

# Parents and Children

by Bob Hoekstra

---

*Parents and children are called to live in mutual servanthood, submitting to one another in the fear of God, and honoring their relationship as a matter of righteousness and spiritual responsibility.*

**Duration:** 1:01:50

**Scripture:** Proverbs 10:13, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 5:21, Ephesians 6:1, Colossians 3:20, Hebrews 12:5-11

**Topics:** "Family Relationships", "Christian Parenting"

---

## Description

This sermon focuses on the biblical principles of parenting and raising children according to God's design. It emphasizes the importance of mutual servanthood in family relationships, highlighting the roles of parents and children in submitting to one another in the fear of God. The sermon delves into the significance of obedience for children, the role of fathers in not provoking their children to wrath, and the balance between discipline (law) and grace in child-rearing. It also explores the promise of training children in the way of the Lord and the impact of being filled with the Spirit in parenting.

---

## Transcript

Well, our study for this time together is another in the series of Family God's Way, Approaching Marriage and Family as God has designed it in His Word. This is the fifth of six studies, and it's entitled Parents and Children. Let's pray together, shall we, as we go into the Word.

Lord, we're blessed to know You, to be in Your family, to have You in our lives. We're blessed to have time and place to invest in study in the Kingdom of Heaven. Lord, we thank You for Your Word and pray now for the teaching, anointing, enlivening ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, You said that Your words are spirit and they are life, and we pray by Your Spirit that You will give life to our hearts and minds, renew us, equip us, shape us, and use Your Word this day, Lord, for the pilgrim path we have with You, the discipleship trail, and also the service that You've called us to. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Parents and Children focus in Ephesians 5 and 6, well, Ephesians 5 and 6 about the family relationships, first husband-wives, chapter 5, chapter 6, parents and children.

In our last study, we looked at the relationship and the ministry between husbands and wives. We saw that it is God's will that husbands and wives function in their united partnership as mutual servants, servants of God one to another. In this study, we'll look at parents and children and we'll see the same principle applies in the parent-child relationship, mutual servanthood.

And of course, that comes out of the context-setting verse for the family verses in Ephesians 5 and 6, and that would be Ephesians 5:21, being subject to one another. All Christians are included in the description in verse 21 of chapter 5, which tells us that we are to be submitting to one another in the fear of God, submitting to one another. Yes, parents and children are also to live in mutual servanthood.

Parents and children, both of them, not just one category or the other, both parents and children are to be subordinating their own personal interests and needs and desires and well-being in other words, they're to function as servants function and they're to do this to one another, children to parents, parents to children. Now, of course, they're not going to have the exactly identical shape to their servanthood call because one is a parent, one is a child. There's going to be some differentiation of how that is worked out, but the heart of it is still the same just as it was for husbands and wives, servanthood, mutual servanthood.

So it is now in the verses for children and parents. And again, there's no other intervening principle that overlays these verses for this study, same as the husbands and wives. Verse 21, submitting to one another in the fear of God, to be servants one to another in the fear of God out of respect and reverence for the Lord who commands this style of life, this kind of living, but also who exemplified this kind of life.

Jesus was the servant of all. He came not to be served, but he came to serve. And he is our example.

Submitting to one another in the fear of God, submitting to, yielding to. I'm here to see what God wants to do to bless you, that kind of role, that kind of servanthood. Now, this truth is applied to children.

Chapter 6, verse 1, children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. So right to start out here with the child and the simple servanthood responsibility given is obedience. This is how a child in a home is to primarily demonstrate that they are a servant of the Lord there.

It is by obedience to the parents. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Obey your parents.

Do what they say. Live under their authority and guidance. And then, of course, Colossians 3:20 adds a phrase to that.

