

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Ephesians 6:1-4 “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” See Col.3:21

Quote: Parents must memorize, “master” and model the Word if they want to mentor their children.

After addressing children, Paul reminds fathers not to provoke their children, “lest they become discouraged.” Helpful books by Christian authors abound when it comes to the “nuts and bolts” of child-rearing.¹ Our text makes it clear that two things are vital—training and admonition of the Lord. “This calls for systematic discipline and instruction, which brings children to respect the commands of the Lord as the foundation of all life, godliness, and blessing.”² In this sense, systematic is not like a doctor saying, “Take two aspirin, drink lots of water, get plenty of sleep, and all will be well.” It does involve a plan, consistency, and, most importantly, prayer and personal application that accompany the instruction. If parents fail in their role as a husband/wife, they most likely will fail in their role as a father/mother. A brow-beating husband is most often a provoking father. A wife who insists on “wearing the pants in the family” will be a mother who tends to foster “attitude” in her children. Why? Because neither is modeling God’s plan for THEIR fundamental roles while they expect their children to honor and obey them.

Parents have no hope of raising godly children unless they themselves are permeated with God’s Word, and bring it to bear on their own roles. They are the essential means of instilling the seeds of God’s Word in the minds of their children with the realization and joyful anticipation that God will bring forth His timely harvest as they prayerfully, faithfully, and dependently fulfill their roles as parents for His glory.

Paul specifically warns fathers not to provoke their children to wrath by “unreasonable commands; by needless severity; by the manifestation of anger. (They are to) so govern them, and so punish them—if punishment is necessary—that they shall not lose their confidence in their father, but shall love him.”³ This

necessitates self-control, patience and the application of biblical principles as they disciple their children!³ What God expects of both parents, He enables as they trust and obey. It is critical that every Christian parent keep in mind that, as they are raising their children, they are manifesting their own growth as a Christian!

What about teens in the home? If parents do not practice what they preach, they likely will foster a bitter attitude in teens who daily “test their wings!” Independence is a natural desire for them that can be a source of contention if not handled properly. Paul reminds us all of the mindset that we must have when dealing with our children regardless of their age. He

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wrote, “*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*”⁴ Oh that all Christian parents could say that. Teens are

quite adept at identifying whether their parents value their spiritual condition more than their own reputation.

Solomon is a tragic example of talking the talk, but not walking the walk. The outcome was disaster in his kingdom and in his family. He wrote, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck. My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.”⁵ The sad betrayal of his own advice on the part of this man who started out with such promise is recorded in I Kings 11 where he has erected altars to heathen gods. The tragic harvest that he reaped in his son is recorded in I Kings 14:21–15:3. *Parents must model the fear of the Lord if they desire to influence their children to do so.* The fear of the Lord is an attitude of awe and adoration whereby the child of God guards and guides his thoughts, words and deeds by the Word of God for the glory of God. Is the fear of the Lord evident in us as Christian husbands/fathers and wives/mothers?

¹ Paul D. Tripp: *Parenting, 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family; Age of Opportunity, A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens* ² MacArthur ³ Albert Barnes ⁴ I Cor.11:1 ⁵ Prov.1:7-10 & David’s I Chron.28:9