

Paul Washer – Disciplining Children (2) March 11, 2012

Let's open up our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 6 verse 4.

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

What the Scriptures are talking about in this instance is the discipline and instruction of children is the primary responsibility of the father. The mother is also involved in this, but the Scriptures directly are speaking to fathers. Now why is this important? Many times the father is out of the house and it gets to the point where the mother is the one always correcting and always disciplining. Husbands, if you want to make your wife bitter, this is how to do it. (Laughs) She is teaching the children, correcting the children, disciplining the children, and then you come home from work and playtime starts. And you let the children get away with anything and mother becomes the “bad cop” in the family and you're the good guy. That is not the burden you should place upon your wife, so it is primarily the father's job.

Another thing that is important to point out here is anger. “Provoking your children to anger.” How do you do that? There's almost an infinite number of ways. But one of the ways is never to invest anything in your children, and then to make demands upon them. Or to make demands upon them that they in no way can carry out. To never be satisfied, to never bless your children, to never affirm your love for them, to never let them know how proud you are. Many parents, especially those who come over from another country, they want their child to succeed, they want their child to get the best grade. If the child fails in something, they push and they push and they push. That's wrong. Now we should teach our children not to be lazy but sometimes the pressure that parents put on children to have academic success will lead them to the point of suicide. It also demonstrates something about the heart of the parent. You push your child to succeed in academics and you never study the Bible with them. That means that the parents care more about the world than they do about the Kingdom of Heaven.

My wife and I, we home-school. Now I've spent a great deal of time in academic circles, I've been to universities and all sorts of things. But academic excellence is not the primary goal of our home-schooling. Primary goal of our schooling is that they come to know Jesus Christ and that Christ be formed in them that they become mature Christians. Is that the primary goal for you, parents? Or would you rather just have them successful. You can be the one who actually leads your child astray. I know parents, for example, in the United States, they take their child to church on Sunday but Monday through Friday it's school. Afterschool it's soccer and football and baseball. They all get home 10 o'clock at night totally exhausted. That's not a family, that's not a home. Most people don't have a home; they have something like a hotel. Where mom lives her life outside, dad lives his life outside, each child lives their life with their friends, and then at night they all come home to go to sleep. That's not a home and that's not a family, and that's no way to raise children. It's no way to train them. You see, you really don't have hardly any influence on your child. This is very very dangerous.

Now, I can teach you all kinds of things about raising children, but I can't make you Christ-like, and all the systems of training in the world will not help you if you're not growing in the image of Christ. If you're not growing in the image of Christ, if you're not filled with the Spirit, if you are fleshly and carnal then you're going to be angry. And there's nothing you can do to stop it. That's why the father's most important task is to grow in his knowledge of the Scriptures and in conformity to Christ. Another way to make a child angry is just out on neglect. Many men will say this, “I don't spend a quantity of time with my children but I spend quality time with my children.”

Let me be as honest as I can be. That's a lie. When you pray, every time you pray, does the presence of God come down and fill the room? No. A man may pray for months, but then every once in a while, there is a sense in which the Lord has shown up and He begins to work, and it's such a special time. Quality time flows out of a quantity of time. The more time you spend with the Lord, the more time you're going to have those moments in which there's true fellowship. That's the same way with our children. Don't neglect them and then think that you can just speak into their life. I like to look at it as bindings between me and my child. Through spending time with them, or let me say it this way, every moment I spend with my children it's like ropes going around us binding us together. And it gives me the opportunity to speak into their lives. They know that I care about them more than money; they know I care about them

more than a nice car. I drive a 3,500 dollar, twelve or thirteen year old Jeep, and the side right door is all smashed in. It's the meanest looking thing you've ever seen. When I pull into a parking lot, all the new cars are afraid of me, because they know I've been in a lot of fights and I've got nothing to lose. And I don't care; I also save a lot of money on insurance. I just get liability; car breaks down on the side of the road, I just walk home and leave it there. (Laughs)

You see, spending time with them gives me the opportunity to speak into their lives. Here's what a man told me one time, "Paul, if you spend a lot of time with your children, and you build a relationship of love with them, then they will forgive you when you make a mistake."

Also another thing that will make a child angry is a father that's a hypocrite. A father who says one thing and does another. A father who will not ask for forgiveness. Many times I have to go to my children, I go to my little 10-year-old Ian, and say "Ian, I got mad at you and I was wrong. Or I was impatient with you and I was wrong. Please forgive me."

