

# Ephesians 6:4 Commentary

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Ephesians 6:4 **Fathers**, do not **provoke** your **children** to **anger**, but **bring** them up in the **discipline** and **instruction** of the **Lord**. (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [Kai oi pateres, me parorgizete \(2PPAM\) ta tekna humon alla ektrephete \(2PPAM\) auta en paideia kai nouthesia kuriou.](#)

**Amplified:** Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to resentment], but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**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. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT (2004 Version)** Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

**Phillips:** Fathers, don't over-correct your children or make it difficult for them to obey the commandment. Bring them up with Christian teaching in Christian discipline. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** The children, be always obedient to your parents in the Lord, for this is a righteous thing.

**Young's Literal:** And the fathers! provoke not your children, but nourish them in the instruction and admonition of the Lord.

## FATHERS, DO NOT PROVOKE YOUR CHILDREN TO ANGER: Kai oi pateres, me parorgizete (2PPAM) ta tekna humon

- Genesis 31:14,15; 1Samuel 20:30-34; Colossians 3:21
- [Ephesians 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 6:4: Spirit-Filled Families - 5](#) - Wayne Barber
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In **Colossians** Paul adds a phrase (may not lose heart) to this negative command...

Fathers, **do not exasperate** (**erethizo** - cause to feel resentment, make bitter, excite to anger. The **present imperative** with a negative which can be translated stop doing this to) your children, that they **may not lose heart** (**athumeo** from a= without + thumos = passion -- means to become disheartened and so lack motivation. The word implies losing heart, being listless, spiritless, disinterested, moody, sullen, with a kind of blank resignation toward life). (Col 3:21-note)

Fathers, don't take this verse out of its very important context! There is one way to fulfill this command and it is not in your strength but the Spirit's strength! The chapter break between 5 and 6 "hides" the fact that this command is an outflow of a **Spirit filled life** (which is commanded to be one's lifestyle in Eph 5:18-note). Don't try to do this on your own. Jettison self-reliance and submit to the Spirit's sufficiency to be enabled to discipline your children without provoking them! The parallel command in Colossians also has an important context - Col 3:16-note. Notice how filling with the Word is associated with effects almost identical to being filled with the Spirit. (**See Table - How being filled with the Word Col 3:16 "energizes" being filled with the Spirit**)

It is interesting to note that the first reference in the Bible to teaching has to do with Abraham's responsibility to bring up his own son in the nurture and admonition of the Lord...

"For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him." (Genesis 18:19).

**Bengel** wrote that the plague of youth is a "broken spirit," discouraged by continuous criticism and rebuke and too strict discipline.

**Luther's** father was very strict, strict to the point of cruelty. In fact he was so stern to him that Luther all his days found it difficult to pray: "Our Father." The word father in his mind stood for nothing but severity. Luther used to say:

"Spare the rod and spoil the child—that is true; but beside the rod keep an apple to give him when he has done well."

Ancient civilization was merciless to the sickly or deformed child as indicated by a writing from the Roman historian Seneca who said...

“We slaughter a fierce ox; we strangle a mad dog; we plunge the knife into sickly cattle lest they taint the herd; children who are born weakly and deformed we drown.”

**First the negative command and then the positive.** The negative was necessary because in the ancient culture of both Gentile and Jewish households, the father often ruled the family in a rigid and domineering manner, with little concern for the desires and welfare of the wife and children. The gospel changed these Gentile fathers, and Paul reminds them of their new way of living now possible because of the filling and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. They are to throw off the filthy garments of the old man they used to be in Adam and put on the new garments of righteousness they now are in Christ.

**Leon Morris** writes that this idea...

would have been revolutionary in its day; in the first-century Roman Empire, fathers could do pretty much what they liked in their families. They could even sentence family members to death (Morris, Leon. Expository Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994)

**Fathers** - It cannot be overlooked that the responsibility for nurturing children in the faith is fixed squarely on the shoulders of Christian fathers. Obviously, mothers will have much to do with the nurture and training of children (e.g., Pr 1:8 "*Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake your mother's teaching*"); but fathers who relinquish this duty entirely to their wives do so in clear violation of New Testament teaching. Children are a gift from the Lord and are to be reared for Him.

Note that the Greek word for "**fathers**" is *pateres* (plural) and although usually the word for the male head of the family it is sometimes used to speak of the parents, encompassing both the mother and father. (E.g., see Hebrews 11:23-note where *pateres* refers to both parents).

The venerable **J Vernon McGee** has his usual witty comment writing that...

Children are not to be provoked to anger. This doesn't mean that they are to be treated as if they were a cross between an orchid and a piece of Dresden china. I think that the board of education should be applied to the seat of learning whenever it is needed...There is the story of the father whipping the little boy and saying, "Son, this hurts me more than it hurts you." The boy replied, "Yeah, but not in the same place!" These little ones who simply will not obey need to be spanked. They need a trip to the woodshed. A child should never be whipped while the parent is angry; this is stated very clearly. We are never to provoke our children to wrath, which will happen if they see that we are simply venting a mean disposition on them. They should be disciplined. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Provoke** (3949) (**parorgizo** from **pará** = at point of, unto, implying movement toward a certain point + **orgizo** = to irritate or make angry) means to make angry, cause to be irritated or exasperate. It means to stimulate one to the point of a brooding, simmering anger that is nurtured and not allowed to die. It is seen in the holding of a grudge, in the smoldering bitterness that refuses to forgive. It is the anger that cherishes resentment and does not want reconciliation. To exasperate means to excite the anger of or to cause irritation or annoyance to.

