

Raising Up Children in the Lord

The Three "R"s of Parenting #2 - Pastor Gary Combs - July 23, 2023 - Ephesians 6:1-4

INTRO: Good morning church! We are continuing our series entitled, "The Three 'R's of Parenting." You might remember the three R's of learning, Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic. So it is similar with Parenting, Receive, Raise up, and Release. Today, we're going to talk about the second "R," "Raise Up Your Child in the Lord."

Everyone has an opinion about parenting. Here are some funny parenting memes that we found online:



Need: Having a good sense of humor often feels like the only way to survive parenting. But the truth is, parenting is no laughing matter. Raising kids is one of the most profoundly important jobs in all of life! Yet, many of us give very little thought on how to do it. We just wing it and hope for the best.

What is your parenting approach? Where did you learn how to be a mom or dad? Was it from your parents? From friends or a book? Or are you just winging it? What is your parenting style? Take a look at this graphic. Where would you place your parenting style: License - easy going, "free range" kids, little or no discipline? Legalism - strict, lots of rules and discipline. Or LOVE/LIBERTY - a balance of fun and discipline, order with freedom?



Trans: Pastor Chuck Swindoll says, "Children who breathe the air of love in a nurturing home are more likely to respond with submissive obedience." Balancing discipline and affection in child-rearing is critical.

BODY: The apostle Paul told the Ephesians how to raise up their children according to God's plan. As Christians, we can follow God's Word in the training of our children and raise them up to maturity according to God's plan. How do we raise up our children in the Lord? The text gives **four imperatives** for raising up children in the Lord.

Read text: Ephesians 6:1-4 (ESV) ¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

How to Raise Up Your Child in the Lord:

1. Teach them godly and right obedience.

EXP: (1) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

"Children" (τέκνα, *tekna*) - a dependent child.

"Obey" (ὑπακούετε, *hupakouete* - Pres Act Imp) - Literally, "to come under hearing." To obey. Obeys a parent's instruction or command. Implies that the parents are giving them something to follow or obey.

"right" (δίκαιος, *dikaïos*) - just, righteous, properly, "approved by God" (J. Thayer); righteous; "just in the eyes of God" (Souter). Regardless of the worldly view that all things are relative, there is a right and a wrong. The standard for right and wrong is revealed in the Bible. Give them a biblical standard to obey.

ARG: We commanded to teach our children diligently to obey God's Word.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NKJV) And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Children that obey their parents please the Lord.

Colossians 3:20 (ESV) Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

ILL: Parenting myths vs. reality: (From Chip Ingram's book, *Effective Parenting In A Defective World*)

Parenting Myth: My children's primary responsibility is to juggle the schoolwork and extracurricular activities that will make them well-rounded, successful adults.

Parenting Reality: My children's primary responsibility is to learn healthy obedience.



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Worldly methods used by parents in an attempt to obtain obedience:

- **Bribing** “Come to mommy and I’ll give you a sucker.”
- **Threatening** “If you don’t pick up your toys, I’m going to throw them in the garbage!”
- **Emotional appeal** “After all I do for you, this is how you repay me?”
- **Reasoning** “But Sweetie, your hotdog will get cold if you don’t come to eat now.”
- **Yelling** “How many times do I have to scream at you?”
- **Countdown** “I’m going to count to three, and then you better get over here.”
- **Teapot** “I’ve had all I can take... now you’re going to get it.”

APP: Stop using worldly parenting methods! Give your children a biblical standard of right and wrong. Help them to see that you are authorized by God to parent them to maturity. Give them the Bible as your standard. But don’t use it only for correction. Show them how to hear from God themselves through His Word.

2. Establish an environment of mutual respect.

EXP: (2-3) ² “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

“Honor” (τίμα, *tima* - Pres Act Imp) - to honor, value, estimate, fix the value, revere. Two steps: 1) Recognize their God-given position as your parents, 2) Give them the honor due them. Also implies financial and physical support for elderly parents. “Obedience is the appropriate **action**; it involves a child’s behavior. Honor conveys respect and devotion and reflects **attitude**.” - Swindoll

“Go well” - Children who learn to honor their parents grow up to live under God’s blessing and care.

“Live long in the land” - God’s blessing leads to a long life. And it has the additional feature that children who honor parents have a stabilizing affect on the nation (“land”) in which they live. For they have learned to honor the authorities that God has put over them in all areas.

