

Fathers,... #93
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Thesis: Children are a blessing from God and are to be treated as such. Fathers must not provoke their children, but are to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Support: Ephesians 6:4

1. Greeting

- a. Good morning!
- b. Happy Fathers Day!

2. Introduction

- a. Ten years ago, upon hearing the news that he would be a daddy, Scott Stapp, of the band Creed, wrote these lyrics:

- i. Well I just heard the news today
It seems my life is going to change
I closed my eyes, begin to pray
Then tears of joy stream down my face

With arms wide open
Under the sunlight
Welcome to this place
I'll show you everything
With arms wide open

Well I don't know if I'm ready
To be the man I have to be
I'll take a breath, I'll take her by my side
We stand in awe, we've created life

With arms wide open
Under the sunlight
Welcome to this place
I'll show you everything
With arms wide open
Now everything has changed
I'll show you love
I'll show you everything
With arms wide open

- b. This song is one of my favorite songs because I can personally relate to it.
 - i. Each time I hear it, I am brought to tears, because this song reminds me of my boys.
 1. When I heard the news I was going to be a daddy, I closed my eyes and began to pray.
 2. When I heard the news, I had tears of joy streaming down by face.
 3. When I heard the news, I took Jeri by my side, and we stood in awe, because we created life.
 - a. I will always love my boys.
 - b. My arms will always be wide open for them.



- c. One of the few things that frightens me is the thought of being separated from them, either in this life or in the life to come.
 - i. I want to be able to hold and love and embrace my kids forever; I don't ever want to let them go.
 - c. As a father, I am resolved to do whatever it takes to help my boys join me and their mom in heaven.
3. **Last year on Father's Day, we looked at the obedience and honor due to parents by children. This morning, let us turn our attention to the responsibilities due to children by their fathers. Our primary text, this morning, is a single verse – Ephesians 6:4. Please open your Bibles to Ephesians 6:4. The apostle Paul writes:**
- a. ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
4. **Within the context of eternity, I submit to you three points to consider regarding this admonishment**
5. **First, fathers are addressed.**
- a. Paul writes, "Fathers,..."
 - i. He doesn't write mothers.
 - ii. He doesn't write mothers and fathers.
 - iii. He writes fathers.
 - 1. Fathers are given the primary responsibility for training children.
 - a. Obviously, mothers are also involved in the training of children.
 - b. However, fathers are to lead, and they bear the ultimate responsibility for discipline and instruction of the kids.
 - 2. Harry S. Truman, the 33rd President of the United States, kept a plaque on his desk that read, "The Buck Stops Here."
 - a. The ever so eloquent George W. Bush said it this way, "I'm the decider, and I decide what's best."
 - b. Brothers, in your families, you are President.
 - i. The buck stops with you.
 - ii. You are the decider.
 - iii. You need to "man up," assume your responsibilities, and be the husband and father your family needs and deserves.
 - 3. This necessarily means fathers will spend a lot of time training their kids.
 - 4. Peter Lynch was one of the most successful investors of all time.
 - a. He ran the Fidelity Magellan fund from 1977 to 1990 and compounded money at an average annual 29.2% per year.
 - b. A \$10,000 investment would have grown into \$288,000 at the end of those 13 years.
 - c. While still at the top of his game, he abruptly retired from the fund in 1990.
 - i. Here is what he wrote about his resignation, "...I had a revelation. I remember that my father had died when he was 46 years old. You start to feel mortal when you



realize you've already outlived your parents. You start to recognize that you're only going to exist for a little while, whereas you're going to be dead for a long time. You start wishing you'd seen more school plays and ski meets and afternoon soccer games. You remind yourself that nobody on his deathbed ever said: "I wish I'd spent more time at the office."

