

Colossians Series

[Sun. Nov. 8, 2015] Colossians Series, Col. 3.21 – Craig A. Thurman

Οἱ πατέρες μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἵνα μὴ
21 *Fathers, provoke not your children [to anger], lest*
The fathers, not do provoke the children of you, that not

ἀθυμῶσιν
they be discouraged. (discouraged in the subjunctive mood, *that they might not be discouraged*)

Οἱ πατέρες μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν ἵνα μὴ ἀθυμῶσιν

(Attached to this negative imperative is the reason why this is to be avoided: *that they be not discouraged.*)

The Parallel text of Ephesians:

Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke [incite, παροργίζετε] not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

και οι πατερες μη παροργίζετε τα τεκνα υμων αλλ εκτρεφετε αυτα εν παιδεια και νουθεσια κυριου

(This is compound statement made of both a negative and positive imperative: *Provoke not, Bring them up.*)

provoke ... (to anger, the added sense [Wigram shows]), ἐρεθίζετε, 2nd p pl, pres, imper of ἐρεθίζω; this word is only used twice in the N.T., once in a positive sense and once in a negative; the negative or evil sense of our text illicit one to a response of anger; the positive or good sense in 2Co.9.2 (below) illicit a favorable response of giving our substance to help brethren in need;

Provocation in a positive or good sense:

2Co 9:2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked ἠρέθισε very many. (... to elicit to an action)

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The LXX use of the Greek, ἐρεθίζειν:

Deu.21.20 This our son is disobedient and **contentious**, he hearkens not to our voice;

Pr.19.7 He that does much harm perfects mischief; and he that **uses provoking** words shall not escape;

Pr.25.23 The north wind raises clouds, so an impudent face **provokes** the tongue.

St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon, J. B. Lightfoot, p.227, "Irritation' is the first consequence of being too exacting with children, and irritation leads to *moroseness (ἀθυμία). In 2 Cor. ix. 2 ἐρεθίζειν is used in a good sense and produces the opposite result, not despondency but energy.' (*sullen, gloomy disposition)

Various old versions translate Colossians:

Wycliffe (1380), Fathers, not ye provoke your sons **to indignation: that they be not made feeble hearted.**

Tyndale (1534), Fathers, ***rate not your children, lest they be of a desperate mind.** (*rate: to rebuke angrily or violently; *obs*, to drive away by scolding; to voice angry reprimands.)

Geneva (1557), Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they **cast down their heart.**

Rheims, (1582), Fathers, provoke not your children to indignation: **that they become not discouraged.**

The Ephesian text Gr. is παροργίζετε, *provoke ... to wrath*, 2nd p pl, pres, imper of παροργίζω; παρά near, beside + ὀργίζω wrath, anger; used one other time (Ro.10.19 *by a foolish nation I will anger you.*);

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Here fathers are commanded not to draw their children close to anger (anger is kindled, inward and private) or wrath (wrath is sent forth and waxes hot, outward and public show) by the things that they do ... Do not taunt the child; do not be the cause for your child's anger.

O.E.D. wrath, 4. Anger displayed in action; the manifestation of anger or fury, esp. by way of retributory punishment; vengeance ...

It is one thing to chasten a child for becoming angry, but it is quite another for a father to chasten a child for the anger to which he has moved the child.

Father can motivate their children to good or evil. They can encourage them to things that are good or discourage them from a desire to be pleasing to them.

lest, ἵνα μὴ, is found 90 times in the N.T. and is translated either *lest* or *that ... not; that ... no* (1Co.4.6; 12.25; 16.2; Re.13.17; 20.3), *albeit ... not* (Phile 19); *that nothing* (Jn.6.12);

discouraged, ἀθυμῶσιν, 3rd p. pl, pres, subj of ἀθυμέω; ἀ negative particle + θυμέω, θυμία to burn; ἀθυμέω, to cease to burn, to put out the fire [in your children] (LXX, Ex. 30.7, 8); so, to stymie your children from good, wholesome, innate *desires to achieve* those things that are not only good for them, but what are usually viewed as pleasing to the father.

