

“A Charge to Parents – Part 2”
Colossians 3:20
(Preached at Trinity, November 18, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last week I began directing your attention upon the duty of parents towards their children. It is in the context of the effect of Gospel upon the lives of the redeemed. Paul is reminding us that the Christians life is lived in the light of Christ.
Colossians 3:17 NAU - "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."
2. Beginning with **Verse 18** Paul describes the practical effect of God's transforming grace upon the family – wives & husbands, children & parents, slaves & masters.
3. Paul began with the institution of marriage – the relationship of husbands and wives, Then he turned to the duty of children to their parents.
Paul gives the command, "Children, be obedient" in the imperative.
Then he adds, "for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."
4. Then he turns to the duty of parents toward their children.
Paul's charge is in the imperative: "do not exasperate your children"
Ephesians 6:4 NAU - "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger"
5. Our actions have a tremendous effect upon our children. Paul says, "Do not exasperate them, do not frustrate them, do not provoke them, do not discourage them. Paul is using this expression to describe bringing a child to exasperation or frustration. Such a condition will lead a child to discouragement that leads to anger. Lacking the ability to express themselves rationally they act out with misbehavior.
6. There are no perfect parents. Raising children takes great measures of God's grace. This is why the greatest instruction I can give you is to pray fervently. God works in the lives of our children in ways that are far beyond us. But God expects us to follow Biblical principles as we continually direct our children to Christ.
7. The Biblical instruction here is "do not exasperate your children"
As I shared last week, I want to set before you 10 ways we can exasperate and frustrate our children. Last week we looked at the first three.
 1. You will exasperate your children by failing to maintain your position as parent
 2. You will exasperate your children by over protection
 3. You will exasperate your children by showing favoritism
8. This morning I want to set before you other ways you can exasperate your children – ways you can frustrate and provoke your children to anger.
9. We ended last week with the third way – showing favoritism and preference for one of your children over the rest.
This morning we'll continue with the fourth way –

- IV. You will exasperate your children by over indulgence
- A. This is a great indicator of our affluence
1. Even before birth we have “reveal” parties.
 2. Birthday parties are social events
 3. Moms spend their days chauffeuring between one activity and another thinking this is the mark of good parenting. The term “soccer moms” has become a part of the American lingo.
 4. They want their kids to be most popular. Their kids have to have the latest style of clothes, the latest electronic gadget.
 5. The children are the center of attention. They are doted upon, pampered, and made to think the world exists to fill their desires.
 6. Parents spend more time playing with their kids than training them. This is true even in Christian homes where far less attention is given to their souls than to their physical desires.
 7. The pampered child sees himself as the center of the universe. This will result in endless frustration as he grows up and faces the real world
- B. In the environment of the home of over indulgence, the greatest attention is usually given to worldly interests with little attention upon their souls
1. For some its sports, or gymnastics, or dance
 2. Your children need your spiritual leadership. It is more than just bringing them to church. You are their spiritual teacher. It is sad to see some parents looking to youth groups to do their work.
 3. The greatest thing for your child is give them a home where Christ is the center of everything and the children are shown their sinful weakness and need of a great Savior.
- V. You will exasperate your children by maintaining unrealistic high expectations
- A. Some parents are never satisfied
1. The child can never do well enough and great successes are ignored as insignificant.
 2. Failures result in harsh reaction
 3. You must resist the impulse of competing with other parents and their children.
 4. You cannot relive your lives through the lives of your children pressuring them to do things you were unable to do. We must not use our children as a means of satisfying our own pride.
 - a. Some parents want their children to model good behavior because it makes *them* look good. Do you want your children to behave a certain way because of your own pride?
 - b. Do you tend to look down upon other parents because their children aren't as good as yours?
- B. You need to allow your children to be children
1. Carefully guard against robbing your child of his childhood.
 2. Remember, childhood is a wonderful time that can never be repeated. If you rob your child of this time they will resent it their entire life.
 3. You can do this by piling on too much responsibility. This is especially true of older children caring for the younger. Children must be allowed to be children.

- C. As a parent you must know your child well
1. I stressed before the importance of a man knowing his wife. The Godly man does not press more upon his wife than she is able to bear.
 2. Godly parents must know their children.
You must know their aptitudes—their strengths and weaknesses. Your child is a unique person. You need to know each child.
 3. You must be sensitive to the various states of their development and base your expectations accordingly.
 - a. They don't all crawl or walk at the same age
 - b. They don't all talk at the same age or with the same clarity
 - c. Different children have different attention spans. I'm not saying you should overlook continual carelessness, but you must be wise to recognize their immaturity.
 - d. Some children have amazingly high levels of activity. They literally find it almost impossible to sit still. You must not have an unreasonable expectation that they should behave like an adult.
 4. Not every child will be good at sports. Not every child will excel academically. Know your child's gifts and limitations.
 5. A child should never be made to feel he is never good enough to meet your expectations. Unrealistic expectations result in frustration and anger.
 6. What a wonderful model we have with our Heavenly Father who shows such pity upon our immaturity. The sweet mercies of the Gospel should permeate your home.
 - a. Samuel Bolton writes in *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom* - "In the Gospel God accepts affections for actions, endeavours for performance, desire for ability. A Christian is made up of desires, of mournings, of thirstings and bewailings: O that my ways were directed! O miserable man that I am! God has mercy for can-nots, but none for will-nots. God can distinguish between weakness and wickedness."¹
 - b. It is a comfort for us to know God looks upon us with His love and favor. Your children need to know you are proud of them.

