

Ephesians 6:4

The Covenant Home: a Life of Formative and Corrective Training and Instruction

Saturday, June 3, 2023 ▫ **Read Ephesians 6:4**

Questions from the Scripture text: To whom is v4 addressed? What are they told not to do? To whom? To what are they in danger of provoking their children? What are they to do to their children instead? By what two means/activities are fathers to bring their children up? Whose training and admonition?

How can fathers help their children fight their sin? Ephesians 6:4 looks forward to another part of the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In this verse of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **since a child's obedience must be in the Lord, fathers must use the Lord's means, in dependence upon the Lord, to help their children fight against their sin.**

We are culpable before God for our reactions. Often, I have heard a parent unwittingly admit to having had grown-up temper tantrums by saying, "my children make me so angry!" No they don't. Your children do what they do, and you respond with that intemperate anger. Even if anger is a righteous response, you have a duty to self-control, a duty to restrain unnecessary severity, etc.

But children aren't parents. This verse implies that there is a duty of a parent to remember that the child is weaker, less mature, not having had as much training or instruction. Yes, the child is responsible for his response, but the parent is obligated to give that child every possible advantage for producing the right response.

If the child is wrathful, certainly he breaks the commandment "honor your father and mother." But if the parent's behavior is provoking, the parent breaks the apostolic commandment in this verse. There is much that a parent can do that will make a difference in whether the child becomes wrathful or not.

Sadly, I've heard parents say (and indeed, read "Christian" parenting books that say it!) that they provoke their children to test them. But our children give us many opportunities to see and respond to the sin that comes out of their hearts. There will be much opportunity for correction and instruction. We need not invent more of them. Indeed, we see here that the Lord positively forbids it!

But if we're going to give them every possible opportunity to obey the Lord, there is more that we need to do than just avoid provoking them to wrath. It is very important that a father be gentle and kind and respectful, and watch against being illegitimately demanding. Even if we remove all provocation from their circumstances, our children have an enemy within them that they must war against. If they are going to honor and obey us, it has to be done "in the Lord" as v1 says—in opposition to their remaining fleshliness.

How can they do that? The answer is in the second half of the verse: discipline and instruction. But not just any discipline and instruction. The verse specifies, "the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Even an animal can be trained through discipline and instruction. But that animal doesn't have a sinful nature. Your child is up against infinitely more.

Thankfully, your child has been blessed with infinitely better help than is available to an animal. We are to give them not whatever discipline pleases us, but the discipline of the Lord! We are to give them the instruction of the Lord! Job number one in not provoking your children to wrath is the means of grace in the congregation, week by week, and the means of grace in the home, day by day. We owe them the whole counsel of God, proclaimed and taught, by God's shepherds in the home (parents) and in the congregation (elders and pastors).

This instruction includes all-day, every-day application of the Scriptures to everything they see and everything they do. God's words need to be on your own heart, controlling your own life (Deu 6:4-6), then they need to be in your mouth and their ears continually (Deu 6:7), in away that shapes how they do everything (Deu 6:8a) and how they see everything (Deu 6:8b), so that the family name on the mailbox and front door could read, "Scripture-saturated Family" (Deu 6:9).

Wrath is part of the folly that is bound up in a child's heart. But, the reason the rod of Proverbs 22:15 drives it far from him is that it's the rod of *reproof*—it's a rod that comes in the context of a Bible-saturated, prayer-saturated, sacrament-receiving life. And the loving Redeemer Who provided these means will prosper them in His abundant grace.

He has laid out the means for combatting the source of wrath in the heart of your child. And, He has both commanded you to use His means and forbidden you to make yourself the occasion of your child's wrath, if you can righteously avoid it.

What more/better use could you make of the means of grace for the children of your home and your congregation? What are some situations in which you could be less an occasion of their wrath?

Sample prayer: Father in heaven, we thank You for taking our children as Your own and marking them with Your Name. Thank You for giving us the means by which You make this external reality into an experiential and eternal reality for them. Forgive us for when we provoke them to wrath, or when we fail to employ Your discipline and Your instruction in fatherly love like Yours. So forgive us and our children, and cleanse us and our children, through faith in Jesus Christ, in whose Name we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP128 "How Blessed Are All Who Fear the Lord" or TPH548 "Oh, Blest the House"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Ephesians 6, verse 4. These are God's words. And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath. But bring them up in the training and admonition of the lord. So far the reading of god's inspired and inherent word.

Children, and all of us are Her prone to wrath prone to anger. Because the world is not as we would have it. And the sin by which An angel that came a devil. Was pride. Which is a. Sadly instructive, grievously instructive. Our culture in the current moment as we are in so-called pride month.

Tried in ourselves in any way would be said. The loan pride in perversion. But one of the things that pride leads to is wrath, Then you can see this in those who are perverted. When their perversion is, Is accurately called out. The rage that ensues. But you can also see it in a parent.

In his pride, has an idea of what providence he should receive today. And when the providence goes awry, How easily short tempered he becomes. And you can see it in children. Who do not get. The food that they want or the activity that they want, or Who are not?

Listened to or allowed to dominate others, like they want and so forth. Children are full of wraths along as Uh, they are convinced that they should be. The center. Of the world, the center of their world and of everybody else's. World. Which is why covenant children have such an advantage.

Because they have been marked in the name of the father, son, and holy spirit. They're visibly externally covenantally joined. To the lord jesus christ so that the

bible calls them is saints. There's not a covenant child in the new testament who is not considered a saint. There's not a Conversion of a single covenant, child.