Paul uses the **present imperative** with a negative which can be translated stop provoking your children to anger, implying that it was going on in among the saved Gentile fathers. Not provoking them to anger involves avoiding attitudes, words, and actions which would drive a child to anger exasperation or resentment and thus rules out

A few ways that can provoke rather than parent a child - How to provoke: favoritism, comparison, unrealistic standards, over-indulging, rescuing, discouragement, lack of rewards, unfulfilled promises, treating them like boarders rather than children, not admitting mistakes, ridiculing, neglect, abusive words, sarcasm, physical abuse.

**KJV Bible Commentary** writes that **parorgizo**...

means do not irritate, exasperate, rub the wrong way, incite. This is done by a wrong spirit and by wrong methods, i.e., severity, unreasonableness, sternness, harshness, cruel demands, needless restrictions, and selfish insistence upon authority. Such provocation would produce adverse reactions, deaden his affection, check his desire for holiness, and make him feel that he can't possibly please his parents. A wise parent seeks to make obedience desirable and attainable by love and gentleness. Parents must not be godless tyrants. ([Dobson, E G, Charles Feinberg, E Hindson, Woodrow Kroll, H L. Wilmington: KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson](#))

The danger in the home is parents who are authoritarian but do not exercise loving spiritual authority.

The only other NT use of **parorgizo** is found in **Romans 10** Paul writing...

But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? At the first Moses says, "I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, By a nation without understanding will I **anger** you. (See **note** Romans 10:19)

There are more than 44 uses of **parorgizo** in the **Septuagint (LXX)**

Deut. 4:25; 31:29; 32:21; Jdg. 2:12; 1 Ki. 15:30; 16:2, 7, 13, 26, 33; 21:20, 22; 22:53; 2 Ki. 17:11, 17; 21:6, 15; 22:17; 23:19, 26; 2 Chr. 28:25; 33:6; 34:25; 35:19; Ezra 5:12; Job 12:6; Ps. 78:40, 58; 106:16, 32; Isa. 1:4; Jer. 7:18f; 8:19; 11:17; 25:6; Ezek. 16:26, 54; 20:27; 32:9; Dan. 11:36; Hos. 12:14; Mic. 2:7; Zech. 8:14

Most of these Lxx uses refer to the children of Israel provoking God to anger because of their idolatry. Here are some representative uses...

**Deuteronomy 4:25** "When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to **provoke Him to anger**, (Lxx = parorgizo)

**Deuteronomy 32:21** 'They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have **provoked Me to anger** (Lxx = parorgizo) with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will **provoke them to anger** (Lxx = parorgizo) with a foolish nation,

**1 Kings 15:30** and because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, because of his **provocation** (Lxx = parorgizo) with which he **provoked** the LORD God of Israel **to anger** (Lxx = parorgizo).

**John Eadie** writes that...

The paternal reign is not to be one of terror and stern authority, but of love. The rod may be employed, but in reason and moderation, and never from momentary impulse and anger. Children are not to be moved to "wrath" by harsh and unreasonable treatment, or by undue partiality and favoritism. If they be uniformly confronted with paternal frown and menace, then their spirit is broken, and the most powerful motive to obedience—the desire to please—is taken from them...Chrysostom refers especially to the Scriptures as one source of this instruction. Such training leads to early piety, and such is ever welcome to Christ and His church.

For the sun shining on a shrub, in its green youth, is a more gladsome spectacle than the evening beam falling dimly on the ivy and ruins of an old and solitary tower. (John Eadie, D., LL.D. The Epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians)

Children can be **provoked to anger** when the father makes unreasonable demands, when he is constantly fault finding, when he neglects his children (as did King David - see 2Samuel 14-15), or when he is inconsistent.

Here are some additional ways children can be **provoked to anger**...

(1) Overprotection--never allowing them any liberty, strict rules about everything. They do not trust their kids and the child despairs & can lead to rebellion. Parents must communicate that they trust.

(2) By showing favoritism, often unwittingly.

(3) By depreciating their worth. Many children are convinced that what they do and feel is not important. One way to decrease worth is by not LISTENING. These children may give up trying to communicate and become discouraged, shy, and withdrawn.

(4) By setting unrealistic goals--by never rewarding them. Nothing is enough so they never get full approval. Are you trying to make them into a person they are NOT? Some kids become so frustrated that they commit suicide.

(5) By failing to show affection (verbally and physically).

(6) By not providing for their needs.

(7) By lack of standards (the opposite of overprotection). These children are left to their own. They cannot handle that freedom and begin to feel insecure & unloved.

(8) By criticism. "A child learns what he lives. If he lives with criticism he does not learn responsibility. He

learns to condemn himself and to find fault with others. He learns to doubt his own judgment, to disparage his own ability, and to distrust the intentions of others. And above all, he learns to live with continual expectation of impending doom." Parents should seek to create in the home a positive, constructive environment.

(9) By neglect. David was indifferent to Absalom.

(10) By excessive discipline. Never discipline in anger. (Adapted from John MacArthur - see [MacArthur, J. Colossians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE DISCIPLINE AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD: alla **ektrephete** (2PPAM) auta en paideia kai nouthesia kuriou:**

- Ge 18:19; Ex 12:26,27; 13:14,15; Deut 4:9; 6:7,20-24; Dt 11:19-21; Josh 4:6,7; Josh 4:21-24; 24:15; 1Chr 22:10-13; 1Chr 28:9,10,20; 29:19; Ps 71:17; Ps 71:18; Ps 78:4-7; Pr 4:1-4; 19:18; Pr 22:6,15; Pr 23:13,14; Pr 29:15,17; Isa 38:19; 2Ti 1:5; 3:15; Heb 12:7-10
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Ge 18:19 "For I have chosen him, in order that **he may command his children** and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."

