

INTRODUCTION

1. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn with me once again to Ephesians chapter six.
2. We are looking again at verse 4 where we have been learning about "A Parent's Duty."
3. When parents are filled with the Spirit, not only will they have a song in their heart that is sung with one another, or be thankful, but they will be submissive in all things in the fear of Christ.
4. As we have been looking at Ephesians 6:4, a parent's submission is seen in they're not provoking their children to anger.
5. Paul says in **Ephesians 6:4 (NASB77)** ⁴ And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
6. In our last couple of times together we have been looking at how parents provoke their kids to anger.
7. We said the word "provoke" (parorigizo, pres.act.imp.) means "to make angry" (GING), "to arouse to wrath" (Thayer), "to exasperate" (Friberg), or "to make resentful" (UBS).
8. It means "to bring one along to a deep-seated anger."¹
9. When we provoke our kids to anger this is what happens.
10. We exasperate or make them resentful toward us.
11. We contribute to a deep-seated anger in their hearts.
12. And as we have already noted, the heart is always the issue.
13. Yes, we discipline for the act of disobedience but it's the heart that we're after.
14. The heart determines behavior. What you say and do expresses the orientation of your heart.²
15. Jesus said it this way in **Mark 7:21-22 (NASB77)** ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²² deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness.

¹ Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, The Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, 1980). 540.

² Tedd Trip, Shepherding a Child's Heart, (Wapwallopen: Shepherd Press, 1995). 3.

16. What you say and do is a reflection of your heart.
17. **Luke 6:45 (NASB77)** ⁴⁵ The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.
18. Ginger Plowman, in her book, *Don't Make Me Count to Three*, says, "When our children sinfully express themselves, whether it be in the form of selfishness, disobeying, talking back, throwing temper tantrums, or taking swings at us or their siblings, they are drawing from what is in their hearts. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." The heart is the well from which all of the responses to life gush forth. The behavior a person exhibits is an expression of the overflow of the heart. To put it simply, the heart determines behavior.³
19. Tedd Trip says in his book, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, "Parents often get sidetracked with behavior. If your goal in discipline is changed behavior, it is easy to understand why this happens. The thing that alerts you to your child's need for correction is his behavior. Behavior irritates and thus calls attention to itself. Behavior becomes your focus. You think you have corrected when you have changed unacceptable behavior to behavior that you sanction and appreciate.

"What is the problem?" you ask. The problem is this: Your child's needs are far more profound than his aberrant behavior. Remember, his behavior does not just spring forth uncaused. His behavior—the things he says and does—reflects his heart. If you are to really help him, you must be concerned with the attitudes of heart that drive his behavior. A change in behavior that does not stem from a change in heart is not commendable; it is condemnable.⁴
20. Parents, you need to not only address the heart of your child, but you must also address your heart.
21. When you provoke your kids to anger, the tables have been turned.
22. You have a heart problem that needs correction!
23. That's what we're seeking to do as we look at Ephesians 6:4.
24. We're doing preventive discipline.
25. We're looking at the Word of God and seeing examples of ways in which we provoke our kids to anger so that we can correct this before it happens—but again we must deal with the heart!

³ Ginger Plowman, *Don't Make Me Count to Three* (Wapwallopen: Shepherd Press, 2003). 29.

⁴ Tedd Trip, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, (Wapwallopen: Shepherd Press, 1995). 4.

26. Now we have already stated that we provoke our kids to anger when there is a lack of marital harmony between mom and dad and when mom and dad establish and maintain a home that is child-centered rather than Christ-centered.
27. We this occurs the other three are almost inevitable. We will model sinful anger, we will habitually discipline while we're angry, and we will scold our children rather than correct them.
28. As we also stated last time, children learn by our example.
29. Lou Priolo says, "When you or your spouse model sinful anger, you may inadvertently teach your children that the only way to solve problems is to win."⁵
30. So, children need the right heart attitudes modeled before them.
31. They need to see the fruit of the Spirit in your life.
32. They need to see you imitating God by being "kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other" (Eph.4:32).
33. They need to see you imitating Christ by walking "in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us" (Eph.5:2).
34. Until we deal with our own hearts, this will never happen.
35. Before we look at the positive side of verse 4, let's consider 3 more ways in which we provoke our kids to anger.
36. We provoke our kids to anger by a lack of marital harmony, by establishing and maintaining a home that is child-centered rather than Christ-centered, by modeling sinful anger, by habitually disciplining while angry, by scolding and by *not admitting when you're wrong and not asking for forgiveness*.

