

# Spiritual Disciplines - Fatherhood

*Eph. 6:4 – “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”.*

## **The Need for Godly Fathers:**

I believe the lack of godly fathers is at the root of many of the social and spiritual problems in America today. The Scriptures lay a great deal of responsibility at the feet of the fathers and when this responsibility is not assumed and fulfilled, chaos is the result. We have many young (and old) men today who do not understand responsibility, morality, or love because they never had a father to teach it to them. I believe that much of the promiscuity and perversion among women is the result of seeking attention that their fathers never gave to them. Read Luke 1:13-17. This passage refers to the work of John the Baptist in preparing a people for the Lord. Part of John’s work was to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children. Why? Because godly fathers are a foundation of a good Christian home, which is a building block of the Church and of a good society. When godly fathers are physically, spiritually, or mentally absent, the home suffers and chaos results.

Children have a natural love for both of their parents, but they have a special honor for their fathers. Look at the passage below:

*Proverbs 17:6 – “Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.”*

When fathers fail to fulfill God’s expectations for them and let both God and their children down, the children look elsewhere for attention and direction. It is not possible for a mother to fulfill both her role and the role of a husband. That isn’t to say that God can’t bless single mothers, enabling them to raise godly children. I mean that whenever a godly father is missing, he can’t be replaced.

Many of the key passages on child raising are directed at fathers (See Ephesians 6:4, Proverbs 4:1-4, Isaiah 38:19, Colossians 3:21, Hebrews 12:7-10, 1 Timothy 3:4-5). This doesn’t mean that mothers don’t also play a tremendous role in parenting. However, the leadership has been given to men and these verses imply that men are to play a key role in loving, teaching, and disciplining their children!

## **The Father’s Directives**

One of the key passages in Scripture relating to the role that fathers must play in the home is Ephesians 6:4. This passage gives fathers four directives: Don’t provoke your children to anger; Bring them up (Tenderly Cherish them); Nurture (Discipline) them; and Admonish (Instruction) them. Let’s discuss each of these.

### **Don’t Provoke them to Anger**

Somehow, many of the behavioral traps that men easily fall into bring our children down in frustration and provoke them toward anger, bitterness, and ungodly lives. Read Colossians 3:21 and discuss how the following behaviors can be manifested and how this provokes a child to anger and discouragement.

**Criticism**

**Over Strictness**

**Irritability**

**Inconsistency**

**Favoritism**

**Tenderly Cherish them**

# Spiritual Disciplines - Fatherhood

**Eph. 6:4** – “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”.

Once we know what not to do, we need to know what to do. Many people skip past this portion of Ephesians 6:4 because the meaning is not clearly illustrated in the King James Version. To “bring them up” means to tenderly cherish your children. This describes a way in which we accomplish our instruction and discipline, the next two parts of this passage.

Our model for fathering is the way God, the Father, attends to His children. Psalms 25:6 says, “Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.” Consider how patient, loving, and merciful God is toward you, despite your limited understanding, endless questions, lack of faith, and outright rebellion against Him. Consider the infinite gap between His knowledge and your knowledge, His perfection and your sin. Then, consider your children and the way you respond to them. Are there more similarities than differences? What might God be convicting you to change?

## Discipline

Discipline is a dreaded but necessary part of child raising. Proverbs 22:15 says, “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” Proverbs 13:24 also says, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” The rod here is symbolic of all forms of discipline, not just spanking.

What is the goal of discipline?

When people think of discipline they normally think of violence and anger. What are some ways that we can conduct discipline in a tender and loving manner?

## Instruction

The word “instruction” literally means “to place before the mind”. It is the process of instilling knowledge, understanding, and wisdom in our children so that they might have the right concepts “before their mind” when they make decisions. While teaching methods may vary from person to person, the importance of accomplishing this task in them cannot be overemphasized. Read 1 Samuel 3:11-13 and discuss Eli’s failure to instruct his children.

Many parents think of giving lectures when you say that they should instruct their children. What does the Scriptures teach us about how and when we should instruct them? Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and discuss how to have an instructive lifestyle in today’s society.

How does the direction to be tender and loving affect how we instruct our children?