Ex 12:26 "And it will come about **when your children will say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?'** that you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'" And the people bowed low and worshiped.

Ex 13:14 "And it shall be **when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?'** then you shall say to him, '**With a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.** 15 'And it came about, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed every first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of beast. Therefore, I sacrifice to the LORD the males, the first offspring of every womb, but every first-born of my sons I redeem.'

Deut 4:9 "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but **make them known to your sons and your grandsons. (Are you listening granddads? You may be old, gray and tired but your job is not over yet! I know, because I'm a granddad!)**

Ps 71:18 **And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Thy strength to this generation, Thy power to all who are to come.**

Deut 6:7 and **you shall teach them diligently to your sons** 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 up.

Josh 24:15 "And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but **as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**"

**But (alla = a strong adversative)** - Always take note of this small but significant conjunction which is a marker of **contrast**. Pause and ponder the passage in the power of the Spirit (His teaching ministry - 1Jn 2:20, 27 [anointing ~ Spirit]), asking questions like... "What is being contrasted?" "Why does the author change direction now?" "To whom does this contrast apply?", etc. This simple discipline in **inductive Bible study** will force you to slow down and actively engage the text, rather than speed reading it without really engaging your mind. You will be forced to re-read the prior passage(s) which will help you establish the context, increase your understanding of the passage and aid your retention of the truth you have just read. You will always profit when you pause to ponder a passage! And as you engage the text, establishing the **context**, you are in effect also **meditating** on the passage, a spiritual

discipline God promises will always pay spiritual dividends! (See Josh 1:8-note, Ps 1:1-note, Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note)

**Moses** records the OT ideal for fathers writing...

"And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your **heart**; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up. (Dt 6:6-7)

**Comment:** Note that first the fathers have to deal with their **hearts**. The word in the head is not the same as the word in the **heart**! Then look for those teachable moments, instructing them but not beating them over the head with the Bible. In the past, an apprenticeship often began while the learner was still a young person and in his learning process, he moved in with his teacher and lived as he lived functioning with him in his profession "24/7" observing his every move and following his instruction. In so doing the apprentice learned much more than a profession, for he was being taught a whole way of life. This concept of learning a whole way of life is inherent in "bring them up". Through word and personal example parents will nurture their children and teach them what it means to live for Christ in a practical, daily sense.

As someone has well said "**Train up a child in the way he should go, but be sure you go that way yourself**" which is what you are doing - **making disciples** (matheteuo) (Mt 28:18-20)

### AN EXAMPLE NOT TO IMITATE

Scripture records the **sad record of Eli** who failed in this area of fathering his sons...

And the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever **for the iniquity which he knew**, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and **he did not rebuke them**. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." (1Samuel 3:11-14)

**Comment:** **Rebuke** in 1Sa 3:13 is translated in the Septuagint with *noutheteo*, the verbal form of *nouthesia*! Their crimes were actually capital crimes and, if the sons failed to repent and/or be corrected, it would have been Eli's responsibility to have them executed -- Dt 21:18-21. Eli questioned them but he did not truly rebuke them -- see 1Sa 2:23 -- but they ignored him, and Eli allowed them to continue. God therefore sharply rebuked Eli himself for honoring his sons more than the Lord-1Sa 2:29. Eli's descendants were eventually banned from the priesthood. Child rearing is clearly no small issue to God!

**Calvin** translated **bring them up** as "Let them be fondly cherished". He then emphasized the overall ideas of gentleness and friendliness.

**Bring them up** (1625) (**ektrepho** from **ek** = out or an intensifier + **trépho** = nourish, rear, feed) means to nourish up to maturity, to nourish in general, to nurture, to bring up from childhood, to raise a child to maturity by providing not just for physical and but also for emotional, soul needs (Eph 5:29-note). **Ektrepho** means to provide food for with the implication of a considerable period of time and the food being adequate nourishment. It is nurture, positive teaching which is enforced.

Here is a use of **ektrepho** in the secular Greek...

"I have made the agreement and I will **nurse** (ektrepho) the infant slave Thermoutharion for the two years"

Webster says that **nourish** (from Latin *nutrire* = to feed, nourish) means to nurture, to rear, to promote the growth of, to provide with the food or other substances necessary for growth and health

The **present imperative** is a command calling for this to be the father's lifestyle or habitual practice. In a sense, he should always (even when he is old and grey) be teaching them the wisdom God has taught him.

The Bible Friend has the following **Recipe For Child Rearing**...

1 cup of **Proverbs 22:6**

2 Tablespoons of **Proverbs 19:13**

1 Dash of **Proverbs 23:13**

1 Teaspoon of **Proverbs 3:5**

1/2 cup of **Titus 2:3-7**

Mix all the ingredients, add a pound of persistence, one cup of love, and whip until right consistency. This recipe is recommended by the Creator of Mankind.

Please add a pinch of **Ephesians 6:4**

**Discipline** (3809) (**paideia** from **paideuo** = instruct in turn from **país** = child) means to provide instruction, with the intent of forming proper habits of behavior, of providing guidance for responsible living, of rearing and guiding a child toward maturity. **Paideia** is a broad term, signifying whatever parents and teachers do to train, correct, cultivate, and educate children in order to help them develop and mature as they ought.

**Paideia** has particular reference to child-training, carried out with both firmness and gentleness as needed in each particular case.

