

“A Charge to Parents – Part 3”  
Colossians 3:20  
(Preached at Trinity, November 25, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. For the last two weeks we've been looking at the duty of parents towards their children. It is in the context of the effect of our union with Christ. Paul is reminding us that the Christians life is lived in the light of Christ.  
**Colossians 3:17 NAU** - "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."
2. Beginning with **Verse 18** Paul describes the practical effect of God's transforming grace upon the family – wives & husbands, children & parents, slaves & masters.
3. Paul began with the institution of marriage – the relationship of husbands and wives. Then he turned to the duty of children to their parents. Paul gives the command, "Children, be obedient" in the imperative. Then he adds, "for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."
4. Then he turns to the duty of parents toward their children. Paul's charge is in the imperative: "do not exasperate your children"  
**Ephesians 6:4 NAU** - "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger"
5. Our actions have a tremendous effect upon our children. Paul says, "Do not exasperate them, do not frustrate them, do not provoke them. Such a condition will lead a child to discouragement that leads to anger. Lacking the ability to express themselves rationally they act out with misbehavior.
6. The Biblical instruction here is "do not exasperate your children"  
Paul states this in the imperative. He gives a serious duty to parents, but he doesn't elaborate. It is up to us to connect the dots. As I preach this text it is my duty to make application. I stated two weeks ago that I'd give you ten ways you can exasperate your children. So far we've looked at the first seven.
  1. You will exasperate your children by failing to maintain your position as parent
  2. You will exasperate your children by over protection
  3. You will exasperate your children by showing favoritism
  4. You will exasperate your children by over indulgence
  5. You will exasperate your children by unrealistic high expectations
  6. You will exasperate your children by unrealistic low expectations.
  7. You will exasperate your children by hypocrisy.
7. This morning I want to set before you the final three ways you can exasperate your children – ways you can frustrate and provoke your children to anger.

- VIII. You will exasperate your children by failure to demonstrate your child's importance
- A. A child can be made to feel he or she is unwanted, undesired, unimportant
    - 1. Your child can be made to feel he is an inconvenience. They will know what you consider most important.
    - 2. You continually express the countless ways he is keeping you from doing the things you want to do or even the things you feel you need to do.
    - 3. My first point in this series was we can exasperate our children by being over protective. You can also exasperate them by being under protective. You can give them the idea that they are unimportant. They receive little attention, little oversight, little protection.
    - 4. A parent must be willing to make sacrifices for their children. And the sacrifices must be made with joy
  - B. Your children should know that you love them intensely and unconditionally.
    - 1. They must know that you don't love them more or less based upon their actions. Your love must not be something they have to earn
    - 2. You will never win their heart unless they have your heart  
They must have your love, attention, commitment, time, affection, concern, involvement, and on and on.
    - 3. You should be reflecting God's love for you which is an unconditional love full of pity and grace.
    - 4. Pharisaical demands of obedience without love builds up resentment.  
You can demand good behavior but are you winning their heart?
  - C. You must express to them that you value them; you value their opinion
    - 1. You can exasperate your children when you don't allow them to voice their thoughts. You have to listen to them.
    - 2. While you should demand obedience and respect you should be approachable.
      - a. This is the nature of our relationship with our heavenly Father
      - b. God says obey. He makes absolute demands. Yet we can go to Him in prayer and express our heart
    - 3. You must maintain dialogue with your children
      - a. You make rules but you should explain why.
      - b. If they disobey they should be allowed to explain the reason for their disobedience.
      - b. When they speak listen with your heart – hear what their concerns are
  - D. Your desire is to capture the heart of your children
    - 1. Your little girl has to know that she's her daddy's treasure
    - 2. She must know that her welfare is your great interest; that you will protect her and defend her. She will trust her life to you if you've given your life to her. When a prospective suiter comes calling she will trust your evaluation; that you will only give her to the right man.
    - 3. Your son will value your wisdom as he makes the great decisions of life because you have demonstrated that his wellbeing is of the greatest importance to you.
    - 4. What a tragedy when parents put everything else before their children.

- IX. You will exasperate your children by failure to discipline
- A. By being too lenient - by not applying enough discipline or proper discipline  
This is far too common today
1. There is a total breakdown of discipline today - even among Christians
    - a. We are guilty of turning our children into objects of worship
    - b. Most parents pander to their children  
The children rule the home
    - c. Discipline makes demands upon the parents. It is far easier just to ignore the bad behavior.
  2. Even worse, our culture has rejected the proper discipline of children
    - a. Many are appalled today at the thought of spanking children. Any form of spanking is considered abuse.
    - b. This is because they don't have a proper concept of accountability. Corporal punishment teaches children that there are consequences to their actions.
    - c. There is a false view of man - that he is basically good. The truth is children are depraved and must be taught subjection to authority.
    - d. There must be consequences for actions - it must begin at the home and then to society as a whole. We can witness this breakdown in proper child rearing as teachers complain their classrooms are without order and our prisons are overflowing.  
When we don't enforce our household rules our children will choose which laws of society they'll ignore – sometimes involving terrible consequences.
  3. One of the great evidences of being a child of God is our experience of God's loving chastisement.  
**Hebrews 12:6-8 NAS** - "For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." <sup>7</sup> It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup> But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons."  
Kent Hughes – “An evidence of being a child of God is God’s discipline. So it is with human fathers. The absence of discipline means fatherhood is not being practiced, and weak, inconsistent discipline shows a lack of love. Discipline is therefore a key to child-parent fullness!”<sup>1</sup>
  4. As soon as one mentions spanking today the charge of abuse is levied. Discipline is not abuse. Abuse must never be permitted. As a church we must always look to the safety of all our children. But this does not mean that we condemn spanking.  
While corporal discipline or spanking is the usual means of discipline it is not the only means. The important thing is that there is discipline and that it is applied properly.

