

An Appeal to Fathers

by Don Currin

Fathers must exercise caution not to provoke their children to anger, lest they lose their power to train them for Christ.

Scripture: Genesis 37:3, Proverbs 15:27, Proverbs 20:7, Hosea 4:6, Ephesians 6:4, James 1:20

Topics: "Family Values", "Parental Guidance"

Description

Don Currin delivers a powerful sermon on the importance of fatherhood, highlighting how Satan has targeted fathers to undermine their nurturing influence, leading to defeated dads, bitter children, and fragmented families. He emphasizes Ephesians 6:4, urging fathers not to provoke their children to wrath but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, stressing the impact of both negative and positive actions on parenting. Currin explores how fathers provoke their children through partiality, passion, pretense, prosperity, and preoccupation, warning against neglect and sinful behaviors that can hinder a father's ability to influence their children for Christ.

Transcript

Fatherhood has fallen on hard times as Satan has undermined the nurturing influence of many fathers. In an attempt to destroy families, the devil has targeted the head of the home. The outcome of his assault has been defeated dads, bitter children, and fragmented families.

In Ephesians 6:4, the Apostle Paul speaks poignantly to the fathers in the Church of Ephesus when he writes: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

It is significant to note that the verse carries with it both a negative and a positive admonition. The negative is "provoke not your children to wrath", while the positive is "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". Interestingly, the positive is affected by the negative, as fathers can hinder their power to rear their children in godliness if they provoke them to anger.

Christian fathers of our day are perplexed as to why they have so little or no influence upon the lives of their children. They wonder why their instructions and directions are so flippantly regarded by their offspring. I am convinced that the answer can be determined by considering what we do to grieve them.

How Fathers Provoke Their Children

Partiality: In Genesis 37:3-4, Israel loved Joseph more than all his children. His affection was obvious as he makes Joseph a coat of many colors. Imagine the resentment Joseph's siblings felt as they witnessed the favoritism of their father. How often have fathers planted the seeds of deep rooted bitterness in their children by their partiality toward one child over another.

Passion: Undoubtedly, it made for a miserable home life for Jonathan to have a tyrant like Saul as a father. Saul's anger brought fear, oppression, and estrangement to their relationship.

Following a Sunday evening service, a broken-hearted father shared how he had lost his temper with his son the night before for forgetting his ball glove at a park. The grieved dad said he had verbally abused the boy all the way home for his negligence. When arriving home, the son went to bed in tears with no consolation from the father. The dad said that God had spoken to his heart in the morning service as he thought, "I can replace that ball glove, but I can't replace the soul of my boy". He concluded by saying that after he and his son arrived home that afternoon, they reconciled.

For those fathers who are convinced that anger is one of the surest ways to motivate kids to do right, it would do them well to consider James 1:20. Righteousness is never the fruit of sinful anger.

Pretense: Proverbs 20:7 says, "The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him." A recent survey taken among Bible-believing churches revealed that hypocrisy in dad was the leading cause of bitterness among their youth. An old saint said, "Hypocrites are like pictures on canvas; they shew fairest at farthest". Nothing creates an environment of contention and subsequent resentment in a child any more than pretense in the father.

Prosperity: Years ago while conducting a series of meetings, the pastor pointed out a home to me one day that was within sight of his church. He told me that a few months before he had attempted to reach the head of that home for Christ. During the course of their conversation, the gentleman regrettably shared how his daughter had recently graduated from high school, and he did not know her. The sorrowful father related how he had neglected his girl over the years.

The Scripture warns in Proverbs 15:27 that "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house...". How many children have been provoke to wrath by a discontented dad that was not satisfied with what God provided. In his endeavor to make more money, it resulted in longer hours at work, less time at home, and greater alienation between he and his children.

Preoccupation: In Hosea 4:6, the prophet gives a solemn warning to those who forgot the law of their God through their own sinful preoccupation. God said that he would forget their children as a judgement for their wicked involvement.

While many believing dads today may not be involved in the sinful practices of Hosea's day, they may be so absorbed in their own agendas to the neglect of their kids. The story was told of how G. Campbell Morgan was approached by a distressed father who inquired as to how to regain the respect of his small boy. Can you imagine the man's surprise when the intellectual preacher asked, "Have you ever tried a game of marbles?"

If we expect to have the utmost influence upon our children we must never prioritize our selfish desires and temporal interests over their needs. The dad who pursues his own carnal ambitions to the exclusion of quality interaction with his child may find it difficult to persuade that child to heed his counsel later in life.

Fathers, let us exercise extreme caution in not provoking our children to anger lest we lose our power to train them for Christ. We must maintain our nurturing influence by resolving never to exasperate them. May it be our aim to rear a godly seed that will grow up like Solomon who "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father."

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