Children, obey your parents in all things. And then second, it adds, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. For all of the days of a child preceding that time when they're leaving the household, especially when they are leaving to cleave to their own mate, and as the Lord gives them a spouse and they're to start a household of their own, in all those days preceding when they're especially living at home with the parents, of course, with increasing measures of freedom and responsibility as a child grows up and the parent with wisdom from the Lord is giving them opportunity and responsibility and freedom to learn to follow and serve the Lord day by day personally.

And, of course, this would include the teenage years when many a person in those years of early life is so tempted to rebel. People talk about the terrible twos. What does that make the teens? If the twos were terrible, in my case, it was what is beyond terrible.

Maybe in your life, too. But this is not a necessity that teenage years be years of rebellion. I was a rebel.

I was a pretty quiet rebel, but I was a very, very stubborn and selfish rebel. And two of our three children were rebels in their teen years. They were not as quiet in their rebellion, but thank God it didn't last as long as mine did.

Mine went from about age 15 to age 25. Two of our three seemed to be hardening selfishly against the Lord in those years briefly. But thank the Lord.

Praise be to God. All three of them are now walking with the Lord. They're not teenagers anymore.

This is the year or part of the year they're 38, 39, and 40 years old. And those ages, let you know, we didn't win the Family Planning with Wisdom Award. We had, my wife called it extended triplets, you know.

But, you know, it gave us tremendous opportunity to see the faithfulness of God at work in and through us as parents in spite of our shortcomings and failures and even needing to ask our kids for forgiveness and grace toward us along the way. And that's the way it works in the human family. Only God is perfect, but he loves to be perfecting us.

And we'll talk much about that today because the way God raises his kids, us, his children, is really a picture of how he wants to use us in the rearing of our children. And special joy in my heart thinking about children here in today's study. The Lord blessed us with three children, and they do have, all three of them, a great love for the Lord, a great desire to please and serve the Lord, and a strong heart inclination to have the Lord's presence in their home, the primary characteristic of their households.

And they are now raising their children. In fact, our oldest grandchild is pressing very close toward the 20 mark now. And praise be to the Lord.

Yesterday afternoon, actually, the Lord added a 12th grandchild to our family for my wife and I. So we are bubbling over with joy on that. And it's kind of a humorous story, you know? My dear wife, she loves babies. I love babies.

She triple loves babies. And she loves grandbabies. And early on, she announced to the family way back that it was on her heart that God might give us 10 grandchildren.

And we started praying about that. And our kids would hear us talking about that. And, you know, the older they got, the more interested they were in that dynamic, especially when they're learning math, you know? Let's see, 10 grandchildren, or three of us, three children.

This average is at least three children plus, you know? And they kind of had jokes about, you know, to each other, to their siblings, are you going to have six or seven? Thinking, how is mom going to meet this? And God has super abundantly. He's answered that prayer exceeding abundantly beyond what we could ask or think. Our daughter has three children.

Our youngest son has four children. Our oldest son, they just had their fifth child birth yesterday. And they've been praying since they were married for six.

So, God, we're open. What a blessing. What a treasure children are.

Oh, how we need to point them to the Lord as we raise them up. It's always been God's plan. It's always been His way.

But you look around at what's happening to the world and the deterioration as the human family, you know, presses into thousands of years of sinful history, and then pressing toward the culmination of all of the last day events and all of that. Oh, how we need the Lord in the midst of all this. And see, that's exactly where it starts.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord. In the Lord. It's part of the child's accountability and responsibility before the Lord.

It's not just children, obey your parents. I mean, that's a valid truth. And even those out in the world are wise to teach their children the issues of obedience.

But what God is calling us to is way bigger than that. It's children, obey your parents in the Lord. It's a part of a child's spiritual responsibility, spiritual perspective, spiritual accountability to be learning to obey their parents.

It's not just an issue between parent and child. It's also an issue between parents and the Lord and the children and the Lord. Children, obey your parents in the Lord.