---

<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon: The Supremacy of Christ*, Preaching the Word, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 123.

5. What does it mean to be too lenient in discipline?
    - a. The moment a child demonstrates rebellion it must be addressed. Immediate obedience must be demanded.
    - b. Tantrums are efforts of a child to manifest autonomy. They are saying, "My will hasn't been honored and I am letting everyone know." Young children must be taught that their wills are subject to the authority of their parents. This is what is meant by authority. A tantrum must never go unaddressed
    - c. Open disobedience must never go unaddressed. Immediate compliance must be demanded.
    - e. At what age? As soon as they are able to purposely manifest their wills against yours. We call them the terrible twos because there is a battle of the wills going on. The child must not win this battle.
- B. Discipline is harmful when it is applied inconsistently
1. An important aspect of proper child discipline is consistency. The reward of consistent discipline when the child is young is a well behaved respectful young adult.  
Proper discipline is not simply seeking to control the actions of your children. You are seeking to win their heart.
  2. Inconsistency is either arbitrarily changing the rules or changing the consequences
  3. Children need to have consistency and order. Rules need to be known and their enforcement must be the same every time.
  4. You are provoking your child to wrath when you are inconsistent. They will assume they can disregard your will and get away with it.  
First time obedience is a good goal.
  6. You are also inconsistent if you discipline one child more or harsher than the others. You must be consistent and equal among all.
- X. You will exasperate your children through abuse – physical, emotional, psychological  
Unreasonable, unfair, or harsh discipline  
(sarcasm, ridicule, anger)
- A. It is abusive when discipline is improperly applied
1. By making impossible demands or being overly critical –
    - a. You must remember their weakness just as God remembers yours.  
**Psalms 103:13-14 NAU** - "Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. <sup>14</sup> For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are *but* dust."
    - b. We should guard against harsh criticism or harsh cutting words
    - c. You should guard against spanking in anger
  2. Again, you must remember there is a great difference between defiance and a mistake. Mistakes should be corrected but not disciplined
  3. You must be careful and patient with development
    - a. Young children are prone to forget - short attention spans  
Their minds are not fully developed  
They do not give great attention to detail
    - b. Their coordination is not developed - poor skills

4. The punishment must be appropriate to the infraction
    - a. Rebellion must be punished quickly and firmly
    - b. Disobedience stemming from forgetfulness receives less severe punishment
  5. Discipline must have a redemptive purpose. You are teaching your children that their actions should honor God.
- B. Your children must understand that your discipline is the result of your love for them and your love for Christ
1. Never discipline in anger. They must understand your motive is repentance not revenge.  
You are seeking to honor God, not just impress other people
  2. It is good to explain to them why they are being spanked and then after they have stopped crying talk to them about the matter of their heart.
- C. More about abusive discipline
1. Spanking is designed to correct, not to injure
  2. It is never acceptable to strike a child in the face.
  3. It is never permissible to ridicule or demean a child with harsh abusive language
  4. Discipline should not humiliate or shame. It should be done in private.
  5. Remember the purpose of discipline
    - a. It is not to meet the expectations of others – your purpose is not to gain the approval of others or impress them with your ability to control your children.
    - b. It is not to vent your own anger over your children’s actions
    - c. Discipline is meant to correct bad behavior out of a motive of love and to teach them God’s demands for their life
- D. Sexual abuse has brought great harm to those who are the most vulnerable
1. It is unspeakable wickedness to rob a child of their innocence. Often the truth doesn’t come out until adulthood when the effects of abuse are reveal the deep scars.
  2. As a church we must guard our children zealously. We must provide a safe environment for them. We need to be alert for any signs of abuse. This is why we are proactive with background checks. We must maintain commonsense safeguards like having two adults present.
  3. Wise parents are aware of the ever-present danger and be careful to limit possible exposure. Most abuse is perpetrated by friends and family. While not living in fear and paranoia, exercise wise discernment in who you trust being alone with your children – adult or child.
  4. You must listen to your children

**Conclusion:**

1. As I stated last time, you have great power over your children. But this power must never be abused. You can harm them by not treating them with the care that is demanded. God tells us, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart." So that they will not lose heart. In other words, so that they will not be discouraged.
2. Your children are a great treasure, a wonderful gift from God.  
**Psalms 127:3 NAU** - "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward."
3. You must carefully guard them as you would any precious treasure.  
You should seek to gain their heart by carefully giving them your heart.  
**Proverbs 23:26 NAU** - "Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways."
4. And you must raise them with grace. A graceless Christian is a contradiction. Pray that you might be gracious towards your children, training them up with love, pity, and grace.