
2. To understand important truths
3. To be good stewards – 1 Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 25
4. To communicate to solve problems – Ephesians 4:15, 25-32
5. To make decisions based on God's Word – Joshua 1:8
6. To handle temptation biblically – Ephesians 6:10; Matthew 4; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8
7. To love and serve others – Philippians 2:5-11; 1 John 3:18
8. To begin the day with praise – Psalm 118:24
9. To handle trial biblically – James 1:2-4; Hebrew 12:5-15; 1 Peter 1
10. To return good for evil – Romans 12:17-21
11. To seek and grant forgiveness – Matthew 5:23-24; Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 7:1-5; Matthew 18:15-17
12. To deny himself/herself – Luke 9:23
13. To be content – 1 Timothy 6:6
14. To make disciples – Matthew 28:18-20
15. To understand the place of the local church & pastors – Ephesians 4:11-16
16. To be a good spouse and parent – 1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:23-25, 33; Genesis 2:18
17. To respect and obey authority – 1 Peter 2:13-24; Romans 13:1-7