

Principle #1: Children are a blessing.

Principle #2: Children are ultimately God's possession.

Principle #3: Children are to be raised in the training and admonition of the Lord - Ephesians 6:4

I. TO WHOM IS THIS CHARGE GIVEN?

- "And you, Fathers" - Not generic term for parents (6:1), but specifically of the male parent, the father
- The fathers Paul addresses are of differing circumstances, vocations, spiritual maturity, educational background, financial status
- These are not men who were (by and large) middle/upper class, well educated, with Christian (or Jewish) parents
- In this particular situation, it was mostly non-Jewish men, both slave and free, who had been recently saved out of paganism, and who did not have their individual copies of the Scriptures
- And yet, all have same responsibility and are charged by the inspired writing of the Apostle Paul to fulfill this command as followers of Jesus Christ
- The charge is not given primarily to mothers, the church, Sunday school teachers, Christian school, or the government
- When Paul puts pen to paper are writes "fathers", we can know as fathers that this is speaking of every one of us

II. WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE CHARGE?

- "Bring them up" - The "them" in this passage is "your children." They are the "target", the ones to whom fathers are supposed to do these things.
- The Greek word is "ektrepho", usually meaning to primary things. First, to feed physically by provision of food. This is certainly also the ordinary calling of the father (1Timothy 5:8). As can be seen by the rest of the sentence, this isn't what Paul is primarily speaking about. This term can also mean to raise, care for, or rear. This carries the idea of doing what is necessary to bring someone to a mature state, improving them, moving them to an ideal or a standard.
- What is the ideal or standard? Everyone who has any interest in education has some standard or ideal to which they are moving and want a person to become like.
- The Christian ideal is the person of Jesus Christ, who is the perfect human embodiment of the image of God (Colossians 1:15). This is accomplished through salvation and change into righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24).
- So we see the direction which fathers are to be aiming.

III. WHAT IS THE TWO-FOLD METHOD OF FULFILLING THIS CHARGE?

A. "In the training of the Lord"

- The Greek word here is "paideia." It too is used in two primary ways in Scripture. The first is what we usually think of when we think of the word "discipline." I mean the physical discipline that comes by way of spanking or physical punishment. This is the way the word is used in Hebrews 12:5-11, but is being used to mean more than just that (though certainly including it).
- If we think of another way the word discipline is used, we come closer to Paul's meaning. The particular way Paul is using the word would be familiar to people raised within the Greco/Roman culture. To "paideia" someone was to provide all things necessary for the physical, mental, and emotional training to become a good citizen of the state. They would do this within a particular discipline, being groomed in a particular vocation.
- The Romans did not view this training as slices of a pie with life divided into the vocational/family/spiritual, but everything included within this training.
- So Paul is taking a term that is used to convey a training for life which included everything that person was and using it in a particular Christian context. What we should see is that Paul isn't talking about some "spiritual" training in addition to living in the real world, but rather that all of life is to be lived with a particular view towards God. Paul is calling fathers to oversee their children for the creation of citizens in God's Kingdom in all of life.
- The primary tool for this is seen in Paul's other usage of the term in 2Timothy 3:16. The Bible is then the primary and sufficient textbook for this training in every culture through all of human history.
- So this training is "of the Lord", that which the Lord has instructed in His Word in how to love God and neighbor.

B. "In the admonition of the Lord"

- This is the Greek word "nouthesia", which means to provide instruction to correct behavior and belief. It can also mean to warn as to consequences. This is the same word from which we get our phrase "Nouthetic Counseling."
- So with both of these terms together, there is the both the positive instruction as well as correction necessary.
- It is to teach a child a complete way of life, not just segmented ideas of truth and spirituality. It has as its primary instrument verbal instruction with a secondary confirmation physical spanking (a later subject).

- The equivalent to this passage in the Hebrew Scriptures is found in Deuteronomy 6:1-9. This is a helpful passage in several ways.
 - 1.) We must be taught God's ways. – v.1
 - 2.) Mere knowledge is not the goal, but loving obedience in the fear of God. – vv.1-2, 5
 - 3.) There is blessing in this obedience.
 - 4.) These ways are to be passed on to our children and grandchildren. – v.2
 - 5.) To properly teach it to our children, we must first have it in our heart. – v.6
 - 6.) To properly teach it to our children, there should be both "formal" teaching as well as "informal." It should saturate our lives. – vv.7-9
- The Jewish people understood that everything was to be directed by God's Law, not just the "spiritual" portion of their life.

IV. WHAT ARE THE SAD CONSEQUENCES OF NOT FULFILLING THIS CHARGE?

- The word here means to make angry or resentful. Another consequence can be found in Colossians 3:21. The word (different than Eph6:4) means to stir up, rouse, make resentful, embitter. The outcome is that they are discouraged or disheartened. This means that they lack the motivation to do the right thing. The wind is taken out of their sails.
- Not dealing with them and instructing them in God's ways has the potential of causing bitter, angry, and rebellious children who lack the motivation to try to please us and God. When our hearts aren't filled with God's ways, and we are harsh, overbearing, nitpicky, unforgiving, partial, passive, indifferent, etc. then the outcome can be a filling of wrath.

V. WHAT IS THE HOPEFUL OUTCOME OF FULFILLING THIS CHARGE?

- Psalm 78:1-8 Passing the Word of God on to our children so that they may set their hope in God, not forget His works, keep His commandments, and tell their children. Spreading the glory of God generationally.

VI. HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF THIS CHARGE

- A. Abraham - Genesis 18:19
- B. Joshua – Joshua 24:15
- C. Solomon - Proverbs 4:1-9

APPLICATION

- Father's who has the primary task of doing this? Not your wife. Not the church. Not the state. You do.
- Do you recognize and take seriously your responsibility? Are you seeking to establish a Word saturated home?
- Are you studying the Word in such a way as you are becoming equipped to do so?
- Are you engaged with and active in the multi-faceted raising of your children? This may be a call to self-denial in turning of the TV, the video games, the Internet, limiting hobbies so that you may be equipped to equip your children.
- Are you aware of your utter dependence on God to do this?
- It is recognized even by many non-Christians that there is a huge problem in regards to the absence of fathers in our culture. As Christian men we should grow up, stop playing around, and be the fathers God calls us to be.
- I would remind those of you who did not have such a father, or wives who have not had such husbands, that all is not lost. We do not believe that the lack such a father leaves one without hope or permanently dysfunctional, b/c of God's grace.
- We see this in the example of Timothy. There was a father (Acts16:1-3), but he was not a believer. Timothy was able to overcome those negative factors and have a good reputation and become a godly example and essential partner with the Apostle Paul in ministry. This came as a result of teaching from the time he was a child 2Timothy 3:15 from the women in his life 1:5.
- Wives, if your husband is not this, then you can be a mother like Timothy's.
- While not having a godly father certainly makes it a challenge, in the influence of a godly man is inestimable, it is no excuse to give up or not try.