

Eph 6:4 Fathers Do Not Provoke Your Children

And the fathers, do not make your children angry. As is his pattern, Paul has first addressed the ones under authority, namely, children. He now addresses the ones who have authority over the children. Paul makes it very clear that the father must take responsibility for raising his children in the fear and admonition of the Lord at the feet of the fathers.

Paul's stance toward Children as he wrote to the Ephesian church was one based on love, and wanting what was best for the family, and based on all persons in the family living in obedience to God, and in love and respect toward each other. Physical discipline was certainly a part of the educational process Prov 13:24 **He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.** Or, as it's succinctly put; Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child. Prov 22:15 **Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.** ; Prov 29:15 **The rod and a rebuke give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.** Early correction provides great benefits later to the parents in how the child behaves. Prov 29:17 **Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul.**

Hebrews 12:5b-7 , **"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are punished by Him; 6 For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He punishes every son whom He accepts." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?** And, so we see that there is continual admonition to teach our children about God, as He has revealed Himself in scripture, and to teach them to obey Him. We also see that legitimate discipline of children for their good is absolutely encouraged by scripture, and is in fact following the example that we see both in scripture, and by example of how God deals with us. In giving the instructions, Paul brings to fathers a new perspective on the treatment of their children. He says, "do not provoke" your children, or not to "to irritate, provoke to anger." Fathers are not to make it a practice to cause their children "to become provoked or quite angry." Although the prohibition in Col 3:21 **21 Fathers, do not antagonize your children, so that they will not become discouraged.** It uses a different word, but it's meaning is the same and there it is followed with "so that they will not become discouraged." So, the caution against purposeful irritation caused by teasing, nagging or demeaning fathers in the context of everyday life will likely cause the children to become angry. This anger grows, no doubt, out of the frustration of never being able to please fathers who constantly nag or demean them, or not becoming frustrated by fathers who continually tease them. **6:4b. "but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."**

Fathers are exhorted to "nurture" the children. This word means "to bring up from childhood, bring up, rear up, nurture" In general, this includes educating them in His Ways. God says that the father is responsible for the education of his children with respect to the Lord, His Word, and His dealings with people. Of course, in the OT, this mainly included examples of His wonderful dealings with the nation Israel. In Exod 10:2, the Israelite fathers are specifically commissioned, while the plagues of Egypt are still going on, to tell their children how God delivered them from the Egyptians by His great power, saying **2 and that you may tell in the presence of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, so that you may know that I am the Lord.**" And again, at the end of the plagues, when God instituted the Passover throughout their generations in Exodus 12:25–27 **25 When you enter the land which the Lord will give you, as He has [y]promised, you shall keep this rite. 26 And when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' 27 then you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord because He passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'**" And the people bowed low and worshiped. ; and throughout all their generations, the Sons of Israel were supposed to consider it as if the Lord had delivered them themselves personally from Egypt, and remind their children of it Exod 13:8 **8 And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.'** Deut 6:20-21 **20 "When your son asks you in time to come, saying,**

'What do the provisions and the statutes and the judgments mean which the Lord our God commanded you?' 21 then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ; Deut 4:9 9 "Only be careful for yourself and watch over your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons ; Deut 6:6-7 6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 And you shall repeat them diligently to your sons and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.

So, we are to instruct our children, raising them, or educating them in instruction of how to live. Specifically, it means to "discipline, punish, or correct". It is used of "instruction" in 2 Tim 3:16 **16 All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness;** and "discipline" Prov 3:11 **My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord Or loathe His rebuke.** And, as Fathers, this idea of correction or discipline is just mirroring what the Lord does for us. In Heb 12:6-11, the author emphasizes that we do our best to discipline our children, so that they will be corrected, and be better children, better people, and better Children of God. We, as parents are imperfect, but God's discipline is perfect, so it's best to allow our children to experience God's discipline as Christians as soon as possible. Heb 12:6-11 **For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He punishes every son whom He accepts." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had [d]earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much more be subject to the Father of [e]spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 For the moment, all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.** In this context it reflects the idea of instruction in connection with correction or discipline of the Lord. In the OT the fathers instructed their children about God's discipline as illustrated in his dealings with Israel throughout her history.

The second word is used of keeping something at the top of mind, as in admonishment, warning, and correction. It means a word of admonition that is designed to correct while not provoking or embittering. The word was used as that which "signifies the gentlest sort of instruction in conduct, free from rebuke or reprimand and characterized by timely suggestions rather than sharp imperatives." So, "training and admonition." Discipline emphasizes education by teaching a lesson, including attitude adjustments, as necessary, and admonition is the more gentle, verbal aspect, whether by encouragement or reproof.

And all of this is done so that they will not sin against God, disobey Him, or disrespect Him, so that their lives will go easier. The reference is to Christ who is their Lord. In other words, the father's training and admonition is not to be so that they will be better children for us so much, but rather so that they will be better Christians, and fear and obey God for the rest of their lives. The training and admonition come from the Lord or are prescribed by the Lord through fathers. The fathers are the Lord's agents and, therefore, raise their children according to His mandates. Such training and admonition would be sensitive to the children's responses and needs.

And, in this the life filled by the Spirit is supremely important. Fathers must rely on the Holy Spirit to temper their conduct and attitude, thus enabling them to avoid provoking their children to anger. Also, the Holy Spirit gives us the wisdom and enablement we need to train and instruct. We, as fathers should train and admonish our children in ways prescribed by the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.