

Ephesians 6:4

"The Proper Nourishment of Christ's Children by Christian Fathers"

The proper nourishment of Christ's children for their learning to obey and honor is led and overseen by Christian fathers, who are also under Christ. Whether they are led into righteousness or provoked to wrath depends much upon their fathers' being careful to give them every advantage in restraining their sin. For their nourishment, their Lord has given training and instruction.

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Ephesians chapter 6.

Our portion this evening is verse 4. The seasons chapter 6 verse 4, let's pray. Our Father in heaven how we thank you for your great mercy to us who were darkness, but whom you have made to be light in Christ Jesus. And we pray that you would grant to us to be filled with your spirit.

To do this spiritual battling. Equipped in your armor enabled and enlivened by your spirit applying Christ to us. That we might be mighty in the Lord your son already and whose name we ask. Amen. Ephesians 6 verse 4 and you fathers. Do not provoke your children to rap. But bring them up in the training and admonition.

Of the Lord. So far the reading of God's inspired and and Eric work. Well we just heard in our portion for last week that children are to obey their parents to honor their father and their mother. There's extremely important that fathers that parents generally and father specifically learn and know and live according to the fact that they are under authority.

Fathers are commanded by the apostle under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit here. Our houses are not about us men. They are about Christ. And although we under Christ are to rule and lead and provide and protect and nourish. We are under Christ, so it's important to see first of all here the fathers are being commanded.

Because when we try to follow what has written here in this central section of the spiritual warfare between the light versus the darkness and then our battle is not against flesh and blood and we find out that the spiritual war takes place primarily with wives and husbands and children and parents and slaves and masters as we'll get to them next week.

It is quite possible that in our flesh trying to correct. The insubordination of lives and treating wives and husbands as being of equal authority and having having similar roles in the home and the insubordination of children and teaching children to live as those who can decide for themselves what they want to do instead of those who are commanded by their parents.

And it's quite possible that in our flesh and trying to fix that we end up with homes in which fathers dominate their children. Or husbands dominate their lives, we've already seen that the latter. Is exactly the opposite of what is commanded to the husbands and now we learned that the fathers.

The fathers are under authority and the fathers are to nourish their children this word that is translated bring them up in our verse today it is the same word that is translated in chapter 5 and verse 29 as nourishes for what a husband is to do with his wife fathers are also to do with their children because they're not your children.

Didn't we just get done and verses one through three telling them last week that they are Jesus's children and you are Jesus's parents that Jesus said over them. He is the one who chose whom they would have and they belong to him and now that we know that they belong to him he addresses us and he says, And you have to help them.

What does it look like or what is it called children when a child has a fit of wrath? I didn't want to use the word fit. I might give it away to easily. It's a temper tantrum, isn't it? And it's not the terrible twos. It is the wicked hell deserving children of Adam spawn of Satan twos.

But praise God. There is grace. And Christian children don't have to have twos or ones or threes or forties like that. They can obey their parents in the Lord. Because the honoring of their parents is in Christ for them. Just as much as every other godly character godly characteristic godly behavior

is in Christ for everyone else who believes in Jesus, don't you dare children.

Listen to those in our culture and even in our church culture who talk about you as if there is some form of wickedness that is automatically part of whatever age you are now that wickedness is a part of the first Adam and you don't have to have it. You can follow the last out of the Lord Jesus Christ and it's mom and dads, but especially dads job to help you and you fathers do not provoke your children to wrath.

There's a horrible thing that I hear children sometimes say you make me angry. Well mom or dad may have been the occasion and something that they did that was wronged and quite often something that they did or said, that was right. Is the occasion for your anger, but you made yourself angry.

You are responsible to obey versus one through three all by yourself now thankfully. God hasn't left you all by yourself. And he's telling the parents that and by the way. As in a hundred times worse when you hear a parent. Who should be responsible for their own emotional control tell their children, you made me angry look what you made me do oh I'm sorry I said that to you that way honey but when you blah blah, I just said sorry but I'm not really sorry because I'm blaming you in the rest of this paragraph.

But. But we are to understand our children's characters and constitutions and we are to give them every possible advantage because our children are weak. Does your heavenly father just give you a bunch of commands and then form it fold his arms and say all right time for you to obey.

Or does he give you every possible advantage? So he says you fathers do not provoke your children to rap there is conduct and behavior and a manner that you can have in your children that that provokes them that gives them every disadvantage. Sets them behind or you can come alongside them and you can know that living with them in gentleness and demanding only such things as are necessary for you to demand and giving them the equipment in teaching and training and everything that you can do to enable them to obey every one of your commands.

You know, I've actually heard people who think they are rediscovering Christian child-rearing give their children tests, just to see a fellow bay. They will provoke the wickedness of their children so that it will come out so that they can come down on them.

Your children or sinners, they're gonna disobey. Lead them rightly don't provoke them to wrath and when they sin anyway, then give them the discipline that is necessary under the command of God. For when you train a child like an animal and create the obedience test and do it over and over and over again and brothers and sisters.

I've seen it done with toddlers. And you provoke them to wrath. You may be following the the the guidance of your favorite counter-cultural child rearing expert but you are directly disobeying the Holy Spirit. Who commands you. You fathers do not provoke your children to wrath. Give them every possible advantage.

Because if you love your children what you want them to do is to obey children obey your parents in the Lord and honor your father and mother for this is right that they would care what's right that they would care what the commandments of God say. So you fathers do not provoke your children to wrap and it is very specifically fathers.

Mothers are going to be involved but the father takes the lead you say well the mother spends the most time with them well fine. Then you're delegated it to your wife when she's spending time with him, but when you come home. Don't keep delegating it to your wife. Hey that's not living with her according to understanding.