The Greek word group is reflected in several English terms such as pedagogy, the science of teaching, while a pedagogue (Greek paidagogos, one in charge of boys, custodian, tutor) is a schoolteacher, or literally one who leads children. In a negative sense a pedant is one who overrates his educational importance.

**Paideia** originally referred to instruction of children and evolved to mean chastening because all effectual instruction for the sinful children of men includes and implies chastening. correction.

A father should guide and correct his child. As a ship's captain keeps his vessel on course, so a father is charged to keep his son on course.

**Detzler** writes that **paideia** (and **paideuo**)...

moves from education to correction and finally embraces the concept of punishment. This idea is quite unpopular, because many Christians confuse salvation with sentimentality. God does not tolerate sin among Christians, but rather disciplines them as a good father would (Heb. 12:5-11). In fact, if a Christian is comfortable and undisciplined, there is cause to doubt that he truly is a believer. ([Detzler, Wayne E: New Testament Words in Today's Language. Victor. 1986](#))

**Webster** says that the English word **discipline** describes training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character

**Thayer** says **paideia** describes...

the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment). In Greek writings from Aeschylus on, it includes also the care and training of the body. Whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions hence, a. instruction which aims at the increase of virtue: b. according to Biblical usage chastisement, chastening (of the evils with which God visits men for their amendment)

**TDNT** writes that...

**Paideia** from **país** a child. In classical usage, that which is applied to train and educate a child. So Plato:

Education (**Paideia**) is the constraining and directing of youth toward that right reason which the law affirms, and which the experience of the best of our elders has agreed to be truly right ("Laws," 659). ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Vincent** adds that...

In scriptural usage another meaning has come into it and its kindred verb **paideuein**, which recognizes the necessity of correction or chastisement to thorough discipline. So Lev 26:18; Ps 6:1; Isa. 53:5; Heb 12:5-8. In Acts 7:22 **paideuo** occurs in the original classical sense: "Moses was instructed (**epaideuthe**) in all the wisdom," etc. The term here covers all the agencies which contribute to moral and spiritual training. (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament 3:404).

**John MacArthur** has a helpful note on **paideia** writing that it refers to...

the systematic training of children. It includes the idea of correction for wrongdoing, as seen in the well-known proverb,

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently (Pr. 13:24).

In the several uses of the term in Hebrews 12:5-11, the translators of the Authorized Version rendered it "chastening," which is clearly the emphasis of that context. Paul's meaning here is expressed even more fully, however, in the proverb

"Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it (Pr. 22:6).

Discipline has to do with the overall training of children, including punishment.

Susannah Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, raised seventeen children and had these words to say about raising children:

"The parent who studies to subdue [self-will] in his child works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body forever" (cited in The Journal of John Wesley [Chicago: Moody, n.d.], p. 106).

### **Paideia** is used 50 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)**

Deut. 11:2; Ezra 7:26; Job 20:3; 37:13; Ps. 2:12; 18:35; 50:17; 119:66; Pr. 1:2, 7f; 3:11; 4:1, 13; 5:12; 6:23; 8:10; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:5, 10, 32f; 16:17, 22; 17:8; 19:20, 27; 22:15; 23:12; 24:32; 25:1; Isa. 26:16; 50:4f; 53:5; Jer. 2:30; 5:3; 7:27; 17:23; 30:14; 32:33; 35:13; Ezek. 13:9; Dan. 1:20; Amos 3:7; Hab. 1:12; Zeph. 3:2, 7

Here are a few representative uses...

**Psalm 50:17** "For you hate **discipline** (Lxx = paideia), and you cast My words behind you.

**Proverbs 1:8** Hear, my son, your father's **instruction**, And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

**Proverbs 3:11** My son, do not reject the **discipline** of the LORD, Or loathe His reproof,

**Proverbs 6:23** For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; And reproofs for **discipline** are the way of life,

**Proverbs 10:17** He is on the path of life who heeds **instruction**, But he who forsakes reproof goes astray.

**Proverbs 12:1** Whoever loves **discipline** loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.

**Proverbs 13:18** Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects **discipline**, But he who regards reproof will be honored.

**Proverbs 15:5** A fool rejects his father's **discipline**, But he who regards reproof is prudent.

**Proverbs 15:10** Stern **discipline** is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die.

**Proverbs 15:32** He who neglects **discipline** despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.

**Proverbs 15:33** The fear of the LORD is the **instruction** for wisdom, And before honor comes humility.

**Proverbs 16:22** Understanding is a fountain of life to him who has it, But the **discipline** of fools is folly.

**Proverbs 19:20** Listen to counsel and accept **discipline**, That you may be wise the rest of your days.

**Proverbs 19:27** Cease listening, my son, to **discipline**, And you will stray from the words of knowledge.

**Proverbs 22:15** Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of **discipline** will remove it far from him.

**Proverbs 23:12** Apply your heart to **discipline**, And your ears to words of knowledge.

**Jeremiah 2:30** "In vain I have struck your sons; They accepted no **chastening**. Your sword has devoured your prophets Like a destroying lion.

**Jeremiah 17:23** "Yet they did not listen or incline their ears, but stiffened their necks in order not to listen or take **correction**.

**Habakkuk 1:12** Art Thou not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. Thou, O LORD, hast appointed them to judge; And Thou, O Rock, hast established them to **correct**.

**Zephaniah 3:2** She heeded no voice; She accepted no **instruction**. She did not trust in the LORD; She did not draw near to her God.