- ii. So he resigned. He took a less prestigious, less lucrative, and less demanding job at Fidelity.
 1. As far as I know, Peter Lynch is not a man of faith, yet even he realized the need to spend more time with his family.
 2. As Christian men, with eternity in view, doesn't it make even more sense to adopt this mentality, if at all possible.
 3. Fathers, you need to ensure you have the proper balance in your lives.
 4. You need ensure you are spending enough time playing with and training your kids.
 5. You only have one shot with each one, so you need to get it right.

b. Fathers, you bear the responsibility for the training of your children.

6. **Second, Fathers, do not provoke.**

a. **Ephesians 6:4b**, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,..."

- i. The apostle starts with a negative command.
 1. We, as fathers, are not to provoke our children to anger.
 2. We are not to abuse the power God has given to us.
 3. Brother Olbricht notes in his commentary:
 - a. Fathers can exasperate their children by harsh commands, correction for every little fault, demands that are too strict, or severe punishment. They need to temper discipline and strictness with love and kindness. Fathers should not nag, criticize, create resentment, continually complain, or provoke their children to anger. Humiliating children, not treating them in an equal manner with others, or failing to be understanding can greatly discourage them.
 4. Provoking your children to anger not only violates the golden rule, it may also cause them to lose heart and become discouraged (**Colossians 3:21**).
 - a. Severe and unfair treatment of a child will eventually cause him to despair of ever being able to please his father.
 - b. This treatment will eventually break the tender heart of a little one.
 5. General Douglas MacArthur once said, "By profession, I am a soldier and take great pride in that fact. But I am prouder, infinitely prouder, to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build. The father only



builds, never destroys...It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not from the battle, but in the home.”

- a. Fathers, build up your kids.
 - b. Don't destroy them by provoking them to anger.
7. **Third, Fathers discipline and instruct.**
- a. Paul turns from the negative to the positive in **Ephesians 6:4c**, "...but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
 - i. Fathers are to bring up, rear, and train their children generally.
 1. But specifically in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
 - a. The word translated as discipline means, "The act of providing guidance for responsible living, *upbringing, training, instruction*, in our lit. chiefly as it is attained by *discipline, correction*" (BDAG).
 - b. The word translated as instruction means, "Counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct, *admonition, instruction*" (BDAG).
 2. Here's the bottom line: Fathers must provide all of the required training to bring up their children so that they are one day productive citizens in society and, even more importantly, in the kingdom.
 - a. This is accomplished through education with positive and negative reinforcement.
 - i. Praise and punishment; carrots and sticks.
 3. The ultimate goal for all of this training is for each and every one of these little ones to become faithful Christians.
 - ii. As I said before, fathers must dedicate significant amounts of time to the task.
 1. Moses writes in **Deuteronomy 6:6-9**:
 - a. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
 - i. Here's the obvious point.
 1. The way your children will develop faith in God is by being continually exposed to his Word.
 2. I am reminded of a study done by brother Wendell Byrd some time ago.
 - a. He was interested in the spiritual development of young people, and here's what he found out.
 - i. When both parents were faithful Christians and actively involved in the local congregation, 93% of their children remained faithful.
 - ii. When only one person was zealous, 73% of children remained faithful.