You know what he'll say a lot of times? "Oh, dad, that's okay."

And I go, "No, you must release me. You must forgive me. You must speak that into my life. Son, I'm asking for your forgiveness."

"Okay, dad, I forgive you."

"Thank you."

You see, just relationships, that's what the Christian life is about. Relationships. Now, I usually work about 12 hours a day, I have a lot to do. Now, I work in my own ministry so that's an advantage, I can get up very very early and go to work when I want. A lot of times I'll go to work, be working at 5 in the morning. Why? So I can be home at four or five. Why? To be with my family. We have a rule in my house, while I'm out of the house, the children belong to my wife. But when I walk through that door, they belong to me. And they belong to me until I put them all to bed. They're mine. I've been gone all day, they're mine. That meant changing diapers, that meant playing with my little daughter some little doll game. I'm teaching her to shoot a gun so she's kind doing stuff now that I like. (Laughs) But, being in their life, there's no substitute for that. On a day off, spending it with family, now here's something, guys, I want you to think about. It's a good example. One day on a Saturday I decided I was going to take my boys fishing. So a really good friend of mine, and he has a son, he said "What are you doing Saturday?"

"I'm taking my sons fishing!"

He said, "Great!" He said, "I'll come along with you and bring my son!"

I said, "No."

He said, "What?"

Now we've done things together. This is what I said to him, "I'm spending the day fishing with my sons. If you go, you will talk to me, our sons will talk together, that does not qualify as a day with my sons."

Do you see that men? Because you can do that. It's wrong. And with my daughter, it's the same thing. We have to have a date time; we go out and do stuff. She likes to go to the park, so I take her to the park. We climb on monkey bars and all these other things. She likes to go to the store, so I take her to the store. You see, this is what life is about. And then by doing these things, you can speak into their lives. Let me say this, and please don't misunderstand. Because we home-school, and our children are with us most of the time, people will say, "Well how are they going to develop socially if they're not with other children?" They're with other children sometimes, but I always get that question. I was teaching in England a couple of years ago, and this man stood up and he said, "How are your children going to know how to interact with people socially if they're just with you?"

And I said, "Well, what do you mean?"

And he said, "Well they need to be with other children in order to know how to act."

I said, "Really?"

I said, "You know last night after I got through preaching, I went out into the streets of London looking for a fish and chips. I saw children about the age of my son, they were saying things so vile, that I never heard such language even when I was a lost man. There were little girls exposing themselves to boys. Just how do you think those kids are going to socialize with my children?"

So by me turning my children over to that, they're going to learn how to interact in society? All the filthy things I learned as I kid, I didn't learn any of them from my mother and my father. I learned all of it from other kids. My son is 10, he travels with me when I preach, often times we have a Heart Cry table that has books on it and talks about the ministry. If I can't be there, my 10-year-old stands behind the table and talks to adults about the ministry. So I guess he's really not socialized. (Sarcasm)

Now, here's what I want you to see. At least in North America, a lot of times we say this, "What's happened to the family? Brothers and sisters aren't close anymore. Kids aren't close with their family...how did this happen?" Well let

me explain it to you, I'll tell you exactly how it happened. First of all, you throw Christianity out of the family, don't expect to have a biblical family. Second of all, I want you to think about this, I had this wise man and woman who have a large family talk to me one time. And they told me that I ought to be careful about letting my children having a lot of friends. I thought that was kind of strange, but for the first, probably 5 or 6 years of my two boys, we kind of lived out in the rural areas. They didn't really have a lot of friends, and they were as close as close could be. It's like one of them couldn't breathe without the other, best friends in the world. Then we moved to a place where they went to a real large church and they met a few kids that were really good kids, and they would come over, and within a few weeks you know what happened? For the first time in our entire family, now our children were about 7 at that time, 5, for the first time, my son Ian didn't really want to be with his younger brother anymore. He wanted to be with his friends, and he really didn't want to be with me anymore, he wanted to be with his friends. And guess what? We were creating an American family. No one wants to come home and eat, little brothers and little sisters are a nuisance, you just want to get out of your house and be with your friends. We stopped it. We stopped it until they were mature enough. And you know what? If one of those friends comes over and visits, a lot of times he's sitting over in the corner by himself and the two brothers are playing together. They want to be with their mom and dad; they want to be together as brother and sister. And you know what's amazing? People will come up and say, "I mean, I've never seen a family like this in my life. How come they just—love—just want to be together! How did you do that?!"

