



Parents, Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for their children when they still live in the home. Eph. 6:1-3.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.” (Ephesians 6:1-3, NASB)

In Ephesians 6:4, “Fathers” actually refers to the parents, not just fathers. They are the basic authority in their children’s lives, both mothers and fathers.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4, NASB)

Isaiah 58:6 is an idiom for a nation not respecting the authority of their peers. Parents with perceptive ability but no norms and standards are no good. Why are their feet swift to run to evil? Mental attitude sins have wiped out their norms and standards. Isaiah 59:6-7.

““Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6, NASB)

“Their webs will not become clothing, Nor will they cover themselves with their works; Their works are works of iniquity, And an act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, Devastation and destruction are in their highways.” (Isaiah 59:6-7, NASB)

The Test of Parenthood

What are your norms and standards? Can you administer discipline, train, and incite obedience from your children and still remain fair? When children are out of line, they must be evaluated on the basis of your norms and standards. You must also have all the facts in the case. A person is innocent until proven guilty. If discipline is needed, there must be the justice approach at times and the grace approach at times. This is a test of the character of the father and the mother.

Whether we parents like it or not, we have a tendency to live by our emotions. Maybe noisy children get on your nerves. Maybe when they get too noisy, you just pounce on them. Have you let your emotions get the better of you? There may be nothing wrong with the child’s behavior. The child opens their mouth and the next thing they know, you are on them and punishing them because you have become irritated and emotional. Children do irritating things that are not wrong things. What turns off a child more than any other thing is a father or mother who are unjust.

For example, when a parent handles their children emotionally, then the children grow up with emphasis on emotion and a resentment of authority. You take a father who is very emotional and lives by his emotions rather than by living by being rational and just with his son or his daughter and there will be problems. Let’s consider the son. Let’s say the father is very brutal and quick tempered and has close cropped hair. Every time his son does something that irritates him, he slaps him. When that boy gets to a certain age what is the first thing he is going to do? Well, he associates short hair with his father and he hates his father and resents him because his father was never fair. He is going to grow hair down to his shoulders. His father always went around with big hammy fists, so he is going to carry flowers and be passive. He resents authority. Why? Because his basic authority in life has been his father and his



mother and they have always been unjust.

Why are they unjust? They have no norms or standards of their own or they have lived by their emotions. Parents who are constantly overcome with mental attitude sins are not capable of rearing children. Mental attitude sins are the greatest enemy of the human race. This destroys children. They never catch on to authority. They are never treated in justice. So, we have emotions, or lack of norms and standards causing the child to be exasperated.

In Ephesians 6:4, “provoke” is the present active imperative of παροργίζω (parorgizō) and means to exasperate your children. Parents, don’t do this! It means to arouse anger by unfair or unjust treatment. Children will develop a lack of respect for authority if they are not treated fairly and justly. Children who are punished must always understand why they are being punished. You can’t blow up at a child, go screaming at them, scare the daylights out of them, punish them, and expect them to respect your authority. They will sneak every time.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4, NASB)

Parents must calm down and give their children a trial. No child should ever be spanked without a trial, but all children should be spanked as punishment to fit the infraction. But they should never be spanked until they understand why they are being spanked. So, if you are the type of parent who runs around screaming at your children for no good reason, they will have little respect for authority.

How can you give them fair treatment if you don’t have any norms or standards in the right lobe of your soul? Or, if you do, they are wiped out by mental attitude sins. Take, for example, a parent drinking around the house. The kid does something to irritate you and you wipe him out. Once you have knocked out norms and standards, you are an animal. You cannot be an animal and be a parent. There are other ways to knock out these norms and standards or to render them useless - negative volition toward Bible doctrine.

In Ephesians 6:4, “but bring them up” is the present active imperative of ἐκτρέφω (ektrephō) and means to nourish up to maturity, to train to maturity. There is one serious problem about training to maturity. Suppose the man or woman is immature or still a child. It is hard to train a child to maturity if you are immature yourself.