- iii. When both parents were “reasonably active,” just over ½ of their kids remained loyal.
 - iv. When both parents only worshipped infrequently, just 6% of their children maintained their faith.
 - 3. Training up your children in the way they should go takes vast amounts of time and energy; it doesn’t “just happen.”
- iii. Training also requires punishment, even corporal, if necessary.
 - 1. **Proverbs 13:24** says, “²⁴ Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.”
 - a. Clearly, there are times when parents should use corporal punishment because they love their children.
- iv. I want more than anything, for my three boys to become Christians and remain faithful.
 - 1. I want to spend eternity with them.
 - 2. Gary and Bev batted 1000.
 - a. They have five children, and all five appear to be faithful today.
 - 3. So I asked Gary about his parenting secret.
 - a. He told me, “It is all about authority. You need to teach your kids about authority at a very young age.”
 - i. Daddy’s authority.
 - ii. God’s authority.
 - b. He then told me, the means he used to teach authority.
 - i. He kept an old ping pong paddle hanging on a doorknob.
 - ii. He only used it sparingly (at least that’s what he said).
 - iii. But it always hung there to remind his kids that he was the boss.
 - 4. Not too long after our conversation, I went out and bought “Paddy.”
 - a. Let me tell you, my kids love “Paddy.”
 - b. Isn’t he cute.
 - c. Noah especially likes it when I put a little topspin on Paddy when I use him.
 - d. Gabers is partial to the black side.
 - e. Josh doesn’t like Paddy; he finds no humor in it.
 - i. All kidding aside, after I have use Paddy, I hold my kids in my arms and tell them how much I love them.
 - ii. I use Paddy only because it is in their long term best interest.
 - iii. Love can be, and should be, reflected in corporal punishment from time to time (unless your kids happen to be perfect).
- v. I want to make you aware of one last thing before we close.
 - 1. There is a United Nations treaty called the U.N. Convention on the Rights of a Child.
 - a. This treaty has been ratified in all but 2 countries in the World.



- i. Only the United States and Somalia have not ratified it.
 - ii. President Obama has said of this treaty, "It's embarrassing to find ourselves in the company of Somalia, a lawless land. I will review this and other treaties to ensure the United States resumes its global leadership in human rights."
 - iii. There is pressure within our government to ratify this treaty in the name of children's rights.
- 2. This treaty, however, is dangerous to parents, especially Christian parents. Here are some of the consequences (according to parentalrights.org):
 - a. Children would have the ability to choose their own religion while parents would only have the authority to give their children advice about religion.
 - b. The best interest of the child principle would give the government the ability to override every decision made by every parent if a government worker disagreed with the parent's decision.
 - c. A child's "right to be heard" would allow him (or her) to seek governmental review of every parental decision with which the child disagreed.
 - d. According to existing interpretation, it would be illegal for a nation to spend more on national defense than it does on children's welfare.
 - e. Children would acquire a legally enforceable right to leisure.
 - f. Christian schools that refuse to teach "alternative worldviews" and teach that Christianity is the only true religion "fly in the face of article 29" of the treaty.
 - g. Allowing parents to opt their children out of sex education has been held to be out of compliance with the CRC.
 - h. Children would have the right to reproductive health information and services, including abortions, without parental knowledge or consent.
 - i. Parents would no longer be able to administer reasonable spankings to their children.
 - j. A murderer aged 17 years and 11 months and 29 days at the time of his crime could no longer be sentenced to life in prison.
 - i. This is a dangerous treaty; this document strips power from parents and places it within the hands of government and children.
 - 1. A 12-year old girl could be taken from her parents if she complains to the government about having to go church too often.
 - 2. A 6-year old boy could be taken from his home because of a spanking.



- a. Raising children with an eye towards eternity is hard.
- b. This treaty would make it infinitely more difficult for fathers are to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

8. Conclusion

- a. I, like every father here today, want to hold and love and embrace my children not only in this life but also in the life to come.
 - i. In order for this to happen:
 - 1. We have to step up and be the husbands and fathers we ought to be.
 - a. We bear the responsibility for training up our children.
 - 2. We must not provoke our children to anger; otherwise, they will lose heart and become discouraged.
 - 3. We must bring our children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
 - ii. King Solomon writes in **Proverbs 22:6**, “⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”
 - 1. This is a proverb and not a promise.
 - 2. That being said, if we fathers do our part, most of the time (not always, but most of the time) our kids will also do their part.
 - a. They will not depart from the way they should go.

9. Invitation

- a. I conclude with an invitation.
- b. If you are here this morning, and you have not yet put on the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism, you now have an opportunity to do so.
- c. If you are ready to obey the gospel by faith, won't you please come forward as we stand and sing.
- d. Let us stand and sing.