That's not attending to her soul leaving her on the hook for all of the child rearing from wake up to to put your head on the pillow at night. There's a husband who's doing that to his wife obeying what we heard a couple of weeks ago and the end of chapter five.

But more than that are your children learning that they have a father on earth who's under of their father in heaven and their father in heaven disciplines them he does what is painful at the moment to produce the peaceful fruit of righteousness, but he doesn't just give them the rod he gives them the rod of the reproof and it comes with instruction and teaching and pointing them to Christ and thanking God together with with them that God has given his son to bear what they deserve so that instead of getting what they deserve they can get the discipline that they need.

Fathers. The buck stops with you. Do not provoke your children to wrath. But bring them up nourish

them how training and really it's child rearing the the word his child's training very specifically and admonition that word means putting things in their minds. And so there's the there's the training that is the formation and the putting things in their minds now training does imply and maybe even emphasize discipline.

There is discipline that goes with the instruction and it's not a secret what that discipline is. God uses the word rod several times in the put in the book of Proverbs. So there is discipline and instruction. But it's the discipline of whom. Of the Lord and it's the instruction of whom.

Of the Lord. In other words. Before you get to teach them teach them have these words in your mouth when you lay down when you rise up when you go out when you come in. You have to first have these words in your heart. You know, we go to Deuteronomy 6 and we say haha, we're supposed to instruct them all the time, you know, when we rise up when we when we lie down when we go out when we come in we're to teach them how to have the words bound to their hand the Bible controlling everything my child does the word of the frontlet between my my their eyes the Bible training my children controlling how they view everything that they see in fact we're gonna put the Bible on the door post to the house.

And you're gonna go out there and you know scratch off hockey and this established 1998 look under the word of God established yeah an eternity if you're counting the Sun who is the word?

But before you get to that. These words shall be on your hearts. You know, what dad? If you aren't on under the word and if if the word isn't feeling your heart your kids will see it. They are great hypocrite detectors. And you don't get to fold your arms and say well on the dad.

Is what if you just do you just provoke them to wrath there's nothing so infuriating as a hypocrite. You might not put that on yourself but just let someone be a hypocrite with you in business or let your neighbor be a hypocrite with what you do with your your adjoining property or let your legislature or your senator or your governor or your president be a hypocrite.

Now you've been provoked to wrath.

You got to have the word on your hearts, it's got to control you they've got to see it in your life, that's part of the training. That's part of the putting it in their minds. This is how church children are nourished. Now. Think about what he's saying here, this is your child's soul.

If they gain the whole world and lost their soul. What would it profit them? Now if you or I. Met someone else's child or we even saw that one of our children was being malnourished. That they were withering and dying and weak and sickly it's because we weren't feeding them or well we were feeding them as primarily garbage and we're not giving them exercise and not getting them out.

If you saw that happening with someone else's child you would want to go and speak to them and if they didn't do something about you want church discipline and and if the church couldn't couldn't help them you'd call the state.

Is it not infinitely worse? When your children are spiritually malnourished. When they are not exercised. In what the word of God commands and when they are not fed the word of God in which they are to be exercise.

How many children in the churches? Are spiritually weak and dying. Because fathers are not nourishing them. He's talked about elders, he knows they exist right chapter four pastor teachers. For the building up of the whole body the equipping of every part. And yet when it comes to the nourishment of children he's zeroes in on you dad.

So big part of your job. Bring them to the Lord's Day assemblies have them under the means of grace. As soon as you see faith in them, like Manten says in this epistle to the reader on the confession, as soon as you see faith in them, bring them to the table or bring them to be examined to be admitted to the table.

Because they need to eat and drink. That means of grace feet upon Christ. So, that is job number one. But if you obey this command one seventh of their lives. Even if it's the biggest most important seventh. Will you not be to blame? Even if you enter glory.

As on that day, they hear depart from me. I never knew you. Who were malnourished. We did not receive the means of grace in the home. Who are not trained. Who are not instructed. And yet who are still guilty. And who will now bear your own sin forever.

You fathers. Do not provoke your children to wrath but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord and prays God for that of the Lord because it doesn't just mean that there is a particular kind of training and a particular kind of instruction. It means it depends on an almighty power.

Almighty grace that the one who pointed at them in their baptism and said this one is mine. I call him a saint. I call her a saint. That he is the one who empowers his training his instruction his means of grace. So that yes, although you may need times to be shamed into your repentance, you'll have that godly sorrow that makes you go home and say, I'm sorry, son.

I'm sorry daughter. That I have been moud nourishing you or I've been provoking you to wrath. You don't in that repentance depend upon yourself because you know that it's God who gave that instruction because he has claimed your children and he will save them by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

You say, thank God. That you have not just told me what to do. But that the reason it'll work is because you are the one who is saving them. You don't have that promise for your own discipline and instruction, but you absolutely do if it's the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

And you can live and parent by confidence and promises like that. Father's. Do not provoke your children to wrath. But bring them up in the training and admonition. Of the Lord, let's pray. Oh God give grace we pray. For those of us who are fathers and those of us who aspire to be fathers, this is a way toward and so we thank you for a way to grace.

That even as we have just been admonishing one another for an hour. Singing addressing one another in different portions of your word. That is the means by which you make your word to dwell on us richly that is the means by which you fill us with your spirit for these tasks that you have called us to in the spiritual battle and we pray now especially for those who are called.

To the role of a father. That you would show that the Lord Jesus has transformed us from darkness and to light. By the kind of faithful fathers that you make us to be. Grant that your spirit would take the word that we have heard and stir us up to love and joy and zeal and the task to which you have commanded us.

And then keep your promises. And grant to us to see fruit in our children. That we might bless your name as they shine like the sun. In the kingdom of their heavenly father. Which we ask in the name of your son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.