There are at least two good things about having both parents around. If the mother is highly emotional and blows her cork very quickly and tries to get her way with the children or tries to get them to shut up by tantrums, the husband can step in, calm things down, and take control of the situation. The father can handle the mother and the kids. This can also work when the father gets emotional with the kids and the mother can step in and smooth things over and take control of the situation. In this way, respect for authority is maintained. There is a check and balance system called the husband and the wife.

Parental Responsibility

There are three areas of parental responsibility in connection with *ektrephō*. In the physical realm, this means that parents provide food, shelter, clothing, grooming, no sweets, very little pastries, entertainment, recreation, and cleanliness. In the mental realm, parents are to provide a mental vocabulary by which your children can think. Obviously, if your whole vocabulary is “hell” and “damn,” they are not going to be very good thinkers. The words they hear around the house generally are the words on which they are going to start their thinking.

They have to be taught how to concentrate, like the 28 laws of study. The initial academic training of a



child is at home, not at school. You teach your child this in their pre-school years. You should teach and stress respect for authority, respect for the rights of others, respect for the volition of others, and respect for the property of others.

When children are permitted to go into someone's home and are corrected by being patted on the head and told, "Johnny, don't do that," this is very bad. If a child has sticky hands and puts them all over the drapes, etc. it is not his fault, it is the parent's fault. The child does not know any better.

In the spiritual realm, this is only for Christian parents, evangelism of the children belongs to the parents not to the Sunday school teacher, the pastor or the evangelist. This should be followed by communication of Bible doctrine. The parents should be very careful in selecting a local church and the parents should dictate which church to attend, not the children.

There are children who pick their own churches. They pick it on the basis of young people's programs. Children need Bible doctrine. Entertainment is a detail of life. Doctrine is the heart of life and is the basis for the mastery of the details of life. Churches were never designed to entertain young people. They were designed to train them in doctrine.

Two types of children leave doctrinal churches. Those who are plus Bible doctrine and minus the details of life. Those who are minus Bible doctrine and plus the details of life. The latter are flops.

One of the most detrimental things around a big church is a youth program. It is not neutral either. It destroys desire for learning Bible doctrine. The idea of bringing kids in on an entertainment basis and firing in doctrine doesn't do it. No doctrine and lots of entertainment makes Jack a dull boy. Parents are responsible for entertaining their children, not churches. You can destroy a local church with a youth program.

In Ephesians 6:4, "discipline" is παιδεία (paideia) and means the whole training and education of children including the cultivation of mind, morals, and manners and employs for this purpose commands and admonitions, reproof and punishment. It also includes the training and care of the body.

Training in manners involves verbal and sometimes physical admonition. For example, when the child reached too far for the salt at the dinner table, the father may first try a verbal warning and if not obeyed, then a slap to the back of the reaching hand. The father should then instruct the child to say, "Would you please pass the salt, sir." This is *paideia*.

Another example would be when a boy slaps his sister. The father or mother should say, "You never touch a woman. Do you hear me!?" The boy may have to be grabbed by the hair to get his attention. He then understands he is never to slap her again. This is *paideia*. Some children must be trained the hard way.

In Ephesians 6:4, "instruction" is νουθεσία (nouthesia) and means to admonish, to exhort. Some children learn the easy way with verbal admonitions. Some children can be trained to say "Please pass the salt" and that was that. He never reached for it. This is what you can teach by way of principle and example to your children. Norms and standards taught by principle is verbal communication without physical discipline. You must place principles into the minds of your children, teaching them about privacy, freedom, the flag, the evils of tyranny, thoughtfulness, good manners, etc.

In Ephesians 6:4, "of the Lord" means to do it as unto the Lord. Parents are not to be ruled by their children. For example, when a child brings home some report, the parents may change churches or jobs or locale on the basis of such a report without objectively confirming its contents and basis for that content. That's too bad. Also, parents may protect their children from something that is a responsibility



in life, like the military.

A teenage boy today who is out of line will often have parents who will go to the school and say it is the fault of the school. A police officer comes to the door and says the kid has stolen two cars and wrecked one of them. The parents take the side of their boy against the officer. It is all the fault of the police. “My little Johnny wouldn’t do this!” Parents must rule children so that when children become parents, they will perpetuate principles that make a nation great and stable.