What is kind of the typical approach to obedience? I've seen it in many parts of the world in traveling and teaching. Children often say to their parents, why should I do that after the parents have given a command? And it's been almost humorous in settings like over in Milstadt at the conference center, the castle in Austria, where multicultural conferences go on. They come from all over Western Europe, sometimes Eastern Europe, sometimes both.

And one day I was teaching on this and sort of asked them what their response was when their children say, why should I do that? And it was astounding. Nation after nation, Hungary, Romania, on and on and on, Germany, France, at the missions conference, I'm thinking particularly they were there from all over Europe and beyond. And it was almost unanimous in everyone who responded.

Their response was, because I said so. Instruction to children, children's response, why? Why should I do that? And the parents, in fact, we had them all say it in their own language. It was quite beautiful.

Because I said so. Now, in one sense, that is biblically acceptable thinking. But it is absolutely not biblically exhaustive thinking.

There's way more to be said to a child about obedience than just because I said so. Well, what more would one add? Well, let's see what the Lord has added. Children, obey your parents.

Here's an addition, in the Lord. That's a huge addition, to teach that truth to children. Kids, God is involved in our family relationships, and He's looking on and interested and wants to have an impact on our relationship as parent and child.

And in this verse, as your responsibility of obedience, in the Lord. Boy, in the Lord. When you add the Lord into human relationships, there is the potential for everything to be made new or being made new.

Yeah, kids have a sense of respect and fear for their parents when they're little. I mean, you know, hopefully not fear and dread or terror, but respect. I know I had a fear of my father.

I was never afraid of him in that sense of the word. He was a kind and a good man, Chaplain Ray was. And I have great memories of him from smallest childhood up until I was a grandfather, and he was a great grandfather.

But I did respect him. And I respected his walk with the Lord, even in those rebellious years where I was indulging myself and not pursuing after the Lord. But to bring the Lord into the situation, you know, it's not just mom and dad and the kids.

It's mom and dad and the kids with the Lord present in all that's going on. And children, obey your parents in the Lord. In the Lord.

And then another issue is added. For this is right. For this is right.

In other words, this is a matter of righteousness. Children obeying parents is not just a cultural traditional issue, though, that appears more or less in cultures as well. But it's not a mere tradition issue.

It's not an adult domination issue. It's not a sociological development issue. Here's the best result from our trial and error.

Looks like it's best if kids obey their parents. Not that at all. It is something that is divinely correct.

It's right. In fact, I think a great biblical word to use on this truth. It's a matter of righteousness.

Any other approach to that? Parents who don't want their children to obey or don't want to speak to them about obedience or stress obedience, that's unrighteous. That's godless behavior. This is divinely correct.

And we saw another phrase that Colossians 3.20 added. Well, two of them. In all things, this pertains to every area of life for a child.

But here's a big one. For this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Well-pleasing to the Lord.

Boy, there's a motivation for parents. Oh, if I can be an instrument to teach my children obedience, it is going to bless the heart of God. What a motivation.

But here's a big one for the kids. We can actually teach our kids. Johnny, Susie, whoever, when you obey mom and dad, you bring joy and blessing to the heart of God.

It actually pleases God. And the contrary, of course, is true. Johnny, Susie, when you disobey mom and dad, you grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

You know, these things can be taught lovingly, kindly, with respect for God and for the child. And it doesn't have to be heavy-handed foreboding. It has to just be a realization, wow, God's involved in everything around here at this house, you know? It is another world from where households without God actually exist.

And then, verses two and three, honoring our parents. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise. And the promise? That it may be well with you, verse three, and you may live long on the earth, a quote here out of Deuteronomy 516.

In this first of the horizontal commandments, you might say, you know, that have to do with relationships, with people instead of people with God. There is this instruction, honor your father and mother. Actually, we're to honor our father and mother all the days of our lives.

Even when we leave and cleave, we turn from that high priority of parent-child relationship to a new priority, husband-and-wife relationship. We can still honor our parents the rest of our lives, not as ones that we obey in all matters, but ones that we respect in all matters and are concerned about and love and want their counsel and want their blessing and their encouragement and help. And children who have that sort of an attitude toward their parents, it goes well with them and they live long on the earth.