This imperative doesn't seem to be one of those instances where the father has occasionally erred. Every father is a sinner, as well as every child. It isn't the single error as much as the habitual one that can result in an evil response and impress upon the child a character which might prove to be a great handicap for the rest of the child's life. This is warning fathers against a habitual provocation against his children. This behavior is unnatural and should be rectified by every father who professes himself to be a Christian. Being a Christian father doesn't mean that we are better fathers than those who are in

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the world. Being a father of children is a natural relationship that should manifest with a natural fatherly care for those that he has begotten. But for a Christian father not to have this basic care for his own denies the faith which he claims to profess.

*1Ti 5:8 But **if any provide not for his own**, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

The father who would claim to be a Christian and act so contrary to nature and the Word of God is a hypocrite. In Scripture there are some *first, then* principles in Scripture. A father who will apply Christ at home is then prepared to serve Christ beyond.

*Mt 5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; **first** be reconciled to thy brother, and **then** come and offer thy gift.*

*Mt 7:5 Thou hypocrite, **first** cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and **then** shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

*Mt 12:29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he **first** bind the strong man? and **then** he will spoil his house.*

*1Ti 3:10 And let these also **first** be proved; **then** let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.*

*Jas 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is **first** pure, **then** peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

We cannot be faith in much when we are unfaithful in the least.

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Lu 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

LXX, ἀθυμῆν, ἀθυμία (Col. 3.21, *discouraged*):

*1Sa 1:6 For the Lord gave her (Hannah) no child in her affliction, and according to the **despondency** of her affliction; and she **was dispirited** on this account, that the Lord shut up her womb so as not to give her a child.*

*7 So she did year by year, in going up to the house of the Lord; and she **was dispirited**, and wept, and did not eat.*

KJV

*1Sa 1:6 And her adversary (Peninnah) also **provoked** her sore, for to make her fret (Or, tormented her to vexation, grieved her to sorrow, provoked her to anger), because the LORD had shut up her womb.*

*7 And as he (Elkanah) did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she **provoked** her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.*

*Ps. KJV 119:53 (118:53) **Despair** took hold upon me, because of the sinners who forsake thy law.*

*Ps 119:53 **Horror** hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.*

*1Sa 15:11 I have repented that I have made Saul to be king: for he has turned back from following me, and has not kept my word. And Samuel **was grieved**, and cried to the Lord all night.*

*2Sa 6:8 (& 1Chron.13.11) And David **was dispirited** (KJV, displeased) because the Lord made a breach upon Oza; and that place was called the breach of Oza until this day. (David had become discouraged from his desire to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up to Jerusalem. That is, until he received encouragement again, when he saw that the house of Obededom was blessed for its presence. [v.12])*

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*2Sa 6:12 And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. **So David went** and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness.*

Now, David had gone about a good thing in a wrong way, and the LORD rightly chastened this behavior. But what about a father who would chasten a child for having done the right thing. No matter what the child did it was never *good enough*. That is never what we perceive to be from the Lord is it? By Him we are always encouraged to right and discouraged from wrong.

The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 11, p. 227, 'There is indeed a curious implication that discipline in the household tends to be unduly severe: men are warned, as **husbands**, against harshness [KJV, *bitterness*, added] to their **wives**; and as **fathers**, against "provoking" their children by a severity which would cause them to **become discouraged**. "Chafe" would perhaps be a better rendering of ἐρεθίζετε than **provoke**; the thought is certainly of a continual irksome discipline such as causes children to feel that nothing they do can be right.' (bolding and underlining added)

Barnes Notes, vol. 12, p.280, 'Children should not be *flattered*, but they should be *encouraged*. They should not be so praised as to make them vain and proud, but they should be commended when they do well. ... He who always finds fault with a child; who is never satisfied with what he does; who scolds and frets and complains, let him do as he will, breaks his spirit, and soon destroys in the delicate texture of his soul all *desire* of doing well. The child in despair soon gives over every [gives up all, added] effort to please. He becomes sullen, morose, stupid, and indifferent to all the motives that can be presented to him, and becomes to a great extent indifferent as to *what* he does – since all that he does meets with the same reception from the parent.'