**Paideia** is found 6 times in the **NAS**...

2Timothy 3:16-note All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for **training** in righteousness;

**Hebrews 12:5**-note and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the **discipline** of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him...7 It is for **discipline** that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without **discipline**, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons....11 All **discipline** for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

**Instruction** (3559) (**nouthesia** from **noutheteo** [word study] = literally "put in mind" from **noús** = mind + **tithemi** = to place or put - describes exertion of influence upon **nous** implying nous is resistant!) means literally putting in the mind and implies the teaching of the Lord's ways through His Word. It is any word of encouragement or reproof which leads to correct behavior. It conveys the idea of giving one counsel about avoiding or ceasing an improper course of conduct. **Nouthesia** can mean advise given concerning dangerous consequences of a happening or action.

**Trench** says of **nouthesia**..."it is a training by word—by the word of encouragement, when that is sufficient, but also by that of remonstrance, of reproof, of blame, where these may be required, as set over against the training by act and discipline which is **paideia**." (Trench, R. C. Synonyms of the New Testament)

**TDNT** writes that the related verb **noutheteo**... means "to impart understanding," "to set right," "to lay on the heart." **The stress is on influencing not merely the intellect but the will and disposition**. The word thus acquires such senses as "to admonish," "to warn," "to remind," and "to correct." It describes a basic means of education. Philo and Clement of Alexandria speak about God or Christ warning, censuring, and encouraging us in this way. The idea is not that of punishment but of a moral appeal that leads to amendment. In this sense it takes on the meaning "to discipline." Philosophy, however, does not use it technically for its own work. . (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Nouthesia** stresses "training by word," whether of encouragement, or, if necessary, by reproof or remonstrance. **Paideia** stresses training by act and discipline. **Nouthesia** is the milder term without which **paideia** would be incomplete. In both words there is the appeal to the conscience, will, and reasoning faculties. A synonym is **epanorthosis** translated "correction" (see **note 2** Timothy 3:16) was used of setting upright an object that had fallen down and of helping a person back on his feet after stumbling.

**Barnes** wisely warns us that

If a man does not teach his children truth,  
others will teach them error.

**THOUGHT** - What are you teaching your children? How to hunt? How to play golf? How to cheer on the alma mater? Beloved, as good as those things are ("dad time" with children is *always* precious time), make sure the *temporal* events are "seasoned" with a healthy dose of the *eternal* Word!

**Of the Lord** - NLT paraphrases this as "discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord."

**Expositor's Greek Testament** writes that this phrase is...best understood as the possessive genitive or as the genitive of origin, = "the Lord's discipline and admonition," i.e., Christian training, the training that is of Christ, proceeding from Him and prescribed by Him." ([Ephesians 6 Commentary](#))

**Vincent** writes that this means...Such discipline as is prescribed by the Lord and is administered in His name. (Word Studies in the New Testament 3:404).

**McGee** writes...Notice again that the discipline is to be of the Lord. The discipline and instruction are to be administered in the name of the Lord. That is important. Paul has taken the subject of submission first into the home with the husband and wife relationship, then with the parent-child relationship. Now he moves out of the home into the street, the workshop, the marts of trade. It is a different situation here, for there are no bonds of love such as are found in a home; yet children of God who are filled with the Holy Spirit will be submissive one to another. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**S Lewis Johnson** says that we as Spirit filled parents should...never surrender your responsibility to your children. Don't surrender your responsibility to the school. There are certain things you may delegate to the school; the school may teach them mathematics. But don't delegate your responsibility to the school. Don't delegate your responsibility to the church – that's a great mistake that many professing Christians make. They delegate all the spiritual responsibility of bringing their children up to the church. That's a very, very sad thing.

Mr. Pryor who is here, one of our elders, likes to say the best Bible teacher you'll ever have is your father. That is true. The next best would be mother, no doubt. But parents, instructing your children in the things of the Lord, and you should not give it to others. It's a privilege to instruct them in the word. Give them your time. Of some people, if they gave them as much time as they gave their garden, Martin Lloyd Jones said, the children would have more than they are having now. ([Ephesians 6:1-9 Paul to Children & Fathers -Audio](#))

**Wiersbe** agrees writing...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. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary, 1989. Victor](#))

The **Houston police department** years ago put out a leaflet called "How To Ruin Your Children." And it was guaranteed to be 99 percent effective. In part, this is what is said:

**Principle #1**—"Begin with infancy to give the child everything he wants."

**Principle #2**—"When he picks up bad words, laugh at him."

**Principle #3**—"Never give him any spiritual training. Let him wait until he's twenty-one years old, and then let him decide for himself."

**Principle #4**—"Avoid using the word 'wrong.' It may develop a serious guilt complex."

**Principle #5**—"Pick up everything he leaves lying around, so he will be experienced in throwing responsibility on everybody else."

**James Montgomery Boice** offers the following thoughts for those parents who have done the right thing and yet still have seen the child grow up rebellious...