Really, that's kind of an Old Testament way to say, this is part of abundant living in Christ. Jesus said, I came, you might have life and have it more abundantly. This is more of that abundant life for those who honor their parents, honor them, respect them, give them the honor that is due in the role as a parent.

Things will go well with that child and they will live long on the earth. They'll enter in to the abundance of God's goodness, truly a good life coming from the Lord as a blessing for their obedience to God and honoring the parents and their treatment of their parents. It speaks of respecting here for children.

You know, you don't obey your parents, but you do it by giving honor to your father and mother to go back to the household relationship before marriage. Obedience is not just a matter of cold compliance. You know, it speaks of respect in that compliance.

Disobedience and rebellion does not lead to a good testimony before the Lord. It brings grief to the spirit of God. It produces internal and external problems that can diminish both length and depth of life, mistreating those in household relationship with us before the Lord.

It quenches the spirit of God. It reduces the level of blessing in the home and it dishonors God. All of these things caught up in these three verses.

Now, if you don't have children yet, these are things to be praying about and learning. And as the Lord might be leading you toward a partner in life, a spouse, these are good things to begin talking about and praying about to have your heart and mind prepared and heart knit together with your marriage partner. Things to study and pray about.

You know, this is a great prayer list for those who are going to be parents, and that's the vast majority of every adult. Not all. Some will have the gift of celibacy and won't even get married.

That's a small portion. Some who get married, they may not be able physically to have children. The Lord may have another way, either adoption or children's ministry or something, you know, where you still one way or another, the vast majority of adults will need to know these truths and live them.

And what better way to start out than thinking about them, praying about them, just keeping them in mind. And if you have children, these are things to turn to regularly. And if your children have come and gone and grown up and went away and you have a whole lot of misery and woe when you look at this, you know, oh, man, did I miss it there.

Good things to be talking to the Lord about. Lord, forgive me. You and I both know I missed the mark there.

And every parent will in many ways, by the way. But I've seen God work in great ways where parents with grown children went back to their kids. I think of a brother right now, his name and face are very vivid in my mind.

I won't mention him, but he felt he missed this whole opportunity and his guys were grown and he prayed for an opportunity to begin to minister these kind of truths of live in the Lord in your life. And when children come, teach them to obey in the Lord. And he found his grown boys very receptive to ministry by a humble hearted father who basically said to them, I blew it.

In fact, he said to them, I raised you every way opposite to the word of God. And I'm sad. I'm sorry.

I'm ashamed of it. Will you forgive me? And will you let me give you new? Let's start a new input. God is certainly a God of new opportunities, isn't he? His mercy, his forgiveness and his grace.

So children obey your parents in the Lord. This is right. Do it in all things.

This is well pleasing to the Lord. That's how kids function as servants at home. And this is the simplest pattern of the four household relationships, husband, wife, parent, child.

And it should be the simplest one because this one is for the children. Just obey. Do what mom and dad say.

But it's all linked into the Lord at work among us. Now, it shifts to the parents. Again, no intervening overriding contextual principle other than Ephesians 5:21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.

OK, we've seen how wives are to submit, how husbands are to be submissive servants. We've seen how children are to be submissive servants in the home. Now, how about the parents? Yes, they're to be submissive servants, too.

Not like the child. Many, many a family, even Christian family, the parents are obeying the children. Whatever the children want, they get.

Whatever they demand, mom and dad acquiesce. That's not biblical parenthood. That's distorting life for the child.

That's letting the child function more like a parent when they need to be servants of God in the lives of the parents and be growing in the things of God. But parents are to be subject to their children, not doing what their children say. I was teaching on a Counseling God's Way seminar, and the pastor had been gone that week, and I was teaching in his church, and he came in on the Sunday, and he said he was out at vacation, and they went to a theme park for the kids.