And I tell them and they go, "Man, that's weird." You will know them by their fruits. Academics in my home is not the most important thing. Character, Christ-likeness. Let me give you an example. I went to a really bad grade school and a really bad high school. I didn't learn anything. I decide to go to college, I go into an English class, they told me to write a paragraph with a thesis statement and supporting sentences. I didn't know what he was talking about, I never even heard those words before and I got an F.

(Larry translates F as Fantastic)

No, no, I got an F, I flunked.

Larry: Oh, flunked. That's what I mean.

I guess it's called fantastic because we live in a society that calls good evil and evil good. (Laughs) But I did, I flunked. At the end of the semester I got an A in the class. Why? Because my dad taught me how to work. I stayed in the library day and night. It's character that triumphs. *Character*. Now, it says that we are to bring our children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. I want us to go now to 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 15.

"And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:15

Now let's look at this passage. You always see this passage as with regard to discipleship. But I want to show you how it gives an excellent pattern for raising children in the instruction and admonition of the Lord. First of all, it says that it's the sacred writings that give us wisdom onto salvation. What do you need to give your children? The Scriptures. The greatest gift I can give my children is the gospel of Jesus Christ manifested in the teaching of the Scriptures. This is so extremely important that they know the Word of God. Now this does not take a large part of the day to do, but it does take up a big part of our lives. Let me just share with you how we do discipleship at home. In the evening, at least 4 or 5 times a week, I tell my boys it's time for Bible study. We've been doing it together for about two years. Now before that we had to do it individually, because my son Ian was learning to read and my son Evan had not yet learned to read. But now Ian is 10, Evan is 8, so when they were 8 and 6 we could begin studying together. So here's what we do, in every study we go through the book of Proverbs. 7 verses a night. When we get through with the book, we start through it again. And I will do that with them all the days until they leave my home. In addition to that, we choose a book of the Bible and we go through it verse by verse. About 4 to 5 times a week. Ian sits here, Evan the 8-year-old sits here. And I say, "Evan, let's begin in Romans 9 verse 1" and he'll read verse 1, then I'll explain to them what it means and I'll answer questions. And I go, "Okay, Ian, verse 2." He'll read verse 2, I'll explain to them what it means, and we go through the Bible like that. Every night.

The so-called academic experts have said that to become an expert in anything, you need 10,000 hours of training. That's my goal, that when they leave my home, they're experts in the thing that will be most important in their life. The gospel and the Scriptures. And it's a joy, it's a joy. Now with my little girl who's just 4 and she can read 3-letter words but that's about it. We go through a very simple children's Bible. We go through it twice, then we go to a more advanced Bible. Then we go through another advanced Bible, then we go into the Scriptures themselves. And then it will be she reading the Scriptures, me doing the commentary. Another thing that we do to teach our children is that they read biographies. I can remember about a year and a half ago, two years ago, Ian was 8 years old and I hear him kind of crying. I go up to his bedroom and he's on the side of his bed and he's reading the biography of the martyrdom of Polycarp. And he's weeping.

"Look how they're going to kill him, dad. He's such an old man. Why would they do this?"

"Son, they may do that to your own father one day. Will you follow Christ?"

I want them to have heroes, but heroes of the faith. I want them to read about Polycarp, I want them to read about Spurgeon, I want them to read about Hudson Taylor, and have the right kind of heroes. There's a wonderful book series out there, it's called the "Ten Boys Series", there's also a "Ten Girls Series" and it's biographies for children about men and women of God that were mightily used to change history. It's another thing that you need to understand, be very careful with what's called academics today. I will grant you, I will agree with you, we have made great advances in technology but we are not an educated people. Let me give you an example, I studied in the University, history, politics, science, philosophy, Latin, graduated with my degree, then on with a Masters. One day a friend sent me a book on logic, and I decided I'd read the first chapter, it was a work on classical logic. I read other books on logic in university, so I read the first chapter, three times. And I said, "Okay, I understand his terminology, I understand his definitions, but this is a much higher logic than I've ever studied." And I put the book down, went in the kitchen and I came back and I looked at the front of the book because it really impressed me, and I noticed it had a strange drawing on it and I thought what's that doing on the front of this book? Because it was the picture of a school teacher standing over little children that looked to be about 9 years old. And I thought, what's this picture doing on this book? And then I read the preface of the book; that was the logic primer for grade school children in the colonial period. And yet it was more advanced than anything I'd studied at the university.