⁵Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger : Practical Help for the Prevention and Cure of Anger in Children* (Amityville, NY (P.O. Box 805, Amityville, NY 11701): Calvary Press Publishing, 1997). 32.

- I. A Lack of Marital Harmony
- II. Establishing and Maintaining a Home that is Child-Centered Rather than Christ-Centered
- III. Modeling Sinful Anger
- IV. Habitually Disciplining While Angry
- V. Scolding
- VI. Not Admitting When You're Wrong and Not Asking for Forgiveness

A. This Will Always Lead to Your Children Doing the Same

- 1. If you never admit when you're wrong neither will they.
- 2. If you never ask for forgiveness neither will they.
- 3. Since children learn by our example, we must model the proper approach.

If you want your kids to admit when they're wrong and ask forgiveness, then you need to do this too!

B. We Must Teach Our Children the Meaning of Confession and Repentance

1. The meaning

- a) **1 John 1:9 (NASB77)**⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The word "confess" is the Greek word *homologeō*. It means "to say the same thing."

When we confess our sin, we are saying the same thing God says about it.

- b) That's same word is used in **Romans 10:9 (NASB77)**⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Here the word means the same. You are saying the same thing that God says about Jesus—that He is Lord!

- c) **2 Corinthians 7:10 (NASB77)** ¹⁰ For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

The Greek word for “repentance” is *metanoia*, from *meta*, “after” and *noeō*, “to understand.” Literally it means “afterthought” or “change of mind,” but biblically its meaning does not stop there. As *metanoia* is used in the New Testament, it *always* speaks of a change of purpose, and specifically a turning from sin. In the sense Jesus used it, repentance calls for a repudiation of the old life and a turning to God for salvation.

Such a change of purpose is what Paul had in mind when he described the repentance of the Thessalonians: “You turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God” (1 Thess. 1:9). Note three elements of repentance: a turning to God; a turning from evil; and the intent to serve God. No change of mind can be called true repentance if it does not include all three elements. The simple but all too often overlooked fact is that a true change of mind will necessarily result in a change of behavior.

Repentance is not merely shame or sorrow for sin, although genuine repentance always involves an element of remorse. It is a redirection of the human will, a purposeful decision to forsake all unrighteousness and pursue righteousness instead.⁶

J.C. Ryal says, “A holy man will endeavor to shun every known sin and to keep every known commandment. He will have a decided bent of mind towards God, a hearty desire to do His will, a greater fear of displeasing Him than of displeasing the world, and a love to all His ways. He will feel what Paul felt when he said, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22), and what David felt when he said, “I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate *every* false way” (Ps. 119:128).⁷

2. The example

There are 4 steps in repentance. Teach these to your children. Practice them to your children.

⁶John MacArthur, F., *The Gospel According to Jesus : What Does Jesus Mean When He Says "follow Me"*, Electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic and Professional Books, Zondervan Pub. House, 1997, c1988).

⁷J.C. Ryle, *Holiness : It's Nature, Hinderances, Difficulties and Roots*, electronic ed. based on the Evangelical Press reprinting, with new forward, 1995. (Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1996).

- a) Acknowledge that you have sinned

Tell your kids, “I was wrong” or “God has convinced me that I was wrong.”

Or be even more specific and call it what it really is—sin.

- b) Identify the specific sin by its biblical name

“What I did was selfish,” or “What I did was dishonest.”

- c) Identify a biblical behavior to demonstrate your resolve to repent

“I should have clarified what you meant before I jumped to that hasty conclusion.”

- d) Ask for forgiveness

“Will you forgive me?”

This is the first step in Matthew 18:15-17.

C. We Must Teach Our Children the Process of Matthew 18:15-17.

1. The first step – alone - private (v.15)

- a) **Leviticus 19:17-18 (NASB77)** ¹⁷ You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

- b) **Proverbs 25:9-10 (NASB77)** ⁹ Argue your case with your neighbor, And do not reveal the secret of another, ¹⁰ Lest he who hears *it* reproach you, And the evil report about you not pass away.