I don't know, Disney or someplace like that. He was amazed how the parents were letting the children treat the parents, you know, demanding and demanding. There was even a little kid in the stroller, maybe three years old, and he wanted to go this way, and the dad said, no, that way, and the dad was wrestling the stroller.

And then, of course, he prevailed with strength, and all of a sudden, the sharp little rebel in the stroller, he just jammed his foot down in the wheel, and the father almost fell over the stroller. And he's looking up at his dad, you know, scolding him. I said this way, and the father said, oh, okay, you win.

That is not the pattern. That's not how parents are to be servants in the home. But they are to be servants.

They are to subject their lives to the well-being of their children. Let's see how they're to do it, though. Ephesians 6:4, and you fathers do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture, or it could be translated training, the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Now, this is how parents are to be servants to their children in the home. And note who is singled out in this verse, and you fathers do not provoke your children to wrath. Chapter 6, verse 1 read, children obey your parents.

Okay, mom and dad, plural. Now, wouldn't you expect in verse 4 that it would read, and you parents? Well, that's what one would expect. And obviously, mom and dad are both involved in the raising of the children because of the previous statement, children obey your parents, plural.

But when it comes to the parents' role, it is amazing that God, by his Holy Spirit, guided the Apostle Paul to hone in on fathers, and you fathers do not provoke your children to wrath. What's the implication there? Well, I see a few things there. One is that fathers are certainly expected in the plan of God to be involved in the raising of children.

I mean, many a man has viewed the raising of children, well, that's just something that, that's why he got married, you know, so we not only have children, but there'd be someone to raise them. And then off he goes to work, and then to the club, the bar, the golf course, the whatever. Oh, this is so strong and clear.

God doesn't want us as men to miss this, and you fathers. My father was involved in the raising of us children, but I could have easily slid into that worldly path and just let my wife take care of that. Oh, she had a heart to take care of that.

She has diligently been ministering to those children since they were babies in arms, but she was much wiser than I was on these issues. In fact, she was much more mature than I was on any issue when we got married, which I've noticed is not an uncommon pattern in marriages, you know. And I thank the Lord for my wife's wisdom and maturity at her age, and God used it to have an impact on a lot of things, the way I thought wrongly about them.

But she knew I should be involved in the raising of the children, and she had a very wise and loving and kind way to remind me of that. She was so wise in it, I didn't even realize a lot of the time until I was looking back on it, that she was helping me learn this thing, you know. She would say, oh, I might be in my study at home, just come in maybe from painting houses and going to seminary and working on assignments.

And of course, she's in the kitchen, and we're the kids, they're where mom is hanging around. And she would call out, Robert, you wouldn't want to take the kids out back and play with them, would you? So I can maybe kind of finish up dinner, you know. And I would kind of, oh, yeah, yeah.

And I'd march off and do it. I almost felt like I thought of the idea, you know. I didn't, and my wife wasn't making a point of that.

But just, you know, a kind little question, and I'd peek around the corner in there and see the kids climbing all over her while she's trying to stir food on the stove. Another one comes to my mind that was, that one comes to mind because it happened often in the home, because I needed much help. But there's another one that only happened a couple of times, and then the Lord set it in a pattern.

What was that? One day she said to me, she said, Robert, you wouldn't want to take the kids one at a time, would you, on a Saturday? Saturday morning, maybe go to take them out to breakfast and go off and do something with them, you know. Go to the park and go play ball with them or something like that. You know, hang out four or five hours with them.

You know, just get to really know them one-on-one and just have fun together and minister to them. And you know, man, my wheels are turning and thinking, yeah, I never thought of that. And boy, I don't even know if I can do that, all these responsibilities and things, you know.

But the way she said it, you know, it just, it just, it seems so holy and heavenly. And it was, you know, in spite of me sloshing through it, stumbling my way into it, you know. And eventually she said it one day and it just kind of, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

I think I'll do that. And again, it was almost like I've come to this big decision. I never would have thought it without her.

