

**Ephesians 6: 4b; “Bringing Up Your Children”, Message # 52 in a series
entitled – “The Greatness of His Power”, a Bible Study prepared
by Pastor Paul Rendall for March 27th, 2024.**

In our last study we looked at the phrase here in verse 4 – And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath. In that study we saw that if you would not provoke your children to wrath you must communicate your love to them along with your expectation of their obedience. And you must also personally model for them the importance of humility and prayer. Now this evening we want to think together about what Paul means when he says that we should bring our children up in the training and admonition of the Lord. 1st of all we will look at the word “bring”, in terms of bringing them up, or training them up. And then we will look at what the implications of the word “admonish” are and what that will mean for us as parents.

1st of all – What does this word these words “bring them up” mean, in terms of bringing them up or training them up?

Our New King James translation says – Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. In the King James translation it reads – Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In the NAS it reads – Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. In the ESV it reads the same way as the NAS. In the Weymouth translation it reads – Bring them up tenderly with true Christian training and advice. In regard to this last translation, I believe that the words “bring them up”, or “train them up” implies something more than simply being tender with them, and giving them advice.

If we think about the word in the original Greek, εκτρεφο (ektrepho), we find Strong’s concordance telling us that it means “rearing them up to maturity”; that is, generally to cherish and to train, to bring up and to nourish. The word “discipline” or “training” comes from the Greek word – παιδεια (paideia) which means both the formative and corrective discipline which are given by the parent to the child during the whole time of their being under their roof and under their authority as parents. It involves both instruction and reproof when necessary. And corrective discipline, chastening, in a lovingly firm way with children of younger years when needed.

As helpful as this is to know, I would like you to see how God Himself words it to Abraham. And so I want you to turn with me over to Genesis chapter 18, verses 16-21. “Then the men arose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.” “And the Lord said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and might nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?’ “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”

“And the Lord said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.’” The context here is Abraham entertaining these 3 heavenly guests, two angels and the Pre-Incarnate Christ, who came down to speak with Abraham and Sarah, to tell them that they were going to have a son at the appointed time the next year. Such joyful news. But there was another reason that they paid Abraham and Sarah a visit. And that was that the Lord and these two angels had come down to investigate the report that great wickedness was taking place in Sodom. And they would take action against it.

As they were walking away, the Lord said to Himself – Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? He appears to be speaking to Himself and including in His reflections, the 2 other Persons of the Divine Trinity. Shall I hide from him the fact that I am intending to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their great wickedness? Shall I hide it from him seeing that he shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? He is not going to hide it from him. The reason that He will not hide it from him is stated for us in verse 19 – For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that I the Lord may bring to him what I have spoken to him.

Here, I believe, is the most clear presentation given to us in the whole Bible of the responsibility of a father. It is, that seeing you know the Lord, and that the Lord knows you, all the good thoughts and intentions of your mind and heart that you might have toward raising your children, He still expects you, like Abraham, to command your children and your household concerning three things. They were: To keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness, and to do justice, or to do justly.

The Lord knew all about Abraham's faith and his thoughts, and so He knew that He could entrust Abraham with the knowledge of His upcoming judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. He actually knew that His communicating this knowledge to him would draw out the response from Abraham that it did. That Abraham would intercede with the Lord so that Sodom would not be destroyed. But we need to see here that this is the main responsibility of the father in the household. It is to command his children. What would he command them? To keep the way of the Lord.

In other words, He would teach and train them up in the knowledge of God's ways which are found in the Holy Scriptures, the Bible. The teaching part would include inculcating the Ten Commandments and the two greatest commandments, of loving God with all of their hearts, and loving their neighbor as themselves. In our days it could well include catechizing our children either with the use of a simple written catechism, or asking them questions and expecting over time, that they will have the right answer Biblically.

The training part would be the parental expectation of doing what is right and just, which we will look at in our 2nd point. If the father and mother can teach and train their children, then they can reasonably expect that they will turn out to be God-glorifying people when they grow up. Proverbs 22: 6 – "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Here is a precious promise of what each parent hopes will be the real result of all of their instruction and training. It is that they will not depart from it.

