

INTRODUCTION

1. Please turn in the Bibles tonight to Ephesians chapter 6.
2. We are looking again at verse 4.
3. 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.
4. In our last three times together we have looked at ways in which we provoke our kids to anger.
5. 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).
6. Sometimes it refers to a lashing, open rebellion, and sometimes it refers to an internal smoldering.¹
7. When we provoke our kids to anger we are bringing them along to a deep-seated anger and to openly rebel.
8. How do we do this?
9. I gave eight ways that we provoke our kids to anger.
10. We do this when there is a lack of harmony between mom and dad, by establishing and maintaining a home that is child-centered rather than Christ-centered, by modeling

¹ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*, (Panorama City: Word of Grace, Study Guide, 1981, 1985).105.

sinful anger, by habitually discipling while angry, by scolding, by not admitting when you're wrong and not asking for forgiveness, by chastening in front of others, and by not praising or encouraging your child.

11. In addition to these, I read to you another list which says we do this by overprotection, favoritism, pushing achievement, discouragement, failure to make sacrifices, failure to allow for childishness, neglect, withdrawing love, by bitter words, or by cruel physical punishment.
12. All of this is the negative side of Ephesians 6:4.
13. Tonight I want to consider the remaining part of verse 4, which is stated in the positive.
14. Paul says, "But bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
15. The words "bring them up" (ektrepho, pres.act.imp.) means, "to rear, bring up, educate" (Friberg). It is only used in Ephesians 5:29 and 6:4. In 5:29 it is translated "to nourish" but here it is to "bring them up."
16. The word carries the idea of raising up a child to maturity "by providing for [their] physical and psychological needs" (Lou-Nida) and "unquestionably conveys the idea of gentleness and forbearance."²

²John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Ephesians*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). Eph 6:4.

17. John Gill says this includes instructing “them in the knowledge of divine things, setting them good examples, taking care to prevent their falling into bad company, praying with them, and for them, bringing them into the house of God, under the means of grace, to attend public worship; all which, under a divine blessing, may be very useful to them.”³
18. Wayne Mack says there are several important facets to child raising expressed by the words “bring them up.”

First, he says, “In the Greek text the verb translated ‘bring up’ is in the active voice, imperative mood and present tense. The active voice indicates that children do not automatically grow up to be what God wants them to be...God never intended children to bring themselves up. He gave them parents who are to be actively engaged in making the children what God wants them to be.

In addition to being in the active voice, it is significant that the Greek verb is in the imperative mood. On occasion when we have not known what to do, most of us have turned to others for help. Sometimes they have replied by saying, ‘I am not going to tell you what to do, but if I were in your situation I would...’ In other words, the person has given us some friendly advice which we can take or leave. Well, what God says in Ephesians 6:4 is not just friendly advice. It is not just a suggestion that He hopes we will consider. It is a command which He expects us to obey. It is not one of many alternatives or options from which we may choose the way that we will raise our children. It is the

³ John Gill, John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Ephesians 6:4.

only option open to us as Christians. This is the only way for us to raise our children. Disregard for these directives is not merely a mistake or a blunder. It is disobedience or rebellion against God, for He commands us to raise our children this way. The verb is in the imperative mood. Besides being in the active voice and imperative mood, this verb is in the present tense. At certain times in our parenting experience, I have looked at my wife and said, 'I know the Lord says that children are the heritage of the Lord and the fruit of the womb is His reward (Ps.27:3), but right now they do not seem like much a reward. It is a joy to have children, but wouldn't it be nice to be able to take a little vacation from responsibility? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to sit back for a month or two, and let the children be solely in charge of raising themselves, correcting themselves, and providing for themselves?

But God says, 'No, you cannot do that. As long as the children are in your home, you must be constantly, persistently, unremittingly bringing them up. This is not a job that you will do in a day or a month or a year or even ten years. It is a task that will take much time and constant effort. It is a present task, not a past or future tense task. It is not a job that ended yesterday. Nor it is a job that you can put off until tomorrow. As long as the children are under your care, every day will hold new opportunities for bringing them up...God gives to parents the challenging task of bringing their children up. And the present tense of the verb 'bring up' indicates that this is a task in which parents must be constantly involved. This is a job from which they are never off duty. No time of day or night, no circumstance or situation or place is 'off limits' for the performance of this task.