We are not an educated people, and it's because we're not a Biblical people. You see, knowledge only exists because of a Biblical God. The beginning of all wisdom is the fear of the Lord. We need the Scriptures. Now I want you to look at something very important in verse 16.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable..." 2 Timothy 3:16

It is sufficient. And I know it's sufficient because it says in verse 17.

"So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:17

If you believe that the Bible is the Word of God that is not enough, you must also believe that it is sufficient for every need that man has. It is sufficient. Do you realize that some of the greatest minds in the early history of the United States and Canada had only a Bible to read? Until they went off to the University and yet became some of the greatest minds ever. My little boy Evan, he struggled with reading when he was younger. So what did I do? I didn't take him to read some book like "Run, Dick, Run" or something like that. I took him to the Scriptures and started teaching him 1 John. And now at 8, he reads fluently. His brother has just finished his second book that was over 1000 pages. What improved his reading so much? Reading the Scriptures, reading the Word of God, renewing his mind. Now, in teaching our children and disciplining our children, I want you to see something very important here. The centre of our teaching and discipline of our children ought to be the Scriptures. Do you realize that most parents never talk to their children about ethics until the children have done something wrong? There's no teaching, but when the child does something wrong, that's when you start talking about the rules. That's absurd! It contradicts the Scriptures. Discipline does not begin with punishment, discipline begins with teaching. So the first thing that we do is we take the Word of God and we teach our children.

Now, here's something that will really help. If I look at my children and I say you do this and you don't do this, because I said so, I'm just a human. I'm a human authority; ultimately all true authority is derived from God. So I'm making myself kind of their "god". I don't do that. Imagine that this is God up here, and here's my children down here. (Makes hand motions) I don't stand there and go, I'm telling you that you need to do this. Instead I'm standing like this,

(in between God and the children) and I read to them the Scriptures and I say, “Are you listening what God is telling you *and* me to do?” The authority here is God’s and His Word, what I tell you to do is what God is telling you *and* me to do. So this is about you and God, I am relaying the message and if you’re responsible to obey this, so am I. So you teach them, you teach them. You’ll take your children to learn how to play baseball, you’ll teach them how to play soccer, you’ll teach them how to get a good job, but you don’t teach them the Word of God. This is absurd! So we go to the Word of God, this is right, this is wrong, this is what God says about your mother, this is what God says about your brother, this is what God says about our home. These are the rules that we follow because they’re in here. So you teach them with the Word of God.

You don’t just say, “Don’t lie!” You take the Word of God and you show them the commands not to lie. And you show them from the book of Proverbs the consequences of lying. You teach them what God says about a liar; you use the Word of God and you teach them. My two little boys know nothing about sex, but they know that they are to stay away from any girl and any woman that tries to get them to not follow the Word of God. They know it from the book of Proverbs. You see that? Now, not only teaching, but it also says this,

“...for reproof...” 2 Timothy 3:16

To rebuke them, and to tell them they’re wrong. Ian gets mad at his brother, because his brother did something with his toy. The brother had no right to touch that toy, it belonged to his brother. Go to the Scriptures, talk about property, talk about ownership, talk about asking permission. Then go to the older brother, talk about forgiveness, talk about patience, talk about what God demands. So you rebuke them and show them, “Your impatience was wrong” and “You touching your brother’s stuff without permission was wrong.” But look what it says; it’s not enough to teach and to rebuke but also

“...for correction...” 2 Timothy 3:16

You don’t just tell your child, “You did this wrong.” But you take the Scriptures and you show him how he did it wrong and then you take the Scriptures and show him how he should have responded. You correct him with the Scriptures. Do you see that? The word here correction comes from a Greek word which talks about when a soldier falls down, and the other soldier’s standing him back up on his feet. Or when something falls over, you put it right back straight. So you use the Word of God to teach, you use the Word of God to show the child he was wrong, you use the Word of God to show him how to do it right and then lastly it says also