That hopefully, in accordance with their prayers and the good example of the parents, their children will become true Christians themselves. It is a principled promise that is given here, to the parents who train their children up in the way that they should go. And they will pray that the Lord will work in the hearts of their children to give them more than common grace. They will pray for saving grace to be given, and for God's powerful working in their child's heart.

The father in the household, according the Bible, should see himself, I believe, first of all, as a priest to his children in this regard. Fathers you should you pray for them and with them. Abraham no doubt prayed together with Sarah regularly. And he probably prayed together with all of his all of his 318 servants at times, as well. In Genesis 14: 14 – "Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his 318 trained servants who were born in his house, and went in pursuit.

The Hebrew word “trained” here, means catechized. He was successful in winning that war and rescuing Lot. He succeeded largely, because he trained his servants well, not only in the art of war, but in the habit of prayer. And, later on, when he had other children from other wives, after Sarah passed away, he probably prayed with them all as well. He interceded for them, that they would come to know the Lord and His ways, and walk in them. He was a prophet to them. He would instruct them and teach them in the way of the Lord.

We see this same truth in the use of the word “teach” in relation to bringing up and training children, being used in Deuteronomy 11: 18-21. God is speaking to Israel and He shows them how their children should be instructed. He says – “Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” “You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” “And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that you days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.”

You can see here that God is saying that if you, the parent will lay up His words in your heart, and in your soul, if you make His words to be a constant reminder to yourself, which is what He was saying to Israel, when He commanded that the words would be bound as a sign on their hand and be as frontlets between their eyes, then there would be at the very least, the blessing of the children’s days being multiplied in the land of Canaan. I think that this is a good exercise in remembering God’s word; if we will write it out on note cards, and post what he has said on our walls or our refrigerators. Even more pray that His law would be written on our hearts.

But memorizing verses with children, and going over them with them will be a good way of instructing our loved ones in the knowledge of the Lord. Our children and young people will need this if they are ever going to come to know God, and love Him and serve Him. And if they are to grow in wisdom and understanding they will need to learn to meditate on the word of God, in the way that God told Joshua to do in Joshua 1: 8 & 9. “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.” “For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” “Have I not commanded you?” “Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

It is not enough to have children and young people memorize the word of God. That is good, and that is what it means when God says that the Book of the Law shall not depart from you mouth. But here, we are shown, that meditating upon it day and night is what will make our way prosperous spiritually. It will be a means to the end of our ensuring that we will have good success to our endeavors for ourselves, first of all. And then also, it will be a means for our children to become wise and holy Christian people. It is good to teach our children by word and example, not to be afraid, but to be strong and courageous in learning to do the will of God according to His blessed word.

2nd – What are the implications of the word “admonish” or admonition, as it is found in our text?

“But bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” When we think about the Biblically right way for parents to raise their children, we find Paul using this term – admonition. Admonition is instruction, and it is translated that way in the NAS and the ESV translations. In the 1828 Dictionary of Noah Webster, we find that to admonish means to teach and to warn. 1. To warn or notify of a fault; to reprove with mildness. 2. To counsel against wrong practices, to

caution or advise. 3. To instruct or direct. Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. Let us think once again of how God instructed Abraham to command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him. Since God instructed Abraham to do this. this is way that we ought to do it as well, seeing we are sons of Abraham by faith.

We should do what it says in Micah chapter 6, verse 8 – “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” As parents we must raise our children to realize that God has expectations of them. He has created them for His own good pleasure, and not their own good pleasure exclusively. His expectations are really very simple, in the overview, according to this verse. But we know, if we have ever tried to live these things out, that it will be impossible for us to do so without the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being given to us on a regular basis, all through our life.

We must tell them that they need to be saved from their sins if they would find favor with God. We must tell them that this salvation is not by works of righteousness which they will do, but it will only be found by asking for mercy and grace to be shown to them by God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. We must preach Christ to them, and tell them that without Him, they can do nothing to really please God. May each of us who are parents show to our children the beauty and glory of Christ in the things that we teach them, and the way that we communicate them to them.

Let us make the appeal to them of Solomon to his son in Proverbs 2: 1-9. “My Son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” “For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of the saints.” “Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path.”