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J-F-B, vol. 3, p. 453, 'By perpetual fault-finding "children" are [athumosin] 'disheartened,' seeing the parents so hard to please. A broken-down spirit is fatal to youth.'

Matthew Poole, vol. 3, p. 726, 'Indeed, he (referring to the apostle Paul) seems here more strictly to guard fathers against mal-administration of their power in this extreme than he doth elsewhere, when writing upon the same subject, Eph. vi.4, considering the original word **he here puts the negative upon, to engage them to lay aside rigour in their government**, (as well as unwarrantable indulgence,) and that upon a very weighty reason, drawn from the end, viz. *lest they be discouraged*; lest some children, who might with a moderate hand be reduced to obedience, should be (as it were) dispirited, by the roughness of their father's discipline, and even pine away with grief, or grow desperate.' (bolding added)

We were all raised by someone. For good or for worse, regardless of whether those who had the charge of our care did right or wrong, the Lord calls upon us to do right. It doesn't matter what we had when we were growing up. What matters here is that we become obedient to the commands of Christ. Don't provoke, but bring them up ...

John Gill's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments, vol. 9, p.264, 'Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, &c.] ... *lest they be discouraged*; or disheartened and dispirited; their spirits be broke through grief and trouble, and they become indolent (lazy, lethargic, without drive), sluggish, and unfit for business; or, despairing of having any share in the affections of their parents, disregard their commands, instructions, and corrections, and grow obdurate, stubborn, and rebellious.'

Perhaps a consideration: This error should not be thought to be something unique to fathers. Doubtless there are mothers who err in the same manner. Perhaps mothers, generally speaking, are not so prone as fathers to this.

The Ephesian text

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... *but bring them up* [raise them, ... Lk. 4.16, *where he had been brought up* ...] *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

εκτρέφετε αὐτὰ ἐν παιδείᾳ καὶ νοουθεσίᾳ κυρίου

bring them up [or out], ἐκτρέφετε, 2nd p pl, pres, **imper**, act of ἐκτρέφω; ἐκ out + τρέφω to feed, nourish, bring up (as in raised); ἐκτρέφω, Eph.5.29, *nourish*;

*Eph 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but **nourisheth** ἐκτρέφει, 3rd ps, pres, ind, act.) and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:*

Feed your own children so that when the time arrives that they are to embark on their own journey from the home that they are prepared by the Word of God to be able to judge between things that are good and evil, and from things that are better to things that are best, **whether they know the Lord or not**; but all the more so if the Lord has been pleased to bring them to Himself at an early age.

Life is more than academics. How many of us know this to be true. We have prospered by the hand of the Lord in spite of the fact that we might be *handicapped* in the sphere of academics. While we might not be very well read we can be of a good character. It is not education that makes character. It is *how* we are educated. It is obvious that there are many highly educated crooks in the world. The Word of the Lord can provide for our children, even naturally, a wholesome character.

Bring[ing] them up doesn't guarantee their salvation, but it certainly helps prepare them for negotiating life's most common pitfalls. How? By taking time for them. *Bringing them up* doesn't just happen. It is a purpose of your will. Be interested in not only what they are doing, but how they are doing it. Guide their behavior.

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Chasten what needs to be chastened and encourage what should be encouraged.

nurture, παιδεία, dat, sing of παιδεία; KJV, *nurture* 1, 2Ti.3.16*, *All Scripture is profitable ... for instruction in righteousness* 1, *chastening* 4 (He.12.5, *despise not thou the chastening of the Lord*; 12.7, *If ye endure chastening*; 8, *But if ye be without chastening*; 11, *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous*); **this is the instruction given to children and servants.**

**2Ti.14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;*
*15 **And that** (Or, because that) from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*
*16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable **for** (πρός, unto, to bring near or about ...) doctrine, **for** reproof, **for** correction, **for** instruction in righteousness:*
17 That (ἵνα, in order that) the man of God may be perfect (ἄρτιος, fitted, adapted, suited, capable, proficient), thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

nurture, O.E.D: *sb.* (substantive, noun)

