

Faithful Fathering

[Ephesians 6:4 HCSB](#) And fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Introduction: Today is Father's Day, a day to honor Dad for his special role in the family.

Someone described a father like this: "When you're small, a father has two huge hands that lift you onto his shoulders and that put worms on hooks better than any other hands in the world. A father is the man who sits at the head of the table and gets two lamb chops when you get one. He is nice to be near when there's thunder and lightning—or trouble. A father understands when you think you're too old to be kissed good night. He's the one who teaches you how to tie your tie, who buys your first razor, who gives you permission to take the car, and who comforts mom when you aren't home on time. Sometimes he helps you fail algebra. A father spends most of his life reaching in his pocket for money to give someone for something. And his favorite words are, 'Now when I was your age . . .'"

Today we're going to examine what it means to be a successful father, but this message is for mothers, too. The immediate context of Ephesians 6:1–4 refers to both parents. Successful parenting is attempting to raise our children in the fear of God, a three-step process:

1. **Do Not Provoke Your Children.** This instruction, which presupposes the fact of parental authority, tells parents not to use that authority to abuse or put down their child. Parents abuse their authority by making irritating or unreasonable demands on their children, or by making no allowance for the inexperience and immaturity of children.

- [Colossians 3:21 HCSB](#) Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so they won't become discouraged.

Dan Benson, in his book *The Total Man*, surveyed a number of families and found that for every *positive* statement made in the homes there were ten *negative* ones. We men have an amazing capacity to be critical. We need to learn to see the positive in our children and to frequently praise their strengths rather than continually harping on their weaknesses.

2. **Bring Them Up in the Training of the Lord.** The phrase, "bring them up" contains the idea of nurturing or nourishing. This involves:

A. **Prayer.** Praying for your children, especially "praying Scripture."

B. **Modeling.** Values are more caught than taught. While children may not be good at listening to their parents, they never fail to imitate them.

C. **Time.** Our children need our presence more than our presents. In a study by Cornell University, it was found that the average dad spends about 37 seconds a day with his small children.

D. **Discipline.** Not just punishment, but retraining.

- [Hebrews 12:6 HCSB](#) **for the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and punishes every son whom He receives.**
- [Proverbs 13:24 HCSB](#) The one who will not use the rod hates his son, but the one who loves him disciplines him diligently.

3. **Bring Them Up in the Instruction of the Lord.** A consistent life is not enough; we must provide verbal instruction and biblical teachings for our children. The phrase "of the Lord" indicates that the instruction is given by the parents, but it proceeds from the Lord. The suggestion is that the Lord nurtures the child through the parents. We must recognize that God has given us the responsibility to provide for our children in a physical, an emotional, and a spiritual sense.

- [Deuteronomy 6:6-9 HCSB](#) These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. (7) Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house

and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (8) Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. (9) Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

According to Deuteronomy 6, one of the best ways to do this is by spontaneously sharing Bible verses with your children as the occasion demands, as you sit at home and as you drive down the road, when you get up and when you go to bed.

Conclusion: Here's the way someone paraphrased 1 Corinthians 13 for parents: "If I speak to my children with remarkable words of wisdom and have no love, I'm a two-year-old banging on a dishpan. If I spend all of my salary providing the best for them, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love waits with incredible patience for children to develop self-discipline. Love does not puff up in arrogance and pride when an adolescent daughter tests the limits of her newfound independence. Love does not resort to violence when a teenage son talks back. It does not overreact when a child fails to listen or resent the rebellious youth who refuses to accept the message or the messenger. Love does not laugh contemptuously when the child gets what he deserves, but glows with contentment at every small accomplishment. It carries its own burden yet stoops to pick up a tired child. It believes the best about each child, hopes the best for that child, and endures the pain inflicted by the child. Love simply never quits."