Now all of this helpful and challenging information is compacted into the words 'bring them up,' but there is still more to be found in these words. Notice that God does not say, 'Put them down, hold them down or in or back.'

Rather He says, 'bring them up...'

We are to bring our children up to know and trust in Jesus Christ (Mark 10:13-14; Matt.28:19; Ps.34:11). But more than that, we are to bring our children up to be real disciples of Jesus Christ (James 1:21-25; Ps.1:1-3; 119:9, 11, 105). Our goal should be to bring our children to the place where they are disciplined in the way of the Lord so that their attitudes and patterns and way of life begin to reflect the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Our objective should be to so train them that their thoughts and attitudes and actions begin to reflect and manifest a likeness to the lifestyle of a Christian described in the Word of God. Whether they become successful in business, whether they become good athletes or musicians, whether they are handsome or beautiful, whether they get straight A's in school are matters of little consequence in comparison with the matter of becoming holy and godly mature Christians."⁴

19. This phrase "bring them up" is not isolation from the Lord but it is "of the Lord" by which we are to correct and counsel. Paul says, "but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
20. As we look more closely at the second half of verse 4, I want us to see how this is done.

⁴ Wayne A. Mack, Strengthening Your Marriage, (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1977). 147-150.

21. Paul gives two words at the end of verse 4 that will help us in this process.
22. They are the words “discipline” and “instruction.” One speaks of correction while the other speaks of council.
23. The first way that we are to bring our children up in the Lord is to *correct* them.

I. Correct Your Child

A. This Refers to the Overall Training of Children Including Punishment

The word that Paul uses for “discipline” is *paideia*. It is translated “nurture” in the AV. It too carries the idea of “training, learning, and instruction” (MacArthur) as the phrase “bring them up.”

You could translate the entire phrase, “bring up your children in the upbringing.”⁵

Paideia (**discipline**) comes from the word *pais* (child) and refers to the systematic training of children. It includes the idea of correction for wrongdoing, as seen in the well-known proverb, “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently” (Prov. 13:24).

In the several uses of the term in Hebrews 12:5–11, the translators of the Authorized Version rendered it “chastening,” which is clearly the emphasis of that context.

Paul’s meaning here is expressed even more fully, however, in the proverb “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it” (22:6).

⁵Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary : Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002). 407.

Discipline has to do with the overall training of children, including punishment.⁶

Plato said that “*Education* (παιδεία) is the constraining and directing of youth toward that right reason which the law affirms, and which the experience of the best of our elders has agreed to be truly right” (“Laws,” 659).⁷

B. Discipline is What You Do to the Child

It is training by means of rules and regulations, rewards, and when necessary, punishments.⁸

1. Israel was told they were disciplined by the Lord so that they would keep His statutes and commandments

Deuteronomy 4:36-40 (NASB77) ³⁶ "Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and

⁶John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 319.

⁷Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002). 3:404.

⁸William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 262.

you heard His words from the midst of the fire.³⁷

"Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power,³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in *and* to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today.³⁹ "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.⁴⁰ "So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

2. Other passages of Scripture refer to discipline as correction whether it's verbal or with the rod

a) Job 5:17 describes it as "reproof."

Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

b) Psalms 50:17 refers to it as verbal correction.

For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you.

c) Proverbs 12:1 refers to it as correction.

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
But he who hates reproof is stupid.

d) Listen to some of the other Proverbs that refer to discipline as correction:

- 1) **Proverbs 13:1 (NASB77)** ¹ A wise son *accepts his* father's discipline, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.
- 2) **Proverbs 13:18 (NASB77)** ¹⁸ Poverty and shame *will come* to him who neglects discipline, But he who regards reproof will be honored.
- 3) **Proverbs 15:5 (NASB77)** ⁵ A fool rejects his father's discipline, But he who regards reproof is prudent.
- 4) **Proverbs 15:10 (NASB77)** ¹⁰ Stern discipline is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die.
- 5) **Proverbs 15:32 (NASB77)** ³² He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.
- 6) **Proverbs 19:27 (NASB77)** ²⁷ Cease listening, my son, to discipline, *And you will* stray from the words of knowledge.
- 7) **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.