1. Breeding, upbringing, training, education (received or possessed by one). Now *rare*.

b. Moral training or discipline. *obs.*

2. That which nourishes; nourishment, food.

nurture, O.E.D: *v.* (verb)

2. To bring up, train, educate.

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1536 Tyndale *Tit.ii. 4 That they nuter the youge wemen for to love their husbandes. (sic)*

The first part of the analogy we pose between nurture and that of admonition would be to *instruct* a child how to ride a bicycle. We need to take the child patiently through all of the phases of learning to ride a bicycle. We begin with the bicycle itself; the handle-bars, the pedals, the seat, the brakes, and then we support the bicycle as they begin take to the seat. Usually the child begins to experiment with the steering, pedals and balance. No child that I have ever known ever took to a bicycle without a bit of apprehension. But as they become acquainted with the bike they begin to have the courage to learn more. Proper nurturing encourages them to continue. Impatience discourages an already apprehensive child so that they might not want to learn more that day. And enough discouragement could result in a child never learning how to ride a bike. Nurture feeds the details surrounding the bicycle to the child so that he may become a capable rider. Nurture.

Pr 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction (παιδεία) are the way of life ... (preparing the son) (24) to keep you from the evil woman ...

admonition, νοουθεσία, dat sing of νοουθεσία; compounded of νοῦς KJV, understanding (7), mind (16) [of the perception, the place where moral judgments are discerned or not; refers to the spiritual, carnal, or reprobate mind + τίθημι to be placed, appointed, laid, set forth, made.

Admonitions are like guideposts which instill in children warnings, reproofs and encouragements. Again, we must remember that these admonitions are the Lord's.

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The only other admonition which remains is the *worlds*. Fathers are commanded to ... *bring them up in the ... admonition of the Lord*.

Admonition: OED:

1. To put (a person) in mind of duties: to counsel against wrong practices: to give authoritative or warning advice: to exhort, to warn.
3. To put (one) in mind *to do* a duty: to charge (a person) authoritatively, to exhort, urge, (always with a tacit reference to the danger or penalty of failure)
4. To put (a person) in mind of a thing forgotten, overlooked, or unknown; to give formal or express notice: to notify, apprise, or inform.

*Ec 11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but **know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.***

This verse ends with a most serious charge in all of the Bible. We are all going to stand before God and be judged one day. Those who are without Christ shall be brought before God and be judged for the things that they did. Then shall every one receive sentence for their crimes, to that also an eternity in a lake that burns with fire and brimstone. (Re.21.8) Yes, even the saints shall stand in judgment before the throne of Christ and be judged for the good and bad things they committed against the Lord. Some shall be rewarded, and some shall suffer great loss. But all shall receive eternal life. (1Co.3.11; 2Co.5.10)

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Fathers are to put into the minds of their children the warnings of God's Word. Fathers are warned against harshness, severity, and rigidity because it discourages their children from excellence.

And now, the second part of the bicycle analogy: the admonition. Admonition gives the child the rules for safe operation of the bicycle. There are warnings about the terrain (up and down hill riding, approaching curves and turns), conditions (riding on sand, dirt, ice, snow, bumps, water, pavement), and warn them to use signals, against following too closely, car doors, defensive riding, traffic laws, always being aware of their surroundings. These warnings teach them *how* to ride a bicycle confidently. Admonition.

Pr 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels ...

Learning how to ride a bicycle without good instruction can be dangerous, but learning about the issues of life by experience would be disastrous.

Nature and admonition are what every Christian father has the responsibility to provide for their children. A father's handbook is not some psychologist's theories; it is the Word of God. By the Word of God the child's character and judgments should be formed.

Let's not waste our time obsessing, or encouraging our children to obsess about their personal appearance. The Lord looks upon the heart. Father should mold the children's character for good. The outward will pretty much take care of itself. As we have said in our previous lesson, parents have a small window of opportunity to train up their children. As long as we have these children they are ours to care for. Children are a loan from the Lord. Therefore instruct them as He

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commands, and you will have prepared them for the rest of their lives as adults.