And if she hadn't gently reminded me. And indeed, it happened. I started taking them.

It didn't happen every Saturday, but two or three Saturdays every month. We did that for years while the kids were home. And I went from figuring how I'm ever going to fit this in to thinking how awful would it be had this never happened, you know.

Such wisdom in my dear wife, Deanie. And it taught me a lot of things through those years. And it led to a real fast friendship with those kids.

My wife had that from the moment they were born. I had a close relationship with them, but that just cemented it. And now they're adults.

And I must say, they're three of my best friends on earth, you know. I see that sort of implication. What is that? Fathers get involved in the upbringing of the children.

It's the will of God. And you fathers, God knows that mothers have a heart for this. And of course, it's part of their ministry and responsibility.

But when he turned from children to be your parents to let's see now how parents are to be servants, God selected in a way that just kind of brings you to a halt, you know. And you fathers, why didn't he repeat parents, you know. You think on that and pray on that.

And it stirs a lot in a man's heart. And you fathers, so we are to definitely be involved with the raising of the children. But here's another thing I think that's here, just observing the text.

And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath. Now why did he pick fathers out here? I think it's obvious. We apparently are real candidates for provoking our children to wrath.

Otherwise, it would be a meaningless statement that the Lord gave us, which says, fathers do not provoke your children to wrath. The father is here given a primary responsibility. Yes, a wife, a mother may spend more time with the children, but we are called.

We are the head of the home, the leader of the home, fitting the Ephesians five role and responsibility. But it seems like we are ones who can provoke children to wrath, or frustration, or anger, or reactionary rages of exasperation you might say. And then Colossians 3.21 adds, fathers, same thing, children obey your parents, the previous verse, Colossians 3.21, fathers do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged or lose heart.

Apparently fathers have this sad capacity of provoking little fits or rage from discouragement, to exasperation in children. Now by the way, if an earthly human father did everything perfectly right in his role, that in no way guarantees that children will not have their little fits, and rages, and exasperations on their own. The flesh of a child is very creative in this area, and can be very sensitive, and very demonstrative.

But here's the point, we dads are not to be the cause of moments like that. It's one of our responsibilities as a servant in the home. Be careful, here's one way to serve those kids as a servant of the Lord, don't provoke them to anger, frustration, discouragement, losing heart, etc.

Now what would provoke a child to anger? What would stir a fit of wrath in a child? Well you know we're not actually told that here. You know you might imagine that extremes of ignoring children, or smothering them to where you're living out your life all over again through them. Yeah you could make very practical observational speculations, but here's the thing.

The Lord doesn't go there. He just says don't do it. But where does that leave us? Oh it leaves us in a great place, because it doesn't limit you know.

Okay all I got to watch out for is just that one, two, three little areas, no problem. No it's left open. There might be a lot of things that could frustrate that child, but here's the big thing.

Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. See we're not told what will frustrate kids, but we are told what will avoid frustrating them. Let's read that again.

But bring them up in the training or nurture and admonition of the Lord. If we concentrate on doing what we're told to do, at the same time we will not be frustrating our children and provoking them to wrath, but we will actually be an instrument of God developing their little lives in the Lord. This is how to avoid frustrating the children.

This is how to minimize that you might say, as they're going to have some times of frustration on their own anyway. Just concentrate on bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Another way you could put that.

Bring the children up in training and warning, nurturing and cautioning. You know there's another way to put that in a broader frame of the whole Word of God. Bring your children up in the law and grace of God.

The law would be the admonishment. Watch out. This way's right.

That way's wrong. This way's good. That way's bad.

This is what's needed. The other way will bring serious consequences. That's law and kids need law, but they need more than law.

They need that which trains and nurtures them. They not only need warnings about trouble and paths not to go down, they need that which will develop them into the kind of person God wants them to be. You remember maybe Titus 2, 11 and 12, that God's grace which brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us, teaching us to stay away from worldliness and to press on after godliness.