“...for training in righteousness;” 2 Timothy 3:16

Training. Let me ask you a question? Do you train your child? You say, well, “What do you mean?” Well first of all it’s in the Bible. Do you train them? I, I shoot a longbow. It’s very difficult to do. Now I can explain to you how to do it, I can teach you, with just verbal communication, but when you grab a hold of that bow, you’re still not really going to know what to do. So I’m going to give you a bow, I’m going to tell you how to look, I’m going to watch your eyes, I’m going to teach you how to move your arm out, I’m going to teach you how to pull this arm back, I’m going to teach you about the muscles you should be using in the centre of your back. I’m going to show you how to let go, and then I’m going to show you about a 100 times until what? Until it becomes second nature. When someone goes to study karate or kung fu they think they’re going to start acting like Ip Man the first day. And they go to class; I’ll never forget my little boys. I took them to class the first day, they were like “Man, I can’t wait! Dad, are we going to do flips in the air?!” And they stood there for an hour just learning to stand in one position right. And then they did this (punches air) for hours, and my little boy’s going, “Dad, this is boring.” But you know what, teacher made him do it so long, and now if I walk through the hall and my little boy’s coming out of the shower, back fist. And he automatically goes (back fist).

Training. Now they say, how does this work? We lived out in the country, the first day we moved out there, my boys were so happy. They were out of their mind; they were shooting out of the windows, slingshots. I’m sitting there trying to study, my son Ian runs in the house, slams the door. Runs to his room. Two minutes later, comes out of his room, opens the door, slams it. And I’m like, “I got to discipline somebody.” So I got up, and it was one of those times when the Lord just says, unbiblical reaction. Ian came in, slammed the door again. I said, “Ian, don’t slam the door.”

He stopped, he said, “Yes sir.” Went into his room, got all his B.B. guns, opened the door, slammed it! So I go to the door and I open it and here’s what

you need to realize. He was not rebelling against me. He wasn't. He said "Yes, sir." He meant it. Then what was going on? Well, you got an 8 year old boy so excited he doesn't know what to do. He's not thinking at all. Does he need to be disciplined? No, he needs to be trained. I said, "Ian, come here."

He says, "Yes, Dad."

I go, "I want you to open the door, I want you to go inside, and I want you to close it and I don't want to hear a sound. Then I want you to open the door, I want you to go out and I want you to close it. And I want you to do it 4 times."

So he goes, "Okay."

Does it 4 times. I go sit down. 5 minutes later he comes in, slams the door! And when he did it, right before he slammed it, he went "Ohh!"

I said, "Ian, come here. I want you to go in and out of the door, 8 times."

Now, if Ian is running a 100 miles an hour, and he comes through that door, he goes in slow motion.

My son didn't know how to act in a restaurant. I made a restaurant in the house. Nice tablecloth, sat him down in that chair, and we stayed there until he learned how to act in a restaurant. Training. This is the way you undo your napkin, this is the way you hold a spoon. Some of you may think this is silly, but it's part of being a dad. Teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training. Let's say my one sons has trouble with impatience. It's time to memorize some Scriptures in regard to impatience. I have to particularly watch him in that area, and when I see it coming up, I stop it. You say, "Man, Brother Paul, that takes a lot of time."

Yes it does, it takes a lot of time to be a man. Now none of us will do it perfectly, and I can't tell you this is exactly how you ought to do. But there are biblical principles here that you should and must obey, especially if you're an elder, because if a man does not govern his own house properly, he cannot govern the church of God. It's investing in our children.

I have preached the gospel in many places, I've preached the gospel in dangerous places, but my family has provided for me the greatest opportunity to die to self in real and practical ways. There's no fame in it, there's no glory from men in it, it's an opportunity to live the crucified life in service to others. Now, wives, let's say that your husband has listened to some of these things and like me he wants to do them. But like me, he does them not so perfect, you can be a great encouragement to him, or you can crush him. You can point out the good that he is doing, or you can point out his failures. Let me say it this way, you can be an instrument of God in his life or you can be an instrument of the devil. You have a lot of power for blessing and for curse. Not only does your husband have to die to the world, but so must you, my dear sister. You must die to the world. The one who dies finds life.

"He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it." Matthew 10:39

In the next sermon I don't know when it will be, but we will preach on the atoning work of Christ.