2. The second step – two or three - semi-private – (v.16)

- a) Israel could not carry out the death penalty on the testimony of one witness.

Deuteronomy 17:6 (NASB77) ⁶ "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

- b) Two or three witnesses were to establish the testimony or establish that a confrontation has occurred and the sinning brother refuses to repent.

Deuteronomy 19:15 (NASB77) ¹⁵ "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

3. The third step – the church (v.17)

Now others are involved in the confrontation of sin.

1 Peter 4:17 (NASB77) ¹⁷ For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

If he does not repent he is to be treated like an unbeliever.

Lou Priolo says, "There are two essential skills that must be cultivated to successfully use the Scriptures to bring conviction to your child. The first skill has to do with your familiarity of the Bible. You must know which portions of Scripture may be used for each specific convicting purpose. You must know what the Bible says and where it says it. You must sharpen your spiritual sword by understanding what the Bible says about the sinfulness of the specific sins with which your child is struggling...The second skill you must develop to effectively convict your children of sin is the ability to thoroughly explain the Scripture portions you are using. Just because the Bible claims that God's Word will not return to Him empty but will succeed in accomplishing His purposes (Is.55:11), you should not have a casual attitude about your responsibility to use the Scriptures to convict. You cannot be content merely to dispense Bible verses like a Pez dispenser dispenses candy (as though Scripture is some sort of magic pill that comes without instructions on the bottle. Men (and women) of God do not only tell their hearers what the Bible says; they also tell them what it means, and they tell them how to apply it to their lives. Your job as a parent is not to dispense Scripture but to ministers it to the hearts of your children in the power of the Holy Spirit."⁸

VII. Chastening in Front of Others

A. There Are Times When We Will Have to Correct Our Children Publicly

1. We must be careful though how we do it

James Dobson says, "A child between eighteen and thirty-six months of age is a sheer delight, but he can also be utterly maddening. He is inquisitive, short-tempered, demanding, cuddly, innocent, and dangerous at the same time. I find it fascinating to watch him run through his day, seeking opportunities to crush things, flush things, kill things, spill things, fall off things, eat horrible things—and think up ways to rattle his mother."

⁸ Lou Priolo, Teach Them Diligently, (Woodruff: Timeless Texts, 2000). 32,34.

J.C Ryal says, "The mother cannot tell what her tender infant may grow up to be, tall, short, weak, or strong, wise or foolish: he may be any of these or not, it is all uncertain. But one thing the mother can say with certainty: he will have a corrupt and sinful heart."

There are three truths you must understand about your child if you're going to discipline them biblically.

- a) Your child is born sinful

Romans 3:23 (NASB77) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Psalms 51:5 (NASB77) ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

- b) Sin is bound in the heart of your child

Proverbs 22:15 (NASB77) ¹⁵ Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

- c) Sin is not a laughing matter

Proverbs 14:9 (NASB77) ⁹ Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is good will.

We should never laugh at or make light of the things that God sent His Son to die for. Sin is not a laughing matter.

2. We need to remember that our words are to always be gentle and encouraging but that does not mean they are never to be authoritative.

B. The Fundamental Step in Confrontation is for it to First be Private

1. **Matthew 18:15 (NASB77)** ¹⁵ "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

Lou Priolo says, "The disciplinary principle derived from this verse is that the circle of confession and correction should only be as large as the circle of offense. If your child sins in the presence of others, he may in certain cases be verbally rebuked (but not physically chastised) in their presence. If the sin however is not public, the disciplinary process should be handled between the parent and child. To violate the clear instruction

of Christ by disciplining a child in front of others for sins he has committed in private is to sin against God and the child.”⁹

2. **Matthew 5:23-24 (NASB77)** ²³ If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

C. Don't Seek to Embarrass Your Child

1. This will exasperate them and cause them to withdraw from you.
2. This will also cause them to sin in their hearts and manifest it by their words and deeds.
3. This will also cause them to resent you.

Colossians 3:21 (NASB77) ²¹ Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.