Yet I must say a word on the matter of the child's own responsibility, as I promised. Children are their own people, and they have their own set of responsibilities both before God and others. Consequently, although they may be taught wisely and raised morally and that instruction be supported by parental example, they nevertheless sometimes do go astray, and that is not necessarily the parents' fault. The first example of child-rearing in the Bible should teach us that. We know that Adam and Eve were a sinful man and woman after the Fall, as we all are. But they were undoubtedly model parents nonetheless. They were highly intelligent and knew God intimately. Moreover, they are numbered in the godly line of the age before the Flood, the line which contained such outstanding spiritual giants as Enoch, Methuselah, and Noah. There is no question but that they raised their children to know and honor God. Yet in spite of this their first child, Cain, turned out to be a murderer. Why? The Bible says it was the result of the outworkings of his own sinful heart. So I say to parents: If your child has abandoned the Lord and is living a worldly life, it is not necessarily your fault. It may be, but not necessarily. Do not abandon hope. God has called many such children. Your duty is to continue to live as Christians and pray for your child regularly. The Bible says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).([Boice, J. M.: Ephesians: An Expository Commentary](#))

**Ray Stedman** has the following thoughts on this verse in his devotional entitled **Parents And Children**...

This word translated fathers could well be translated parents, because it includes both the father and the mother. It is also true that the emphasis is laid largely upon the father, for he is responsible for what the children become. That is sobering, is it not, fathers? Mothers may enforce policy, but it is the father's task to set it and to see that his children are raised properly. There is nothing that is more dishonoring to the spirit of Christianity than the attitude adopted by many fathers: "It is my job to make the living; her job is to raise the children." Not in the Word of God! In the Bible, the ultimate responsibility for what a home becomes is the father's. So the word is addressed to fathers.

This is the way a father subjects himself to his children--by deliberately avoiding the things that make a child

rebel. "Do not exasperate your children." The word used here means "anger that results in a rebellion." "Fathers, do not provoke your children to the place where they completely lose control and break out against authority."

There are two things that cause rebellion in children: indulgence and harshness. These two things are the negative of the two things he instructs the father to do: "Bring them up in the training and the instruction [or the exhortation] of the Lord." The opposites of these are indulgence and harshness.

Lack of discipline will make a child insecure, miserable, and self-centered. That is what we call "a spoiled child"--one who grows up to expect to have her way in everything and who rides roughshod over the feelings of everyone else. This is created by a spirit of indulgence on the part of parents who allow their children to make decisions that no child is capable of making. Parents must learn that they need to make decisions for their children for quite a while in their life and only gradually help them to learn to make those decisions as they are able to do so. In the early years of childhood parents must make almost all the decisions. One of the terribly tragic things about life today is the degree to which many parents let children make decisions they are incapable of making.

The other extreme that provokes a child to revolt is harshness--rigorous, demanding discipline that is never accompanied with love or understanding. Rigid, military discipline that says, "Do this, or this, or else," will inevitably drive a child to revolt as he comes to adolescence.

Opposed to this the apostle puts two things--training and instruction (or exhortation) in the Lord. The word for instruction is really "putting in mind" in the Lord. Training and putting in mind in the Lord. As the child grows older, physical discipline is to be replaced by exhortation, by understanding--helping a child to see what lies behind the restrictions and always showing concern and love. It does not mean a total relaxing of limits, but it means a different way of enforcing them.

Father, thank You that You can change the mistakes I have made as a parent into opportunities for advancement in my children's lives as well as my own life. ([Ephesians 6:1-4 Parents And Children](#))

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#### **Dad's Hat Ephesians 6:1-4 June 19, 1994**

Amid the celebration, there was tragedy. It was the opening ceremonies of the 1992 summer Olympic Games in Barcelona. One by one the teams entered the stadium and paraded around the track to the cheers of 65,000 people. But in one section of Olympic Stadium, shock and sadness fell as Peter Karnaugh, father of United States swimmer Ron Karnaugh, was stricken with a fatal heart attack.

Five days later, Ron showed up for his race wearing his dad's hat, which he carefully set aside before his competition began. Why the hat? It was the swimmer's tribute to his dad, whom he described as "my best friend." The hat was one his dad had worn when they went fishing and did other things together. Wearing the hat was Ron's way of honoring his dad for standing beside him, encouraging him, and guiding him. When Ron dove into the water, he did so without his dad's presence but with his dad's help.

On this Father's Day, there are many ways to honor our fathers, as Scripture tells us to do. One way, even if they're no longer with us, is to show respect for the values they taught us.

What can you do for your dad today to show him the kind of honor the apostle Paul was talking about? --JDB

We're thankful for our fathers, Lord,  
They're special gifts from You;  
Help us to show we honor them  
By what we say and do. --Sper

**The best fathers not only give us life  
but also teach us how to live.**

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#### **The Task Of A Father Ephesians 6:4 June 17, 2000**

What admirable quality is common to marmosets, siamangs, sea horses, and jacanas? Here are your clues. Marmosets are squirrel-size monkeys. Siamangs are members of the ape family. Sea horses aren't really horses. And jacanas are robin-size wading birds,

sometimes called "lily trotters" because their long toes allow them to walk across water on lily pads.

Your time is up. Here's the answer I'm looking for: The male of each of these species takes care of its young.

I wish this could be said of all Christian fathers about the spiritual nurture of their children. Dads have a wonderful opportunity to encourage, to warn, to teach, to counsel, and to model the Christian life for them. It's significant that Moses' instruction in Deuteronomy 6 was directed toward fathers. Verse 7 especially spells out one task of a father—to teach his children.

This sounds like Paul's statement in Ephesians 6:4. He said that fathers should rear their children "in the training and admonition of the Lord." Christian fathers who do this will distinguish themselves from other dads and will be obedient to God's will. Oh, that our children would be nurtured by moms and dads who love the Lord! —MRDII

Fathers, give your children guidance  
And instruction from God's Word;  
Then with wisdom and compassion  
Teach them how to love the Lord. —Sper

**A Christlike example  
is a father's greatest gift to his children.**

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#### **Little Cucumbers Ephesians 6:4 April 14, 1998**

When I was just a boy, I was intrigued by a large cucumber. It was no different from any other cucumber, but it was in the strangest place. My uncle kept it in a bottle on a shelf. This particular cucumber was many times too large to go through the neck of the bottle. I wondered how it got there in the first place.