ARG: Deuteronomy 5:16 (ESV) Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

“Many Christians have divided the decalogue into two uneven halves, the first four commandments specifying our duty to God and the remaining six our duty to our neighbor. But the Jews regularly taught that each of the law’s two tablets contains five commandments. The significance of this arrangement is that it brings the honoring of our parents into our duty to God.” – John Stott (*The Message of Ephesians*, p. 239)

ILL: **How does this honor look?**

- It obeys immediately, sweetly and completely.
- It respects parents in thought and deed.
- It addresses parents appropriately: “Dad, daddy, mom, mommy.”
- It answers parents politely: “Yes sir.” “No ma’am.”
- It cares for parents in their old age.

APP: Children are not born honoring their parents. They must be taught. It also must be caught. In other words, you must model it in how you treat them in an honorable way and in one deserving honor.

3. Encourage them with sensitivity and consistency.

EXP: (4) **Fathers**, do not **provoke** your children to anger...

“Fathers” - Perhaps because fathers often struggle here. But more likely because fathers are to lead in the parenting effort. Therefore this instruction includes both parents.

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“**Provoke**” (παροργίζετε, *parorgizete* - Pres Act Imp) - to rouse to wrath, exasperate, anger. Do not drive them to anger, discouragement, frustration. This means that there is to be a balance to a parent’s authority. This balance comes from knowing a child’s nature and being consistent in your discipline.

ARG: What provokes children to anger?

- Fault-finding - Not spending face-to-face time to build a close relationship
- Labeling (“Lazy, stupid, slow etc”) - Comparison - Inconsistency - Hypocrisy - Humiliation

Colossians 3:21 (NLT) Fathers, don't aggravate your children. If you do, they will become discouraged and quit trying.

ILL: The strength of your relationship with your child is critical to your parenting success.

“Your child’s behavior reflects his heart. If you are to really help him, you must be concerned with the attitudes of the heart that drive his behavior. This understanding does marvelous things for discipline. It makes the heart the issue, not just the behavior. The point of confrontation is what is occurring in the heart. Your concern is to unmask your child’s sin, helping him to understand how it reflects a heart that has strayed. That leads to the cross of Christ.” (Dr. Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*).



APP: Be sensitive to your child’s personality and be consistent in your rules and discipline. Your job is not just good behavior. It’s to bring them up in the Lord. You must aim at the heart.

4. Train them with appropriate discipline and instruction.

EXP: (4b) but **bring them up** in the **discipline** and **instruction** of the **Lord**.

“**Bring them up**” (ἐκτρέφετε, *ektrephete* - Pres Act Imp) - nourish up to maturity, nurture, rear, train. Parents should have the goal in mind to represent God’s authority to them until their child reaches the age where the role of authority shifts to God alone.

“**discipline**” (παιδεία, *paideia*) - tutorage; i.e. education or training; by impl. disciplinary correction: chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture. Bring them up through physical correction.

“**instruction**” (νουθεσία, *nouthesia*) - calling attention to, i.e. (by impl.) mild rebuke or warning: admonition, counsel. “Warning through teaching.” (GK: *nous* – mind) – Bring them up through teaching their mind.

ARG: **Bring them up** (“train them up” - **ILL:** Like a vine trained to a stake to grow towards the sun)

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

Don’t fail at disciplining your children.

Proverbs 23:13-14 (NLT) Don't fail to correct your children. They won't die if you spank them. Physical discipline may well save them from death.

Proverbs 19:18 (NLT) Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives.

Understand the Distinctives of Discipline: (From Chuck Swindoll, *Family Life*, p.113)

- **Distinctive between abuse** (harms, leaves scars) **and discipline** (painful for a moment, but leaves no scars).
Hebrews 12:11 (ESV) For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
- **Distinctive between crushing the spirit and shaping the will** (“Do not provoke”).
- **Distinctive between normal childishness and willful defiance** (“Spilled drink vs. Saying ‘No’”).

ILL: **Parenting myths vs. reality:** (From Chip Ingram’s book, *Effective Parenting In A Defective World*)

Parenting Myth: Your goal is to make your kids happy.

Parenting Reality: Your goal is to train your kids to be holy— set set apart for God.

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APP: You are raising your child for the Lord. Raise up your child to believe and follow Christ. Use a balance of both discipline and instruction to train your child for the Lord.

CONCLUSION: Parenting involves three "R"s: Receiving, Raising-up and Releasing. Will you commit to raise up your child in the Lord?

Will you...

1. Teach them godly and right obedience?
2. Establish an environment of mutual respect?
3. Encourage you child with sensitivity and consistence?
4. Train your child with appropriate discipline and instruction?

Of course, the only way we can raise up our child in the Lord is with His help. These four imperatives come after the first three chapters of Ephesian with Paul explaining the power of the gospel and God's grace towards us.

These four imperatives are not like a recipe you can follow and out comes a perfect child. No. There are no perfect children and there are no perfect parents... except One.

With God's grace and mercy, with His help, we can raise up our children in the Lord.

Let's pray.