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## **For the Love of the Family Ministries™**

**Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family  
Proper Discipline Of The Child Part 2**

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## **Proper Discipline of the Child Part 2**

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Ephesians 6:1-4 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Good family relationships between sinful parents and sinful children do not develop naturally, they require much effort. I suppose the first question that arises immediately as we look at verse 4 is why did Paul address the fathers? Why did not he address mothers? Do not the mothers spend more time with their children than fathers do? When Paul speaks to fathers he is speaking to the mothers. As the head of the home, the father is responsible for what mothers do in the home. The father is addressed as the manager. In addressing the fathers, he is addressing the one in whom God has

vested his authority for discipline.

When dad manages his household he does not always need to administer discipline directly. He must discipline the children largely through his wife. Yet in all, the father must remain in control and be aware of what happens. God holds him responsible. So in this verse Paul speaks to the fathers of their responsibility to see to it that their children are properly trained.

Ephesians 6:4 "Provoke not your children to wrath." Fathers must guard against allowing themselves, their wives, or anyone else in the family to provoke their children to anger. The word for "wrath" (anger) here means do not exasperate your children that they may lose heart. In essence, do not take the heart out of your child. What is it that provokes the child to anger? The wrong kind of discipline. When there is the wrong kind of discipline the child gives up and quits. This often happens when a child has been disciplined in a non-Biblical manner. The most interesting fact that emerges in talking with such young people is that it is not discipline itself, nor primarily over discipline, but rather, it is under discipline that exasperates children more than anything else.

An example of this would be unannounced rules that are made known only after the child has broken them, provoke exasperation. Parents this is not proper discipline. Another example is inconsistent discipline. The child is told that if he does a certain thing he will get a spanking. The next day he does the certain thing but is not disciplined for it. When rules change day by day, a child does not know where he stands. The child then becomes exasperated (angry at the situation).

Let me ask a question here. Would you like to play baseball if the rules changed ever day and were not announced? Why do parents keep moving the boundaries? The answer lies partly because they are lazy and they do not work at discipline. Godly parenting in the area of discipline takes hard work and effort. Godly discipline also requires change in parents. Many parents give up too quickly. If they say something today, and they do not see change instantly, they quit. In essence, they stick with it two or three days and do not see change they quit. It is like when they go on a diet.

Parents, we might as well get one fact straight now, it takes time to discipline a child, and it takes stated, consistent enforced rules.

If a child is told not to run in church, and the parent sees the child run in church and does nothing about it, that is inconsistent discipline. Folks, the child needs to know the rules and that if they break the rules they will be disciplined.

Sometimes a child gets exasperated because of over discipline. The parent never gives them room to breathe, the parent has 100 rules and you consistently have to look for infractions. Do not think you are a good parent because you have 2500 rules. Every rule that is made must be policed, or it is not worth making. When a parent fails to police rules, he teaches that he does not mean discipline.

Another reason for under discipline is divided authority. We have husbands and wives who disagree over various rules or penalties. They may do so because they have never taken the time to reach

agreement during the cool before the battle begins. Together, parents must think through ahead of time what they will do. Children can see when parents are divided and use their division to drive a few wedges of their own.

Have you ever seen a mother who is a yeller? The child learns that they do not have to obey until mom yells. So what happens is, mom ends up yelling all the time.

Over discipline in some instances provokes children to anger. The problem is parents who over react. God's Word is the Christian's standard. It is always well balanced. Parents must act Biblically, not react. The Holy Spirit must control a parent. Many parents rightly conclude they must do a better job of discipline and many times over react and do so in anger.

I know that many people will disagree with me on this next point, but I understand that. Many people have said children must never see their parents disagree. I do not think that is true. The children need to see how parents settle their disagreements as a Christian. Otherwise, the parents have failed to teach their children how to handle the problems of marriage in God's way. Of course, the parents must be committed to solving problems in their lives God's way.

Accompanying over discipline is often unfairness in punishment. Over discipliners use a sledgehammer to drive home a tack. Children are exasperated under that kind of treatment as well. The over discipliner has never learned how to distinguish between things that differ. If a child back talks he needs discipline, but be careful that you do not discourage all talk. A child needs to communicate with their parents. Another area in which over discipliners must come to face involves the importance of learning how to distinguish between what must be enforced as a rule and what a child must be allowed to learn on his own.

When we taught our daughter how to swing, I put her in the swing and helped her get started and then went off and let her practice and learn on her own. I watched from a distance, I did not stand right over her. This was something she needs to learn to take her lumps on. On the other hand, we had a kerosene heater in our home when the children were young. The heater was absolutely something we were not going to let a child take their lumps on. Parents must learn to distinguish between swing issues and flame issues.

Another example of over discipline is saying "no" to everything. If someone always said "no" to you how would you feel if you never received a word of encouragement?

Ephesians 6:2 Notice, "Honor thy father and mother" is positive. And if they do they will receive a reward "thou mayest live long on the earth." Ephesians 6:4 notice the word "nurture", it means training with structure. Parents must learn to discipline but they must learn to discipline correctly. If you tell the child you are going to spank them, and they do the infraction again, spank them! If you tell the child to do something and they will not do it, do not let that go.

Listen very carefully, the child's will needs to be broken, but not his spirit. He needs to know that

you love him, but He will be disciplined for doing wrong. If you do not do so, he will test you to see how far you will let him go.

Parents, there is a certain conduct in a child that should never be tolerated. A child who is disobedient to what they have been told to do and non-Christian attitude and conduct should never go unpunished. A child must learn how to treat other children with respect and especially adults in authority with respect. A parent must teach these matters to their children. Ninety percent of what you will teach your children you will do so between the ages of zero and twelve. Parents, a child must learn that what God thinks about it is the most important thing. Discipline must be consistent as it appears in the Word of God. I have three very important rules of thumb for you on discipline:

1. Discipline Early in the Child's Life, Psalm 51:5, Psalm 58:3
2. Discipline Consistently
  - a. You must remember parental authority is God's authority.
  - b. Romans 13:1-2, Ephesians 6:1, Hebrews 12:5-11, Proverbs 3:12, Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 22:15, Proverbs 23:13-14
3. Discipline Improper Reaction and Attitude in the Child's Life