That has to do with grace. God's grace trains and disciplines lives unto godliness. Let's look at this line of scripture in our outline, 1st Timothy 1. Expand a bit on this issue of law and grace.

And again, why are we doing this? Because we are to bring up our children in the training slash nurture and admonition of the Lord. Two areas. One is warnings, cautions.

The other is help and encouragement and development. You see the difference? They're distinctively different. Children need both of them.

And the broader theme that fits both of those categories throughout the word of God is law and grace. Law, those are the warnings and admonishments. Grace, that's God's help to make of us more and more what he wants us to be.

And 1st Timothy 1 pictures this beautifully, verse 8. But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this that the law is not made for a subordinate and so forth. The law of God is for the rebellious, the insubordinate. Now, what does that have to do applied to child rearing? Listen, you're raising an innate little rebel there.

The children of Adam born in trespasses and sins, each one has gone to his own way, as Isaiah 53 puts it. That would include our precious little children, too. They have an inclination to their own way, not only versus mom and dad's way, but as contrasted with God's way.

That's the story of humanity. That's the depravity of the human family. Well, the law addresses that.

The law is made for the lawless and the insubordinate. That which is in the heart of a child that wants its own way. And so very early children express that.

Grandchildren do. Precious little sinners that they are, you know. No, they respond to mom or dad or grandpa or grandma or they're playing with their siblings or friends.

Mine is a yank and take charge of that, you know. Those are just the little seedlings that remind you that you've got a precious rebel in the house, you know. And how's God going to address that? With the law.

With the law. The law is for the rebellious. It reminds that that behavior is wrong.

It speaks of consequences for rebellion against God and disobedience to the parents. But that's not the only way God raises his kids, us. He also uses grace.

Verses 12 through 14, same chapter. And I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has enabled me because he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus. The law is for the insubordinate, the rebellious. It's designed to remind of accountability and judgment.

God's grace, on the other hand, can take a rebel like Saul of Tarsus, who described himself as a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man. But the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, changed his life, forgave his sin, broke his rebel heart. God's grace can take a life and make a humble, fruitful servant of the Lord out of it.

So when our kids are rebellious, they are reminding us they need to hear some more about the law of God. Our kids don't always know that, but when they're rebellious, they're actually saying, Mom, Dad, would you please rehearse the matter of the law of God with me? Tell me what's right and wrong, what the consequences are, you know? On the other hand, when our kids are humble or repentant or eager to please, they will profit greatly in hearing about God's mercy, God's grace, God's abundant provision to make us what he wants us to be. But notice, this is the nurture and admonition of the Lord, of the Lord.

This is not just have some harsh standards, have some kind responses. No, it's not that. It's the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

In other words, it's the admonition, the law of the Lord. It's the law, what God requires and demands and plans in light of who he is. Who is he in relationship to the law? He's holy.

The law is summarized in the Old Testament, Be holy for I, the Lord your God, am holy. So the law is teaching about the holy standards of God based on his character. And then grace, it's what he offers and can do in cleansing and renewing and transforming lives in light of who he is.

Who is he in light of the revelation of grace? He's love. He's love. He's for us.

He's not against us. He wants to help us. He wants to come to our aid.

And our kids desperately need both of those. The nurture and admonition of the Lord. They need the warnings of God based on the character of God, holiness.

They need the encouragements of grace based on the characteristic of God reflected there. He's love. They need both.

And we need to be teaching them about both. But at times when you have to concentrate on one more than the other, ask, are the kids rebelling or do they want to please, but maybe you're frustrated that they can't do right always. And it's like God's saying, okay, let's give some special teaching and insight on law for the rebel, on grace for the humble hearted child.

And many parts of the word of God speak of the law of God, even applied like Proverbs. Let's read a couple of these. Proverbs 10, 13.

Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, but a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding. Chapter 13, verse 24. He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly or early.

The rod for discipline, spare it, avoid it, refuse to use it, shows you don't really love your children. God spans us. He's not brutal.

He doesn't inflict needless pain, but he does discipline us. Chapter 22, 15. Foolishness.

Oh, listen to this. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Chapter 23, 13. Do not withhold correction from a child for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. A better English word would be spank him, beat him.

It sounds like child abuse. By the way, our societies around the world, they're trying to make physical discipline identical to child abuse. That's not in line with the word of God.

That doesn't fit the word. Spanking a child is not automatically child abuse. Now, child abuse is a horrible, horrific evil, and we must never be a part of that.

That's why we must not ever discipline our children out of anger. If they need discipline, and we're very angry, we first need a little quiet time with the Lord. Son, go to your room before you and I both get in trouble, you know, and then come with that tender heart that's gone before the Lord and is concerned about the well-being of that child, not just being irritated as an adult.

Well, many more verses, like Proverbs 29, 15, and so on. This is the law applied. The rod is both literal, you know, like a switch or something, or a small stick, and figurative, a symbol for authority and discipline applied.

But the issues are this. Children need discipline and correction. Certainly a lot of it can be verbal or consequences.

Some, clearly in the Scripture, is appropriate to be the rod of discipline. The point is we need to learn more and more how to raise our children the way the Lord raises us. Let's read one quick passage, not to comment a lot, but just to lay it out and how the Lord raises us.

Hebrews 12, 5. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons, quote, my son did not despise the chastening of the Lord. He chastens us. Nor be discouraged when you're rebuked by him.

He must do that now and then. For whom the Lord loves he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons.

For what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed, our earthly fathers, for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them.

But he, Heavenly Father, for our profit, what kind of profit? That we may be partakers of his holiness. That's what he's aiming at. Now, no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful.

Nevertheless, afterward, by the way, these are words of process and discipline. No chastening seems to be joyful, painful. Nevertheless, afterwards, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it, who yield to the Lord's discipline.

And of course, that's how he has us to raise our children. One more verse, Proverbs 22, 6, bring up a child in the way he should go. And when he is old, he'll not depart from it.

Oh, that's a huge promise. I know that Christian child raising experts try to say that isn't a promise. I've heard them, even men I respect.

But I cannot agree personally with that. It seems anti-biblical. It does not fit the text.

The translation they use is bring up a child according to his way. And when he's old, he'll not depart from it. Bring up a child according to his bent.

You know, help him become what he has the potential to become. And when he's old, he'll flourish in that. I don't think that's possibly what that means.

Why? Because the whole point of Proverbs is the way of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. The whole point of Proverbs is the path that leads to life.

It's the Lord's way. Train up a child in the way he should go, the way of the Lord. And when he's old, he'll be walking in the way of the Lord.

What a great promise that is. Because it also has the implication there that along the way there, he might not walk in the way of the Lord. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he'll not depart from it.

He might have some foolish rebellion along the way. Most of us do. Many of us do.

But when he's old, listen, I was a foolish rebel. My parents were raising me in the things of the Lord. When I was a teenager in early 20s, I was ashamed before the Lord.

But I'm old now. Believe me, I'm old now. And I have not departed from the way of the Lord these 43 plus years.

Where do you get the necessary resource for such living? Remember, we looked at it last time, Ephesians 5.18, be filled with the Spirit. Only a parent seeking after the fullness of the Spirit will ever be able to lead their children in this direction. But by the help and grace of God, we can walk in this path for the Lord's sake and the children's sake.

Let's pray together. Lord, again, for this matter of the parent-child relationship, we pray for a fresh filling of the Spirit. We pray for those who are parents that they'll know the resource they need comes from heaven above.

And those who are preparing for marriage and family, Lord, may they seek that fresh new work of the Spirit. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ilkikRcSCoo.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-hoekstra/parents-and-children/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**