I was filled with awe of my uncle who could perform such a feat. He joked about it and never told me how he did it. My mother finally explained that when the cucumber was very tiny, it had been passed through the narrow neck and allowed to grow while still attached to the vine.

My mother practiced a similar principle with her children. From my earliest memory she surrounded me with prayer and instruction and the gospel. As a result, I was brought to Christ and am now safe in the bottle of His salvation.

What a lesson for parents who have "little cucumbers" at home. Don't let anything interfere with your first duty toward them. The person who said "Give me a child till he is 7 and I care not who gets him after that" knew the value of early training.

Don't neglect your little cucumbers. Soon they will be big. --MRD

Our children are a gift from God  
To nurture and to love;  
They need our help in guiding them  
To turn their thoughts above. --Sper

**A parent's life is a child's guidebook.**

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#### **It's Sally! Ephesians 6:4 May 17, 1996**

Benjamin West was just trying to be a good babysitter for his little sister Sally. While his mother was out, Benjamin found some bottles of colored ink and proceeded to paint Sally's portrait. But by the time Mrs. West returned, ink blots stained the table, chairs, and floor. Benjamin's mother surveyed the mess without a word until she saw the picture. Picking it up she exclaimed, "Why, it's Sally!" And she bent down and kissed her young son.

In 1763, when he was 25 years old, Benjamin West was selected as history painter to England's King George III. He became one of the most celebrated artists of his day. Commenting on his start as an artist, he said, "My mother's kiss made me a painter." Her encouragement did far more than a rebuke ever could have done.

The apostle Paul instructed parents: "Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

It's easy to notice the wrong in a child, but difficult to look beyond an innocent offense to see an act of creativity and love. What a challenge to raise our children according to God's standards, knowing when to say, "It's a mess!" and when to say, "Why, it's Sally!" -

Lord, give us wisdom to provide  
The proper atmosphere  
To lead our children in Your ways  
By what they see and hear. --Sper

**Correction does much;  
encouragement does more.**

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ON this Fathers Day, there are many ways to honor our fathers, as Scripture tells us to do. One way, even if they're no longer with us, is to show respect for the values they taught us.

What can you do for your dad today to show him the kind of honor the apostle Paul was talking about? -- JDB

We're thankful for our fathers, Lord  
They're special gifts from You;  
Help us to show we honor them  
By what we say and do. -- Sper

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#### **Parental Balance Ephesians 6:4**

Every conscientious parent recognizes how difficult it is to exercise his God-given authority over his children. The delicate balance of being tough yet tender is not easy to maintain. Many parents intensify a rebellious spirit by being dictatorial and harsh. Others yield when their authority is tested. When a strong-willed child resists, the pressure to give in for the sake of peace and harmony can become overpowering. I am reminded of the mother who wanted to have the last word but couldn't handle the hassle that resulted whenever she said no to her young son. After an especially trying day, she finally flung up her hands and shouted, "All right, Billy, do whatever you want! Now let me see you disobey THAT!"

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#### **A Dad Who Didn't Quit Ephesians 6:4 November 12, 1996**

Three months before my father died of cancer, he wrote me a letter. I had just left the security of teaching and had gone into fulltime freelance writing. Life was very uncertain.

Dad said, "I know you, I know what's behind you, and I am pretty sure that I understand your goals and the kind of writing you hope to do and the message you wish to convey. Stay in there, and may the Lord bless you. If you ever get in a tight place and need some ready cash, let me know. I think I know where I can lay my hands on a little of it."

When Dad sent me that letter, I was 36 years old and had a wife and three children. But I was still his son and he knew I needed encouragement. He was still parenting, in the best sense of the word.

When the Bible tells fathers to bring up their children "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), it doesn't put a time limit on the process. As children grow, a parent's role changes, but the responsibility to care remains the same. Loving, training, admonishing, and encouraging never go out of style.

I still have that letter. I'm still thankful for the man who never stopped being my dad. --DCM

We're thankful for our fathers, Lord,  
They're special gifts from You;  
Help us to show we honor them  
By what we say and do. --Sper

**The best fathers not only give us life--  
they also teach us how to live.**

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**That's My Dad! Ephesians 6:4 June 15, 1997**

You don't have to meet a man face to face to know what kind of a father he is. Just listen to the way his children refer to him.

The respect that children have for their parents can be a good indicator of how much respect they deserve. One of the Ten Commandments is to honor our father and mother (Ex. 20:12). But how many parents live in a way that is worthy of honor?

I cannot think of a greater tragedy in life than to lose the respect of my children. I would be the most humiliated man if my children were ashamed of me. But nothing would make my heart beat faster than if my child pointed me out in a crowd and said proudly, "That's my dad!"

A good test of whether you are a father who is respected by his children is to ask yourself, "Do I want my son to be what I am, to do what I do, to go where I go?"

Fathers, remember that never before in all history have your children needed the undivided interest and attention of loving parents as in these days of a polluted moral and spiritual atmosphere.

With the help of God's strength and wisdom, determine to be the kind of parent whose child is proud to say, "That's my dad!" --M. R. De Haan, M.D.

A father who emulates God  
Is one who is faithful and true;  
And if he is honest and strong,  
His children will follow him too. --Hess

**A good father earns the respect of his children.**

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**Don't Forget Your Children Ephesians 6:4 June 21, 1998**

It's one of the saddest stories I've ever heard. A father was to drop off his infant child at daycare on the way to work, but his mind was preoccupied and he forgot. Left alone in the car, the baby girl died from the excessive heat. The father will bear that painful memory the rest of his life.