- 8) **Proverbs 23:12 (NASB77)** ¹² Apply your heart to discipline, And your ears to words of knowledge.
- 9) **Proverbs 23:13 (NASB77)** ¹³ Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.

So when we are talking about “disciplining” your child, we are not talking about “an uncontrolled use of physical punishment.” We’re talking about the entire child-training process—training by means of rules and regulations, rewards, and when necessary, punishments.⁹

Ginger Plowman says that for some the word discipline “sounds harsh. Why is that? Perhaps its harsh image comes from the distorted definition that society has placed around it. Society portrays discipline as punishment that involves anger, yelling, and severe or even cruel acts.

Many parents today have bought into society’s definition. Because they relate the word to negative

⁹William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 262.

training, they would rather tolerate their children's behavior than correct it.¹⁰

C. Discipline Involves Love, the Heart, and God's Word

1. It involves love

We discipline or train our children in the Lord because we love them.

- a) God does the same for His children. **Proverbs 3:11-12 (NASB77)** ¹¹ My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD, Or loathe His reproof, ¹² For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, Even as a father, the son in whom he delights.
- b) God told the Laodiceans in **Revelation 3:19 (NASB77)** ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.
- c) Because you love your child you discipline him "diligently." This as, **Proverbs 13:24 (NASB77)** indicates, the use of the rod when necessary. It says, "He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently."

2. It involves the heart

¹⁰ Ginger Plowman, Don't Make Me Count to Three, (Wapwallopen: Shepherd Press, 2003). 25.

As we said last time this is the issue. We are after the heart of the child.

The heart determines behavior. What you say and do expresses the orientation of your heart.¹¹

Jesus said 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.

He also said in **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.

Evil and good both come from the heart and it the evil that we correct and the good that we reward.

3. It involves God's Word

Lou Priolo says, "Teaching the Bible to your children is non-optional. You have been given the responsibility to indoctrinate your children with Scripture. The question is not whether or not you are going to teach God's Word to them, but whether or not you are going to obey God's Word yourself. No matter what you believe your

¹¹ Tedd Trip, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, (Wapwallopen: Shepherd Press, 1995). 3.

parental job description entails, nothing else you do to, for, or with them is more important than this.¹²

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 (NASB77) ⁴ "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; ⁷ and you shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up.

Lou Priolo again says, "In the final analysis, it is not the responsibility of the pastor, youth leader, or Sunday school teacher to indoctrinate your children in the Bible. That's your job! Church leaders cannot always be with your children during those times when the Scriptures are to be taught ("when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up"). Even when they do augment your children's Bible education, they do so largely as your agent."¹³

II. Council Your Child

¹² Lou Priolo, Teach Them Diligently, (Woodruff: Timeless Texts, 2000). 14.

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

Ephesians 6:4 says “But bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

This is the word *nouthesia* which is translated “admonition” in the AV. It refers to verbal instruction with a view to correct.

This is not what you do to a child; this is what you say to a child. This is counsel.¹⁴

Ginger Plowman says, “It’s easy for us to tell our children that they have done wrong and chastise them for it, but it takes much more preparation, discipline, understanding, and self-control on our part to actually instruct them according to God’s Word. This approach takes much brain activity that requires us to think through and verbalize that faithful instruction.”¹⁵

Νουθεσία (*admonition*) occurs only here, 1 Cor. 10:11, and Tit. 3:10. The kindred verb νουθετέω *to warn* or *admonish*, is found only in Paul’s letters, with the single exception of Acts 20:31. Its distinctive feature is training *by word of*

¹⁴ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*, (Panorama City: Word of Grace, Study Guide, 1981, 1985).109.

¹⁵ Ginger Plowman, *Don’t Make Me Count to Three*, (Wapwallopen: Shepherd Press, 2003). 26-7.

nouth, as is shown by its classical usage in connection with words meaning *to exhort* or *teach*.¹⁶

On the one hand it's, "Do what I tell you," but on the other hand it's, "Listen to what I say."

