



God's Design for the Family

Lesson 5: The Duty of Parents

Key Verse: Ephesians 6:4

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

Overview

When President Woodrow Wilson was president of Princeton University, he received letters from parents who wanted to know why the university did not make more out of their children when they were sent off to Princeton. President Wilson told the parents, “The reason is that they are your sons, reared in your homes, blood of your blood, bone of your bone. They have absorbed the ideals of your homes. You have formed and fashioned them. They are your sons. In those malleable, moldable years of their lives you have forever left your imprint on them.” President Wilson understood that the most influential people in a child’s life are parents, yet there are many parents who don’t understand this and want someone else to raise their children.

In our last lesson, we saw the duty of children in the family. The one duty that children have is to obey their parents. Along with obedience they are to show honor to their parents as well. However, children are not born ready to obey their parents. In fact, the opposite is true. Children are born with a sin nature which is on display in their actions and their words.

How do children learn obedience? From their parents. It is the duty of the parents to teach them. But this requires parents to be available to their children. In our society today, there are passive parents who want their children to turn out well, but who are not willing to put in the time and devotion it takes to raise their own children. Many parents have turned their children over to day-care centers, grandparents, television screens, peers, and other forms of social media and entertainment. Sadly, these have become more influential in a child’s life than the child’s own parents.

Psalm 127:3 says, “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.” Children are a gift and heritage from the Lord. This means that when God gives children to parents, He also gives them great responsibility. He lays the responsibility of raising children on the parents. Child-rearing is a full-time job which takes hard work from both a father and mother. Children are constantly absorbing information and ready to be molded and shaped by their parents. While children have the easy duty of obeying their parents, the parents have the rigorous duty of raising their children. It is the parent’s duty to train their children in the Lord and give them the kind of discipline and instruction that only faithful parents can provide. In the formative years of a child’s life, parents will either steer their children in the right direction or the wrong direction. In this lesson, we will see what God says about the duty that parents have to raise their own children.

Do Not Provoke Your Children

1. Ephesians 6:4. Who is this command given to? _____

2. Colossians 3:21. What is Paul's command to parents? _____

3. Ephesians 6:4. What are parents not to provoke their children to? _____

4. How can parents provoke their children?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

5. Colossians 3:21. What happens when a parent provokes their child? _____

Bring Up Your Children

1. Ephesians 6:4. What does “bring up” mean? _____

2. What ages are parents responsible for? _____

Discipline Your Children

1. Ephesians 6:4. What does discipline mean? _____

2. How is discipline done? _____
3. Proverbs 13:24. What is included in this discipline? _____
4. This is the _____ of education which could also be translated as *training*.

Instruct Your Children

1. Ephesians 6:4. What does instruction (*nouthesia*) mean?
 - a. *nous* = _____
 - b. *tithēmi* = _____
2. What three words describe “instruction”? _____
3. This refers to the _____ counsel that is given a child and includes exhortation towards proper behavior.

Evangelize Your Children

1. Ephesians 6:4. Where does this discipline and instruction come from? _____
2. Deuteronomy 6:4–7. What is the responsibility of parents? _____

3. What is a child’s greatest need? _____
4. What is the best way for parents to reach their child? _____

“When the Supreme Court handed down its ruling against required prayer in the public schools, the famous editorial cartoonist Herblock published a cartoon in the Washington Post showing an angry father waving a newspaper at his family and shouting, “What do they expect us to do—listen to the kids pray at home?” The answer is: Yes! Home is the place where the children ought to learn about the Lord and the Christian life. It is time that Christian parents stop “passing the buck” to Sunday School teachers and Christian day-school teachers and start nurturing their children.”

—Warren Wiersbe

Application

1. Parents, are you taking responsibility for raising your children?
2. Parents, are you reaching the heart of your child with the gospel?
3. Church, are you praying for parents who have the duty of raising their children?

Ten Principles for Parents

1. Teach them to fear the Lord. (Proverbs 1:7)
2. Teach them to obey their parents. (Proverbs 1:8)
3. Teach them to guard their heart. (Proverbs 4:23)
4. Teach them to be content. (Proverbs 23:4–5)
5. Teach them to work hard. (Proverbs 6:9–11)
6. Teach them to speak the truth. (Proverbs 4:24)
7. Teach them to choose wise friends. (Proverbs 13:20)
8. Teach them to practice self-control. (Proverbs 7)
9. Teach them to enjoy marriage. (Proverbs 5:18)
10. Teach them to love others. (Proverbs 3:27–29)