While this dad inadvertently forgot his child, many other fathers are forgetting their children deliberately--abandoning them to pursue their own selfish desires. They forget their children when they engage in an extramarital affair. They forget their children while they indulge in pleasures, or become preoccupied with work, money, sports, or any number of distractions. As they do, their children are left without the guidance only a dad can give.

The importance of a father in a child's life is monumental. He is to nurture his children by giving them instruction, protection, sustenance, companionship, assistance, love, discipline, and example.

A good father provides a wide-ranging supply of godly advice and wisdom as he guides his children (Prov. 3:1-12). But a father can't do that if he ignores his children because he is busy with self-serving activities.

Dad, don't forget your children. They need you. --JDB

Our children need a home where love  
Provides security,  
Where what is taught is not confused  
By what they hear and see. --Sper

**The greatest gift a father can give to his children is himself.**

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**Watching And Learning Ephesians 6:4 September 17, 1998**

I was browsing in a used book shop when an irate customer stormed in and loudly demanded a refund. When the man couldn't get what he wanted, he began swearing at the clerk. He continued the tirade for several minutes as a girl of 7 or 8 stood passively at his side. Eventually he stomped out of the store, cursing as he went, with the little girl following close behind.

I wondered if the girl was his daughter. If so, what did she learn from her dad that afternoon? More important, the event caused me to ask, "What does my daughter learn from me at home and all the places we go together?" She learns a lot more from watching my behavior than from all my little talks about life and God.

"Fathers," the Bible says, "do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). This speaks to me of my own relationship with Christ and the example I live before my children. Only as I submit to God's training and instruction can I bring up my children in His way.

There are children watching us today, deciding what to believe about life and God. What are they learning from us? --DCM

No written word nor spoken plea  
Can teach young hearts what they should be,  
Nor all the books upon the shelves,  
But what the teachers are themselves. --Bennett

**Actions speak louder than words.**

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### **A Nurturing Parent Ephesians 6:4 September 18, 2000**

Learning a trade as an apprentice is not as involved now as it was in days gone by. Today, when someone is assigned to a department or an individual to learn a job or craft, he does so by observation, instruction, and practice.

But in years past, an apprenticeship often began while the learner was still a young person. He moved right in with his teacher and lived as he lived. He was with the master carpenter or blacksmith 24 hours a day, watching his every move and following his careful and sometimes harsh instruction. He learned the skill, but he learned much more than a profession. He was being taught a whole way of life.

This total-life concept is built into the word translated "training" in Ephesians 6:4. The command applies to both fathers and mothers, and it means much more than teaching the Bible and Christian belief, though those are involved. The expectation is that through word and personal example parents will nurture their children and teach them what it means to live for Christ in a practical, daily sense.

Sure, children learn a lot about God in Sunday school. But only from you, Dad and Mom, will they see what it means to walk with Jesus in a total-life way. —David C. Egner

God gives us children for a time,  
To train them in His way,  
To love them and to show them how  
To follow and obey. --Sper

**Train up a child in the way he should go,  
but be sure you go that way yourself.**

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### **Dad's Rules Ephesians 6:5 July 28, 2002**

The unsolicited e-mail was full of truth and wisdom. As the father of three daughters, I recognized that the note titled "Daddy's Rules For Dating" offered advice dads can understand. With humor and sarcasm, it listed 10 rules for any boy who hopes to date our daughters.

Rule One, for example, says, "If you pull into my driveway and honk, you'd better be delivering a package, because you're not picking anything up." Translated: "Don't you dare be rude." Each rule had a nugget of truth fathers understand well: "Do not touch my daughter." "Get my daughter home early." "Treat my daughter with respect."

We as fathers (and mothers) are protective of our children, and rightly so, because God has given them to us as a trust. And because our society does not value modesty and sexual purity, we must protect our sons and daughters.

That's why the difficult but balanced teaching in Ephesians 6:4 is so vital. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." If we properly instruct our sons and daughters about what God expects of them, and live it out ourselves, we can avoid angering and discouraging them.

Instead of exasperating children, let's teach them. —JDB —Dave Branon

We must teach our children clearly  
What is right and what is wrong;  
Live before them an example—  
Godly, righteous, pure, and strong. —Fitzhugh

**To teach your children well,  
let God teach you.**

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**Divine Concentrate Ephesians 6:1-9 August 17, 1999**

An experienced parent said, "Before I got married, I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories!"

The task of parenting can sometimes seem overwhelming. As we look for help, we find bookstores jammed with "how to" volumes by religious and secular advisors. Yet, when we search the Bible for specific guidance, we find few passages that tell us exactly what to do and how to do it. We often come back to Ephesians 6:4, which states, "Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

We might wish for more instruction than what this verse tells us, but perhaps God has packed more into it than we realize. If we began to "dissolve" that verse in our thinking and ask God to help us understand how to put it into practice, we might find it to be like a packet of concentrated, flavored drink mix that makes 500 gallons.

When was the last time we thought about what we do that provokes our children to anger? How do our words and tone of voice discourage them? What simple thing can we do today to encourage their spiritual growth?

Why not start putting Ephesians 6:4, God's concentrated plan for parenting, into practice right now! --DCM

Your privilege is beyond all price--  
Worth more than silver, gold, or fame--  
To guide with love and sacrifice,  
And write on children's hearts God's name. --Anon.

**A godly parent  
is a child's best guide to God.**