

“FATHERS ARE FATHER MODELS”

Eph. 6:4

Grace Community Church

Kingston, Tennessee

Sunday, June 16, 2019

1. **TEXT:** Ephesians 6:4, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

2. **INTRODUCTION:**
 - a. **Fathers, whether you realize it or not, you profoundly influence your children—either POSITIVELY or NEGATIVELY**
 - i. **POSITIVELY**
 1. **Ex.: Dr. James Dobson of *Focus on the Family* remarks about his father**
 2. **Ex.: John MacArthur, pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, author and radio pastor’s remarks about his father**
 - ii. **NEGATIVELY**
 1. **Ex.: Dr. Ross Campbell remarks, a psychiatrist who specializes in working with children about sexual orientation**
 2. **Ex.: Bill Glass remarks, former professional football player for the Cleveland Browns turned evangelist, about incarcerated men**
 3. **Ex.: greeting card company offering free Fathers’ Day cards to inmates**
 - b. **Fathers are to be Heaven’s representatives on earth to their children**
 - c. **The Greek word for “father” means, “lit. nourisher, protector, upholder...”¹**
 - d. **In the pagan cultures of New Testament days, fathers were anything but sensitive towards their children.**
 - e. **Today, children are in foster homes primarily because of the disinterest of their parents.**
 - f. **In our text, Paul:**
 - i. **Is giving instructions to fathers about their relationships with their children which would have seemed peculiar by the standards of that day.**

¹ *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, πατηρ, p. 494.

- ii. Is telling the fathers that their new life in Christ should be reflected in how they treated their children.
- iii. Gives fathers 3 commands concerning their children

1. #1: "DO NOT provoke your children to wrath"
2. #2: "Raise your children in the NURTURE of the Lord"
3. #3: "Raise you children in the ADMONITION of the Lord"

I. WHAT DADS SHOULD NOT DO (v. 4, "do not provoke your children to wrath.")

A. The prisoners referred to earlier, probably had numerous secondary reasons for their aberrant behavior, but the primary reason for their criminal lifestyle was manifested in the Father's Day card issue.

1. What could possibly have gone wrong in these father-son relationships that would precipitate such intense hatred for dads?
2. Paul says that fathers can "provoke" their children to "wrath"
 - a) The Greek word for "wrath" is a combination of 2 words.
 - b) The verb part of this word is also used of fruit when it swells with juice as it ripens, which is an apt picture of someone whose heart "swells" with anger as unresolved issues are laid down upon unresolved issues.
 - c) The preposition added to the Greek verb above literally means, "along side of" and when added to the word for "wrath" above refers to something placed along side of itself, in this case, a desire for revenge.

3. It is possible that fathers can "provoke" this sort of rage within their children. (v. 4)

B. What causes this "wrath" in children? The Greek word "provoke to anger" is in the Present Tense (continuing action)

C. Colossians 3:21, "Fathers, do not provoke your children, LEST THEY BECOME DISCOURAGED."

1. DISCOURAGED means, "to be disheartened, dispirited, broken in spirit"²
2. Discouraged children exhibit their discouragement in their appearance, how they treat others and how they interact with their dad.

² *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, αθυμεω.

3. Often, they will also manifest their anger at that fathers by being angry towards God. The psychological term for that is TRANSFERENCE: “the ... transferal of emotions ... toward a different person from whom they were initially experienced.”³

- a) Dispirited kids will oftentimes TRANSFER their anger for their EARTHLY father to the HEAVENLY Father

D. EX:

1. LEGALISTIC DADS
2. CONTROL FREAK DADS
3. CRITICAL DADS
4. PROMISE-BREAKING DADS
5. EMOTIONALLY DISTANT DADS
6. ABSENTEE DADS
7. ABUSIVE DADS

E. Children’s perception of God is formulated in a large part by their perception of their earthly dads.

1. God intentionally chose the term FATHER to describe His love for and interaction with believers.
2. Dads, what have you taught your children about God?
3. Dads may wonder, “How do I properly portray the Heavenly Father to my kids?”--By performing the other two commands of Paul in this passage (to raise your children in fear and admonition of the Lord.)

II. CONCLUSION

1. Dads, if you have not accurately and faithfully “modeled” the Heavenly Father, confess that to God and to your children.
2. If your dad did not accurately and faithfully “model” the Heavenly Father:
 - a) Do not “transfer” your feelings and lack of love for your earthly father to the Heavenly Father.

³ “Transference” from *The International Webster New Encyclopedic Dictionary*, p. 1046.

- b) **Ask God to RENEW YOUR MIND, as Paul expresses it in Rm. 12:1**
 - c) **Study Scripture passages that describe the person and character of the Heavenly Father:**
 - (1) **If you were ABANDONED, or had ABSENTEE dad: Heb. 13:5, "...I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU."**
 - (2) **If your dad was not "there" when you had a problem, Mt. 11:28, your Heavenly Father says, "Come unto Me if you labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."**
 - (3) **If your dad was UNAPPROACHABLE: Heb 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."**
 - (4) **If your dad was ABUSIVE, remember that your Heavenly Father loves children and is protective of them: Lk. 17:2, "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."**
3. **If your earthly father failed to properly represent the Heavenly Father, forgive him. It is possible to do so.**
- a) **TESTIMONY: Josh McDowell**