



Ephesians 6:4 - Teach Your Children

January 8, 2028

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

1. Parenting is hard.

A. External challenges make parenting hard.

- Youth sports eliminated childhood.
- Television and the Internet eliminated childhood.

B. Internal challenges make parenting hard.

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.
Proverbs 22:15 (ESV)

...as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." Romans 3:10–12 (ESV)

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
Psalm 51:5 (ESV)

2. Children are a gift from God.

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." Genesis 4:1 (ESV)

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him."
Genesis 4:25 (ESV)

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.
Psalm 127:3 (ESV)

3. Fathers, don't provoke your children to anger.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger... Ephesians 6:4 (ESV)

A. *Patria Potestas* (the father's power) was law for Roman fathers.

Hilarion to Alis his wife. Know that we are still now in Alexandria. Do not worry if when all others return I remain in Alexandria. I beg and beseech you to take care of the little child, and as soon as we receive wages, I will send them to you. If you have a boy child, let it live. If it is a girl, throw it out. — Letter from Hilarion, a roman soldier, to his wife Alis in 1 B.C.

We slaughter a fierce ox. We strangle a mad dog. We plunge the knife into the sickliest of cattle. Children who are born weak and deformed, we drown. — Seneca, roman orator

- In 2020, we aborted 930,160 children.

B. How do we provoke our children to anger?

- Spoil them.
- Nag them instead of disciplining them.
- Foster dependence on us, instead of independence from us.
- Criticize our spouse in front of them so they learn disrespect.
- Do everything for our children. Don't give them chores.
- When our child throws a temper tantrum, give in.
- Criticize when at home.
- Praise our children for their looks, not their character.
- Be an overprotective parent.
- Show Favoritism.
- Have unrealistic achievement goals.
- Don't sacrifice for our children.
- Neglect time with our children.
- Speak hurtful words to our child.

4. Bring up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

...but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4 (ESV)

A. We must bring our children up intentionally.

- Christian parents are to address heart problems, not just behavior problems.

For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. Mark 7:21–22 (ESV)

The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. Luke 6:45 (ESV)

B. We are to discipline our children.

The word discipline is the Greek word *paideia*. It means bringing about conformity through external motivation for change. It involves both punishment for bad behavior and reward for good behavior.

C. We are to instruct our children.

The word instruction is the Greek word *nouthēia*. It is instruction by word. It is explaining, pleading, and reasoning.

- The Bible teaches us to use BOTH reasoning and the external motivations of consequences and rewards when training children.

5. What should I teach my children?

A. Teach them about God.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Deuteronomy 6:4 (ESV)

B. Teach them the importance of loving and following God with all our heart.

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV)

C. Teach them to love and obey God's Word.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children,... Deuteronomy 6:6–7a (ESV)

D. Teach them about God by using life as a classroom.

...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. Deuteronomy 6:7b (ESV)

E. Teach them about God with visuals.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:8–9 (ESV)

F. Teach them to be wary of the world around them.

And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. Deuteronomy 6:10–12 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. How would you describe the way your parents raised you? What did you like? What would you change?
2. Why has parenting become so challenging in the last 20 years? What can we do about it?
3. Pastor Kurt gave a list of ways parents can provoke their children to anger. Which ones were most impactful for you? Are there other ways parents provoke their children to anger?
4. Children do not learn about the Lord by osmosis. Parents need to have an intentional plan. What is, was, or will be your plan? (Keep it simple!)
5. Why is it important for Christian parents to address behavior issues on the heart level, not limit their focus to external conformity?
6. How old should children be when parents talk to them about sin, Satan, and hell?
7. Paul instructs parents to discipline their children with the external motivators of consequences and rewards, not just reasoned instruction. Why are both essential? What are the right external motivators to use with children, and when should they be used?
8. Deuteronomy 6 tells us the importance of using all of life as a classroom to teach spiritual truths. It also tells us to use visual aids in our home to help children learn the Bible. How have you done this? What are some creative and helpful ways to do this?
9. If you are a parent, in what ways will this message change the way you parent your children?