

Family Matters



Ephesians 6:4 "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, instead, bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Review: The child's duty is to obey. The parent's duty is to teach children obedience in the context of godly nurturing, without exasperating them in the process.

What discipline (chastisement) is not:

- verbal abuse, out-of-control unrighteous anger, or empty threats
- physical abuse
- psychological warfare, manipulation, intimidation, emotional abuse
- negotiation, begging, reasoning, or nagging

Warning Against Abusive Authority

Ephesians 6:4 "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger..."

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

Hebrews 12:15 "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

- "provoke to wrath" "exasperate" "embitter" "enrage" "aggravate"
- Outward/open anger - smoldering/seething/submerged/hidden
- Ridged or domineering, "overbearing" rule/authority that drives a family to anger, despair, resentment, bitterness, and withdrawal.
- **Roman society** – dad was king. A newborn child was placed at the father's feet to determine its fate. Most devastating abuse is that of neglect – treated as if they don't exist.
"patria potestas" (the father's power/patriarch)
- Issue of stewardship (–v- dictatorial rule)
- Regenerated parents still struggle with fleshly habits/desires
Romans 7:15-24
- Anger in the child may be the result of the sin of the child.
- Anger may be the result of deliberate aggravation or neglect on the part of the parents. (intentional or unintentional)
- There is a danger of children in "Christian" families being more hostile to the things of God because of hypocrisy in the home (Galatians 6:7-10 We reap what we sow).
- Discipline should never try to beat the child into submission or be the use of brute force.

Faith Of The Fatherless, Paul Vitz

Many of the most influential atheists of the 1600-1900 were men whose own fathers were either abusive or absent (Nietzsche, Hitler, Hume, Russell, Sartre, Camus, Freud, Voltaire, Stalin, Mao Zedong). Those who had a good example of a God-fearing father influenced culture for good (Pascal, Burke, Wilberforce, Schweitzer, Barth, Mendelssohn) Our view of our earthly father directly effects our view of our Heavenly Father.

Question: What are ways we as parents exasperate our children and cause them to be embittered?

Cause Of Anger In Children:

(Heart of Anger, Lou Priolo)

(Successful Christian Parenting, John MacArthur)

1. Lack of marital harmony/divorce/resentment
Hebrews 12:15 Root of bitterness/many may be defiled
Malachi 2:15 "Guard your spirit and do not break faith with the wife of your youth..." "seeking godly offspring"
Question: What are ways in which your marriage has not been in harmony? If someone asked your children, what would they say?
2. Little or no discipline or boundaries/neglect/impulsive
Proverbs 29:15 "A child who gets his own way brings shame." (A child-centered home)
Hebrews 12:7,8 "For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons."
Question: In what ways have we not given appropriate or needed discipline?
3. Unrighteous anger modeled in the home, out-of-control parents disciplining in their anger, or harsh, abusive, or excessive punishment
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."
(Proverbs 15:18; 29:11,22; 17:19; 14:17; Psalms 37:8)
Ephesians 4:26,27,29,31 "Be angry, but do not sin..."
James 1:20 "For man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

Ecclesiastes 7:9 "Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, for anger resides in the bosom of fools."

Galatians 5:20

Colossians 3:8-13

Question: What are you modeling at home regarding conflict resolution? What is your personal plan to disciplined your children not in anger?

4. Put downs, sarcasm, scolding, venting anger, nagging, labeling ("you always" "you never" "you usually"), name calling, demeaning tone of voice/body language/ haughty eyes, belittling, mocking, ridicule, teasing
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."

Prov. 10:19,32; 12:18,25; 13:3; 15:23,28; 16:23; 17:27,28; 18:21; 28; 29:11

James 3:2-11

1 Peter 3:8-11

(We say hurtful things to our family we would never think of saying to anyone else.)

Question: What are some words you have said or things you have done which have been unwholesome?

5. Inconsistent discipline/different parental standards/ unjust discipline/unclear expectations

Proverbs 18:17

Question: How have you been inconsistent in your discipline?

