

June 20, 2004
A.M. Service – Father’s Day
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“Fathers...”

Eph 6:4 (NIV)

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Eph 6:4 (NLT)

And now a word to you fathers. Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.

1. Fathers:

Why fathers? Mothers also are to be active in the raising of children. But, *fathers, the responsibility of bring up the children is on you*. You need to see that the children are cared for, disciplined and instructed. Don't say, "My wife takes care of the children, that's her job. I too busy with other things." That's not what the Bible says, that's not how God wants you to see it. Make time to be involved with your children, because their upbringing is your responsibility. How you spend your time reflects what's important to you. Are your children important to you? Is doing God's will important to you? Dad, spend time with your children. You don't need to wait for the perfect time when you can take a vacation or an afternoon off from work. Instead, grab those small pockets of time as they present themselves throughout the day. Call your kids on your cell phone between appointments. Send them an e-mail from work. Read to them at bedtime. Carve out a few minutes to help with homework. Go to breakfast. Drop them off at school. Grab every moment you can with your children. If you don't spend time with your children, if you are not actively involved in their discipline and instruction you will make them insecure and angry and so the Scripture says...

2. Do not exasperate your children:

(NLT) "Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them." To exasperate means to irritate or annoy very much; infuriate or frustrate. How? By the way you treat them. By not bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. For that's what Paul says, the way to avoid making your children angry children, angry teens and angry adults is to bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.

a.) **Under Discipline:** We anger and frustrate our children when we do not give them any discipline - No Rules. Fathers, you frustrate and infuriate your children when you give no leadership to the home. Parents, you exasperate your children when you have no rules. They don't know what they are allowed to do and not allowed to do. Anything goes. It is absolutely ridiculous to think that you should allow your child to do whatever they want. If you do that you are raising them to be insecure and rebellious because they need what their boundaries are and you are not providing it.

b.) **Over Discipline:** The opposite mistake is to have Too Many Rules and to be too strict. This is abusive. In "...Paul's day the father had full legal rights over his

children and often ran his household with rigid control. In Jewish families, the fathers were responsible for the education of the children. Paul did not have to establish the fathers' authority; rather, his aim was to set the limits on harsh treatment. Parenting is not easy -- it takes lots of patience to raise children in a loving, Christ-honoring manner. But frustration and anger should not be causes for discipline. Parents can remove the exasperating effect of their discipline by avoiding nagging, labeling, criticizing, or dominating. Don't goad (provoke) your children into resenting you. Paul wrote specifically to fathers because, in that culture, fathers were the absolute head of the home, with complete control and authority. For Paul to say that they needed to treat their children as human beings and consider their feelings was revolutionary. As Christ changed the way husbands and wives related, so he changed the way parents and children related. (from The Life Application Commentary Series copyright (C) 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 by the Livingstone Corporation. Produced with permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.)

- c.) ***Inconsistent Discipline:*** The third way to anger children is to keep changing the rules - Changing Rules. One time you let them get away with a certain behavior another time you scold them for the same behavior. Often this happens when you don't have a prior plan. Then you end up disciplining in anger. In the heat of the moment you may give the wrong kind of discipline – a punishment that doesn't fit the crime. You and your children need to know before it happens what is expected and what will happen if the rule is broken. Isn't this what God does with us in the Bible? And He's a pretty good parent wouldn't you say? A perfect Parent! God said, "Here are my laws (rules) if you keep them you will be blessed. But if you break them there will be punishment." Then He followed through on what He said He would do. Father's sit down with your wife discuss what problems you are having with the children. Set down some rules and what the punishment will be if they are broken or what the reward will be when they are kept. Once you and your wife agree, present it to your children. Make sure they understand and agree. Then be consistent. Make sure you follow through. And so, "Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them." The next part of the verse says...

3. Instead / rather:

Rather than provoking anger in your children, do the following instead. The Bible doesn't just tell us what not to do, it tells us what good habits should replace our bad ones. It instructs us not only on what we are doing wrong but how to correct it by doing what is right. So do this instead and you will not make your children angry by the way you treat them, but they will feel loved and important by the way you treat them. Your children need to feel loved and important. What happens when we don't get what we want? We get angry! Father's, don't exasperate your children, instead...

4. Bring them up:

Notice:

- a.) ***They cannot bring up themselves.***

As I alluded to before, they cannot bring themselves up. They need direction, instruction, training and discipline. They will not automatically grow up to be what God wants them to be. They can't bring themselves up properly. You must bring them up...it's hard work, but God never intended for a child to bring up himself. You must be actively engaged in making your child what God wants them to be "Bring them up" is a command. Prov 29:15 NLT - "To discipline and reprimand a child produces wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by an undisciplined child." If you allow your child to be raised in an atmosphere of complete freedom, allowed to make their own choices, and do their own thing, express themselves freely, the result will be disgrace to the parents. Fathers and mothers must be constantly involved, they are never off duty, until the children leave and go out on their own.

b.) *Not, put them down, but bring them up.*

Notice that it doesn't say, put them down, it says bring them up. Encourage your children; be careful how you treat them and how you talk to them (as mentioned above). Instruct them, then encourage the good and discipline the bad. They don't know what is right or wrong. You must teach and train them and discipline them. Discipline is the total training of your child that includes instruction and punishment. But be careful how you do it.

c.) *Not, hold them back, but bring them up.*

I am not suggesting they have no freedom, or that you should expect your child to be perfect. Rather, encourage them to live up to the potential that God has for them, don't discourage them.

But first you must have some direction before you can give it. How should you bring up your children...

5. In the training and instruction of the Lord:

(NLT) "With the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord."

a.) *The Bible: The direction you need.*

The Bible can give you the direction you need. In the Bible God tells us what is right and what is wrong. He tells us and shows how to give loving training, instruction and discipline. The Bible has instruction for the bringing up of children. If you read and apply the Bible it will help you. But you need something more.

b.) *Relationship with God: The power you need.*

Fathers, you need to have a relationship with God. For the best fathers are godly fathers. We cannot be godly by our own will power. We need God's power. We have to have more than a Biblical plan to enforce as we raise our children or relate to our wife, or in how we live in general. We also need to live with a pure and loving heart or motives and only God can change and purify our motives. We need to know God, enter His Kingdom and have His power to do what is right and good. How do we know God, enter His Kingdom and have His power? We can't be good enough or discipline ourselves enough to know God and enter His Kingdom. It is in and through Christ and Christ alone that we

can have a relationship with God. God loves us so much that He not only made a way for us to know Him but He gives this privilege to us free as a gift. We come to Him with empty hands and a hungry heart. That's it. Admit your need to God and ask Him to come into your life and help you to be the father / man He wants you to be and you father / man you really want to be. Then you will be able to also teach your children about the Lord.

c.) *Introduce your children to Jesus: There greatest need.*

You cannot give them a better gift than to introduce them to Jesus. This is included in the interpretation of this verse to bring up your children in the instruction of the Lord – bring them up to know about the Lord, be a godly example of a man who knows the Lord and pray that one day your children will know Him. Bring them up to know and trust the Lord Jesus; bring them up to be disciples of Jesus. Jesus gave us the “Great Commission”: “Go and make disciples, teaching them to obey all I’ve commanded you.” Start with your children. Bring them up to obey the truth. Prepare them to make intelligent, Biblical, moral decisions of themselves. But the key will be, Fathers, have a relationship with Jesus, and then practice what you preach, avoid a double standard and always give love and respect even when you are not receiving it.

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