¹ Bolton, Samuel, *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2001 – pages 42-43.

- VI. The sixth way you can exasperate your children is the flipside of unreasonable high expectations. We can exasperate them by unreasonably low expectations –
- A. Within the scope of our child’s ability we should hold forth high expectations
1. Children will usually rise to the level of the expectations of their parents—presuming they are reasonable expectations. You should cheer on your children as they attempt great things and press on through hard things. Chuck Norris – “Today we live in a culture that promotes comfort, not challenges. Everything is about finding ways to escape hardship, avoid pain, and dodge duty. In the past, young people were expected to make significant contributions to society. Today, our culture expects very little from teens—not much more than staying in school and doing a few chores. A sad consequence of such low expectations is that life-changing lessons go unlearned.”²
 2. We should help our children to grow with ever increasing expectations—and turn failures into opportunities for growth. I’ve seen children over 10 being allowed to draw or color during the sermon – that’s a low expectation. A gentle nudge when they fall asleep is not a bad thing or requiring them to take notes is not a bad thing. And it isn’t a bad thing to increase the level of their chores.
 3. We should encourage our children to press towards their greatest potential. If we think impossible, they will think impossible.
 4. We should encourage our children to try new things
 - a. We should hold forth great praise for successes
 - b. You are training your children towards adulthood. This means you need to press upon your young adults the seriousness of life and the need to prepare themselves
- B. There should be household expectations that are maintained.
1. Industry and the virtue of hard work should be encouraged. They should be taught to appreciate and care for their possessions and respect the possessions of others.
 2. There are patterns of living that are consistent with our pagan culture. If you profess Christianity, there are certain patterns of behavior that should set you apart—love, patience, forgiveness, contentment. You should maintain certain patterns of behavior in your home. Joshua proclaimed:
“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
 3. You children should understand, if you live in this home we will have certain expectations of one another. We will respect one another. We will show love and mercy and forgiveness. We will honor Christ.
 4. We will also honor the Lord’s Day. As long as you live in this home, we will worship together as a family.

² Harris, Alex and Brett, *Do Hard Things*, Forward copyright, Chuck Harris (Colorado Sprints: Multnomah Books, 2008).

- VII. You can exasperate your children by your hypocrisy
- A. Parents lose the respect of their children when their actions are inconsistent with their teaching
1. “Do what I say, not what I do” is never a good principle for raising children
 2. When they see you at church putting on an air of holiness and then see you at home with little regard for Christ you will lose their respect – and they will also have little regard for Christ.
 3. One of your most powerful tools of instruction is the example of your life.
 - a. Charles Bridges: “If the child hears of godliness, and sees but wickedness, this is bringing him bread with one hand, and poison with the other; beckoning him with the hand to heaven, and at the same time taking him by the hand, and leading him in the way to destruction. Neglect is far better than inconsistency. A child is influenced by the eye more than by the ear.”³
 - b. Parental leadership and pastoral leadership has many similarities. Peter writes of the importance of the pastoral example:
1 Peter 5:1-3 NAU - "Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, ² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."
 - c. Paul exhorts Timothy to remember his example
1 Timothy 4:12 NAU - "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."
- B. Children are amazingly smart – they quickly discern the priorities of your life
1. You teach them much by your actions
 2. They will know the objects of your love – material things, sports
 3. They will know your priorities.
 - a. They know the priority of the church in your family. They will learn a high view of the church from you. Their future churchmanship is being developed by watching you.
 - b. They can easily see the importance of God in your home. They know if He is seldom spoken of. They know the agenda of your home. They know if their discipline is the result of your irritation or the desire to honor God.
 4. Your hypocrisy will exasperate your children

³ Bridges, Charles, *Exposition of the Book of Proverbs*, (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1871) Page 340.

Conclusion:

1. Our goal is to train up children equipped to face the obstacles and difficulties of life with boldness and confidence.
2. Our ultimate goal is to train up children who understand clearly the greatness of Christ and the great benefit of a life lived in submission to Him.
3. You have great power over your children. But this power must never be abused. Some wrongly see raising children and discipline as a matter of control. If we can control their church attendance, their schooling, their friends, their television, their computer use, etc. they will grow up to be good, faithful, respectful children. While parents provide direction in all of these areas, simply controlling these things does not deal with the ultimate issue of the heart.
4. Your actions can frustrate them, discourage them, and provoke them to anger. Your great duty as their parents is to gain their heart.
Proverbs 23:26 NAU - "Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways."
5. May God grant much grace as we train these young hearts.