Ps 127:3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

Father's mold the character of their children for good or for worse. Prepare them for life beyond the home. Teach them how to work, to be honest, diligent, humble, faithful, grave, dependable, & responsible. The truth is, for lack of this, even Christian children can lack good qualities and will struggle along until they learn of themselves to apply that same Word to their lives.

Years ago we used to have Sunday School, and these things were taught to many of you who are now grown into adults. A number of you had the benefit of attending our church school. Some of you received the Lord's instruction at home, at school, and during the church services. How many times we have thanked God for what He has done in your lives! You know how to work and evidently your employers are very pleased too. It is simply amazing what the Lord has done. How profitable it can be to children to receive a good and steady diet of instruction from the Word of God. But for a number of reasons not all children fared well did they? Some parents complained that the school was too strict. Some parents didn't see the need in attending the services faithfully and took no personal interest in the Word of God and the doctrine of Christ. These same parents lived a double-standard. How do I know this? Look at the children.

The imperatives of Scripture are important. We should receive them as they are, the commandments of the Lord. The fact that these imperatives are found in the Word of God should impress us greatly about the Lord's mind to us. He is interested in the details of our lives. His commandments are given to help us walk with Him. They are not for the Lord's benefit, but ours. Husbands, wives, sons, daughters, and fathers, servant and masters have important roles to fulfil in the Lord's work. Fathers (and mothers), consider the value of

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reading the Word of God with your children. Read of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; Laben, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Lot, his wife and his sons and daughters, the twelve patriarchs, of Jethro, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, the judges (Joshua, Jephthae, Gideon, Deborah, Barak), kings (Saul, David, Solomon, Adonijah, Rehoboam), David's mighty men, his sons, of the prophets (Samuel, Daniel [and his three friends], Ezekiel, Jeremiah), of Elkanah, Peninnah, Hannah, Mordecai, Esther, Eli, Hophni and Phenias. Read of our Lord Jesus and the disciples, of the saints throughout the book of Acts. Read to your children about the reality of life in the Word of God. Hollywood and video games do not teach our children about the realities of life. And by all means, don't let Facebook be their teacher either. Use the very Word of God to mold the character of our children. Reinforce those truths with your own obedience. Be your children's Sunday School teacher. Set down a schedule of daily Bible readings in the morning and at night. Commit a few minutes in the day as a family to the Word of God.

The Lord isn't calling parents to become psychologists and doctors. It doesn't take acquiring a teacher's certification to qualify to instruct and educate children. It takes committed, obedient, Christian fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers, the everyday common folk, who have their own children and who love the Lord. The very basics of life are all provided for us at our fingertips in the Word of God.

Pv.3.5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

A good warning here. We should consider the possessive pronouns in each of these cases: *wives are to submit to **their own husbands**; husbands are to love **their** wives;* and *fathers, provoke not **your** children.* A serious offense arises between best of friends for failing to honor boundaries between friends. You might be my friend, but that doesn't mean you may usurp my

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right to guide my family as I deem best. We have a number of parents with children at home. Use good judgment when assuming to correct another parent's child. Clearly, no man (or woman) should taunt another's child to anger. All of our children should be taught to respect authority, whether it comes in the form of elders, grandma and grandpa, aunt or uncle, or any in authority. Assuming the right to correct another child, especially when the parent is present is perhaps not the best means to approach misbehavior. Dealing directly with the parent of the child could be better. But, remember this, most parents have blind spots concerning their children. Let us tend to our own children the most and help one another in love. We all can use help along the way.

Positively stated: Fathers, encourage your children with the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Pr 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

When the child is young is the time when training should begin. Whether or not you obey this commandment the rule stands ... *when he is old he will not depart from it.* The character of the child is set for life. Give them good instruction. Make them to be faithful, dependable, diligent, caring, humble, kind, and accomplished for whatever they set their minds to do. And if the Lord will by His grace save some of them you shall have a double-blessing returned.