Dorothy Knolte says, “Children learn what they observe. If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn and be judgmental. If children live with hostility, they learn to be angry and fight. If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy and withdrawn. If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty. If children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient. If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence. If children live with praise, they learn to appreciate. If children live with fairness, they learn justice. If children live with security, they learn to have faith. If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves. If children live with acceptance and friendship, they learn to find love in the world.”

VIII. Not Praising or Encouraging Your Child

- A. Not Only Are We to Correct Our Children When They Sin but We Are to Praise and Encourage Them in Righteousness.

There must be a balance.

1. If you always correct and never praise them they will become bitter and ultimately rebel.

Adam Clarke says, “Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath - Avoid all severity; this will hurt your own souls, and do them no good; on the contrary, if punished with

⁹Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger : Practical Help for the Prevention and Cure of Anger in Children* (Amityville, NY (P.O. Box 805, Amityville, NY 11701): Calvary Press Publishing, 1997). 45.

severity or cruelty, they will be only hardened and made desperate in their sins. Cruel parents generally have bad children. He who corrects his children according to God and reason will feel every blow on his own heart more sensibly than his child feels it on his body. Parents are called to correct; not to punish, their children. Those who punish them do it from a principle of revenge; those who correct them do it from a principle of affectionate concern.¹⁰

1 Thessalonians 2:11 (NASB77) ¹¹ Just as you know how we *were* exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father *would* his own children.

John MacArthur says, “Parents provoke their children to anger when they constantly criticize them but never reward them, never praise their accomplishments, and never allow them to enjoy their own successes. A child who feels he can never get his parents’ approval will soon give up trying to earn it at all. There may be no quicker way to provoke your children to wrath than by perpetually discouraging them.

This is easy to do. Always focus on what they do wrong, and never notice what they do right. Always notice their faults, but never say anything about their positive qualities. Ignore their natural gifts and talents, and harp on the things they don’t do well. Be constantly suspicious of them.

I had a simple rule of thumb in raising my children: For every time I had to point out to them something that was wrong, I tried to equalize it soon thereafter by pointing out something they had done right. It wasn’t always easy. (“I like the way you’ve arranged your drawer.”) But a loving parent can always find *something* as a source of encouragement. And every child responds well to encouragement and approval.¹¹

2. You should praise and encourage your child as much as you correct them.

In Titus 2:4 the older women were to “encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children.”

B. Righteous Living Must Always Be Praised and Encouraged

1. We must teach that God is righteous and He expects us to be righteous

¹⁰ Adam Clarke, Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, (E-Sword).

¹¹John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting : Raising Your Child With Care, Compassion, and Common Sense* (Bedford, Tex.: Word Pub., 1998). 141.

- a) **Psalms 11:7 (NASB77)** ⁷ For the LORD is righteous; He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face.
- b) **Psalms 116:5 (NASB77)** ⁵ Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.
- c) **Romans 12:1-2 (NASB77)** ¹ I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

2. We must praise those who manifest God's righteousness

Not only did Paul rebuke the Corinthians in his first letter to them but he also praised them when they did what was right and honoring to God.

1 Corinthians 11:2 (NASB77) ² Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

CONCLUSION

1. Are you provoking your kids to anger by not admitting when you're wrong and not asking for forgiveness or by chastening in front of others or by not praising or encouraging your child?
2. What about some of the things I never mentioned like overprotection, favoritism, pushing achievement, discouragement, failure to make sacrifices, failure to allow for childishness, neglect, withdrawing love, or bitter words and cruel physical punishment?
3. Will you take a moment to ask God to help you in this area?
4. All of us have provoked our children to anger at one time or maybe we're doing it now and we need to stop but don't know how.
5. Ask God how you can stop.
6. Ask Him to help you to apply the Scriptures in your home.
7. Ask Him to help you to know and understand what the Bible teaches.
8. Ask Him to give you a right heart.
9. When God's Word is on your heart, it affects your entire life.¹²

¹² Lou Priolo, Teach Them Diligently, (Woodruff: Timeless Texts, 2000). 13.

10. Of course, for it to be on your heart, you have to have a transformed heart.
11. Have you been born again?
12. Have you seen yourself as one who has violating God's law and thus in danger of His coming wrath?
13. Ask God to show you that you have broken His law and that you desperately need forgiveness and call on Him now as we pray.