6. Double standards (hypocritical – expecting from the child that which the parent is personally unwilling to do.)

Philippians 4:9; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Matthew 23:3

Question: Is there any confusing double standards in your home?

7. Unwillingness to listen

James 1:19 "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."

Proverbs 18:13 "He who answers before listening that is his folly and his shame."

Question: Have you been a good listener?

8. Favoritism or comparison among siblings (gifts/privilege)
“Why can’t you be like your brother...?”
* Don’t use one child’s virtues or talents as the standard against which to measure another’s performance.
Results: bitterness, trickery, deceit, jealousy, tension
Isaac favored Esau over Jacob – Genesis 25:28; 27:
Jacob preferred Joseph over brothers – Genesis 37
2 Cor. 10:12
Question: How have you shown preference or favoritism for one child over the next? Have you been guilty of comparison?
9. Parents not admitting their wrong or asking forgiveness
Issue of pride and self denial
James 5:16
Question: When is the last time you admitted you were wrong and said you were sorry?
10. Negative criticism/discouragement/lack of approval/
being overly critical/condemning/accusing/judgmental/
never feeling encouraged/limited praise
“No matter what I do, I can’t seem to please them.”
Proverbs 16:24; 15:23; 19:11
Question: How are you praising your children? How are you being an encouragement to them? Do you focus more on what they do wrong than what they do right? How have you focused only on the negative behavior of your children? What are some things you can praise your children for doing? List 5 positive qualities in your kids.
11. Broken promises
Proverbs 20:25 “It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly, and only later to consider his vows.” (6:2)
Hosea 10:4 “They make many promises, take false oaths, and make agreements, therefore lawsuits spring up like poisonous weeds.”
Proverbs 26:19 “I was only joking.”
Proverbs 13:12 “Hope deferred makes the heart sick...”
Psalms 15:4 “Honor your word even when it hurts.”
Matthew 5:37 “Yes be yes, no be no” (James 5:12)
Question: What promises have you not kept to your children that you need to ask forgiveness?

12. Overprotection/lack of trust/assuming the worst/
stifling/limiting their chance for freedom because
of fear/worry (Genesis 29-31 Laban and Jacob)
* need for balance: protection/space to grow up
* children need opportunities to make mistakes
* greater trust = greater freedom
Question: How much freedom do you allow your
children to have?
13. Overindulgence/excessively permissive/spoiled
* children given too much freedom feel insecure and
unloved. (Prov. 13:24)
* parents who lavish the child with things may try to
compensate for the lack of time together.
* parents who indulge or coddle their misbehaving
children are actually displaying unloving behavior
toward them.
Question: How have you spoiled your kids rather than
giving them what they disparately needed?
14. Unrealistic expectations/pressure to achieve
1 Thessalonians 2:11,12 "We dealt with each of you as a
father deals with his own children, encouraging,
comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of
God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory."
"No matter what I do, it never satisfies my parents."
Question: Do you have any unrealistic expectations
you have placed on your children? How do you
communicate to your children you are pleased
with what they do accomplish? Do your kids have
fear of failure which keeps them from trying their
best?
15. Neglect/feeling unwanted/an intrusion/interference/
unloved/failing to show affection/spend time with you/
communicating indifference/unconcern/disinterest/
conditional love – "I will love you if..."
2 Samuel 14:24
1 Corinthians 13:4-8; 1 Peter 4:8
Proverbs 10:12
Question: How are you communicating you love your
kids? Have you tried to lavish them with gifts to
make up for the lack of time with you?

16. Public chastisement or embarrassment

17. Questioning a child's judgment

18. Using Scripture as a club to verbally beat up the child.

"If you beat up your children with God's Word, they will shrink from it when they are young and flee from it when they live independently. We must be sensitive to times when our children feel overwhelmed by us verbally. Bring God's word with care and compassion, even when it speaks to correct or rebuke."
(Instructing A Child's Heart, Tripp, p. 21)

Make sure you have balance between law and grace and are not living a life of spiritualizing everything while you yourself are living in hypocrisy. Kids see the inconsistency or contradiction between what you say and what you do. (Matthew 23:3,4,13,23-28) Make sure we are listening to our own preaching.

Other: