

# Letters to Parents [#2]

by Charles Finney

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*Charles Finney emphasizes the importance of avoiding certain behaviors and attending to specific habits in order to train children well and develop their character.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:14, Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 22:6, Proverbs 29:17, Ephesians 6:4, Philippians 4:7, Colossians 3:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 2 Timothy 3:15, James 1:19

**Topics:** "Parenting", "Child Discipline"

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## Description

Charles Finney emphasizes the critical role of parents in the moral and emotional training of their children, urging them to avoid insincerity, impatience, and scolding. He advocates for a calm and deliberate approach to discipline, encouraging parents to model honesty and regularity in their own lives to maintain their influence. Finney warns against fostering fears and bad tempers in children, advising parents to be mindful of their words and actions. He stresses the importance of creating a structured environment and maintaining a peaceful spirit to positively impact their children's development.

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## Transcript

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS:--

In pursuing this subject I will notice several others things to be avoided in the training of children.

22. Avoid every thing that can be construed by them into insincerity on any subject. Especially every thing that may make the impression that your word is not to be depended upon.

23. Avoid every appearance of impatience or fretfulness in their presence.

24. Wholly abstain from scolding at them. If you have occasion to reprove them, let it be done with deliberation, and not in such haste and in such tones of voice as to have the appearance of anger.

25. If you have occasion to chastise them, first converse and pray with them, and avoid proceeding to severe measures until you have fully made the impression upon their minds, that it is your solemn and imperative duty to do so.

26. Avoid in your conversation whatever might have a tendency to beget in them the spirit of slander and evil speaking. Never let them hear you speak evil of any man. But always in their presence, as on all other occasions, "be gentle, showing all meekness to all men."

27. Avoid as far as possible whatever may be a temptation to them to indulge evil tempers. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger," is both the counsel and the command of God. If you find your children naturally irritable and easily made angry, be sure to keep this always in your mind, that the more frequently any temper of mind is exercised, the more readily and certainly will it be exercised whenever there is any occasion for its indulgence. If therefore you find your children inclined to the exercise of any evil temper whatever, be sure, as far as possible, to avoid all occasions that may prove too great a trial for them, and cause them to fall into their besetting sin.

28. Avoid unnecessarily exciting their fears upon any subject. Suffer no one to make them afraid of the dark, or of Indians, or of witches, or of wild beasts. Children are often very seriously injured by creating a morbid excitability upon such subjects, insomuch that they are ever afterwards afraid to be alone in the dark. And their foolish fears are often excited even in riper age, in view of things with which they were foolishly persecuted in their youth.

29. Never give them any thing because they cry for it. If they find that they can get any thing by crying for it, or that they are any more apt to get it because they cry for it, you will find yourselves continually annoyed by their crying. Children should be taught that if they cry for a thing, for that very reason they cannot have it.

III. Several things to be attended to in the training of children.

1. Be honest, and thorough, and correct in forming your own views and opinions on all subjects. This is of great importance. For if your children find you often mistaken in your views upon some important subjects, your opinions will soon cease to have much weight with them. It is immensely important that you be well instructed, and know how to answer their inquiries, especially on all moral subjects. Your opinions ought to have great weight with them. It is for their own good. Your opinions will naturally have great weight with them unless they find you in error. Be careful then as you would preserve your own influence over them for their good, and as you would not mislead them to their ruin, to be thorough and diligent in the use of means to obtain correct information on all moral questions.

2. Let your own habits be both right and regular; your rising in the morning, your retiring at night, the hours at which you take your meals, together with all your domestic arrangements. Let order pervade every thing, and be sure to have a time and a place for every work, and every thing around you. Have a place for every tool, and let every member of your family be constrained to keep every thing in its place. And if they have occasion to use any tool, to be sure to return it to its place before they put it out of their hands. By insisting upon this, you will soon save yourself and them a great deal of unnecessary trouble.

3. Be sure that they are up early in the morning, and retire early at night. This is imperiously demanded by their health, and almost universally by their morals. If children are allowed to be up late in the evening they will not only lie in bed late in the morning, but almost always get into the habit of either making or receiving visits from neighboring children. This will bring in its train a host of evils.

4. See that your temper and spirit are right. "Let the peace of God that passeth all understanding dwell in your hearts, that you may possess your soul in patience." And never suffer your angry feelings to come into collision with theirs.

5. Let the influence which you have over them be an ever present consideration with you. Do not forget it. Do not be unmindful of it, even for an hour or a moment. In whatever you say and do in their presence

have an eye to its influence upon them.

Your bro. in the bonds of the gospel,

C.G.FINNEY

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