This is a tremendous task but the end product is righteousness. If you want a righteous child, it has to come from what you teach him to do and what you tell him to do.

Paul use of the word *nouthesia* "does not have as much to do with factual information as with right attitudes and principles of behavior."¹⁷

So when you correct your child you must also counsel them as to what God says about this situation in His Word. Don't just correct and stop—correct and council from His Word.

That implies you knowing and understanding the Scripture yourself. You must know what it means and how it applies before you can correct and council biblically.

What can parents do to help their children develop the right attitudes and behavior?

A. Train your Child to Memorize Scripture

¹⁶Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002). 3:404.

¹⁷John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 319.

The more of God's Word your children have internalized, the more God's Spirit will have to work with as He sanctifies them.

Psalms 119:11 (NASB77) ¹¹ Thy word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee.

B. Train Your Child to Meditate on Scripture

“Meditate” Heb.hagah, “to discuss or ponder” (KJV Commentary), “chatter” (Augustine) or “to chew the cud” (Thomas Watson). It “is the soul's chewing” WILLIAM GRIMSHAW (1708–1763).

It is “disciplined thought, focused on a single object or Scripture for a period of time” (Charles Swindoll).

J.I. Packer defines it even more specifically when he says that it “is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God.

Its purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let his truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart. It is a matter of talking to oneself about God and oneself; it is, indeed, often a matter of arguing with oneself, reasoning oneself out of moods of doubt and unbelief into a clear apprehension of God's power and grace.

Its effect is ever to humble us, as we contemplate God's greatness and glory and our own littleness and sinfulness, and to encourage and reassure us—"comfort" us, in the old, strong, Bible sense of the word—as we contemplate the unsearchable riches of divine mercy displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁸

The puritan William Bridge said, "Meditation will keep your hearts and souls from sinful thoughts. When the vessel is full you can put in no more. . . . If the heart be full of sinful thoughts, there is no room for holy and heavenly thoughts: if the heart be full of holy and heavenly thoughts by meditation, there is no room for evil and sinful thoughts."¹⁹

1. **Joshua 1:8 (NASB77)** ⁸ "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.
2. **Psalms 119:15 (NASB77)** ¹⁵ I will meditate on Thy precepts, And regard Thy ways.

¹⁸J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity, 1973; Published in electronic form by Christian Classics Foundation, 1996).

¹⁹I.D.E. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations*, electronic ed. (Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1996).

3. **Psalms 119:48 (NASB77)** ⁴⁸ And I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, Which I love; And I will meditate on Thy statutes.
4. **Psalms 119:78 (NASB77)** ⁷⁸ May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; *But* I shall meditate on Thy precepts.
5. **Psalms 119:148 (NASB77)** ¹⁴⁸ My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may meditate on Thy word.
6. **Psalms 143:5-6 (NASB77)** ⁵ I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy doings; I muse on the work of Thy hands. ⁶ I stretch out my hands to Thee; My soul *longs* for Thee, as a parched land. Selah.

William Bridge again says, “There are two things that make meditation hard. The one is because men are not used thereunto. . . and another is, because they do not love God enough. Everything is hard at the first: writing is hard at the first, painting hard at the first. . . . meditation will be hard at the first. There is nothing not hard to those that are unwilling. There is nothing hard to those that love, love makes all things easy. Is it a hard thing for a lover to think or meditate on the person loved?²⁰”

²⁰I.D.E. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations*, electronic ed. (Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1996).

CONCLUSION

1. Are you bringing your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?
2. Are you both correcting and counseling them from God's Word?
3. Are you investing in teaching them how to memorize and mediate on Scripture?
4. Paul gives two commands in Ephesians 6:4.
5. The first is negative, "do not provoke your children to anger."
6. The second is positive, "but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
7. You are to do both.
8. How are you doing?
9. Like anything we learn from God's Word, we are to appropriate it to our lives.
10. If you are correcting without biblical council, then repent of that tonight and obey what God says in Ephesians 6:4.
11. If all you do is talk but never discipline by punishment, then repent of that as well and obey what God says in Ephesians 6:4.
12. Ask God to help you apply these truths tonight as we pray.