Um, Who was born into a christian family? Recorded for us in the new testament. And yet. As we know, even as covenant adults, Christian and name is not always. Christian and thought and heart and conduct. And so, children are Uh, taught not just to obey their parents. But to obey their parents in the lord.

And then parents are reminded. That with our children being sinners and we being sinners, too. We may be those who provoke them. To want to be their own, the center of their own world. They of course, are responsible for their owns and everyone is responsible for their own sin.

But here we have a reminder that we are responsible. To think about and anticipate the way our actions affect others. You cannot. Be intentionally. Provocative. And say. Well, it's his fault. He has a temper. And, Then you cannot ought be unintentionally. Provocative and failed to take your responsibility. For not recognizing.

Or maybe unintentionally somewhere, you cannot be ignorantly. Provocative. And not take responsibility for your failure to recognize. Not how you affect others? And so, the first thing, Or not the first thing. But some some obvious things that this means. Is that? We must conduct ourselves. Uprightly at a firingly.

Uh, with one another and especially With our children and we must be thoughtful. For the care of one another's bodies. Things like not keeping a child. Up too late or Giving them. Sugar, which Is like crack cocaine for children or other. Um, Yeah, common grace. Ordinary wisdom. Uh, sorts of things.

But it is a special. Especially. Uh, the the special grace means the means Of god's special grace redeeming grace. That are at the center of not provoking, a child draft. Having that family worship with them that we've been hearing about and thinking about, as we Memorize deuteronomy. Uh, six.

Six through seven this week. Bringing them up before the face of god. So that they don't. So that their self-centeredness, Is not. Um, diminished or treated, by teaching them to be parents entered. God forbid, Um, they just trade one. Demonic focus for another. But that their self-centeredness would be treated by a god-centered life.

And the way that god gives the god-centered life is through word, saturated worship. As the rhythm for life, the punctuation. For life. And then, When they are out of line. You come in with the rod and the reproof that proverbs teaches us to use. In coordination together. And so you have This training that is Uh, formative discipline.

Morning and evening. And you know, when you lie down and when you rise up all day long and whatever the excellence are When you sit in your house and when you walk, by the way, So there's formative discipline first. Uh, but then there's also the corrective discipline That when they do sin, it's not a sin because it offends what you want.

Although hopefully you do want that's best for them. That's a sin because it offends what god wants? And so you come with not. Uh, the parents revenge. But the discipline of the lord, And the correction of the admonition of the lord. And most the vast majority. Uh you want for the children's life, this is what you're aiming at.

Um, of their discipline.

You want the vast majority of your Children's discipline to be that formative discipline that when you lie down and when you raise up and when you sit in the house and when you walk, by the way, And yet, you'll find early in the child's life. Uh, they'll give you a Or run for it with opportunities for corrective discipline.

But the more consistently you do, both and both require consistency. The more. Lord willing and blessing your obedience to not provoke the child to wrap. Um, the more the lord's discipline or training and the lords, Admonition or instruction. The more it will have the effect. And as they learn.

To live before have walk before him had, as god gives them tender hearts by his spirits blessing. Upon the word. Uh, you are, you will need much less. Of the corrective. Discipline. There are children, who will be? Corrected and trained. The lord brings them to a maturity. Where they are corrected into trained by the word.

Just as well as by the rod, the They fulfill that proverb that the word enters their heart more deeply than 100 blows. Enter into a full. And we know that the rod isn't meant. Uh, for all of life. For adults would be going around getting spankings. For their sin.

But the desire is That in our worship. Times. And in, The use of the word saturating, our conversations and other times. And that's an area i think are Our family could grow in all of these. But, Thinking and speaking biblically to one another And obviously that would have to change patterns of what we do.

Very difficult to indulge yourself in worldly things for an hour and for hours at a time. If we are speaking to one another faithfully, From the word and the lord give us to change both. But this is the sort of life that. Our god desires and god commands. For parents to live with their children.

And when the lord give it to us, Than to whatever extent, you do not receive it from your earthly father, If you know that it is the will of your heavenly father You may look to him for extraordinary, grace. To help you be. Scripture minded and mindful. Throughout the day.

Lord willing. We're going to be doing after the decant training in the bible class. Inside of school. We're going to be doing the battle plan for the mind. Book on christian meditation. But it's a lot easier. For everyone to do the christian. Meditation. The taking control of your mind with the word of god.

If we have christian conversation,

So let us ask god, that his spirit would give us this sort of life together. Our father in heaven. We thank you that your spirit has given us these words. In ephesians 6, verse 4. And we pray that he would write them. On our hearts. The words which you have commanded us in scripture?

Would be in all of our hearts. And that it would be out of that, that we Speak of them when we sit in the house and walk by the way. When we lie down when we rise up. And we pray that. You would not only do this for our house now.

But that you would, Be so convincing. My children. Of the necessity to live and think like this. And so preparing. Spouses for them who think the same way. That they would. Have their? Training and instruction. In their homes. To be your training and your instruction. Formatively and correctively. For the generation, that is to come.

Granted, oh god. And grant your spirits attendance? Upon all that. Speaking of your word, that it would be mixed with faith. Would profit us that it would glorify you. That it would give convincing and converting and Building up and holiness and building up and comfort. Unto salvation unto your glory.

In christ. When his name, we ask it. Amen.