

## ***BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR GODLY PARENTING***

*(Part 1: Ephesians 6:4)*

Other than your duty to love God supremely, no duty in life is more special, significant and sacred than your God-given role in the family. You may succeed anywhere else in life, but if you fail in your role and responsibilities at home, all of your accomplishments will be in vain. Our true success and strength hinge upon our home life. We must regard our family life with a much more engaged attention and much more focused commitment because God wants to raise up godly men and women from our homes (Malachi 2:15). **In order to raise a godly generation, parents must seriously and faithfully fulfill their biblical duties to their children through the power of the Holy Spirit.** Ephesians 6:4 provides three biblical principles for godly parenting.

**1. *Parents must rely on the* \_\_\_\_\_.**

The raising of sinful children unto a life of godliness by parents who are equally sinful is impossible apart from the empowering presence of God. One cannot parent his or her children in a godly and effective way without completely relying and totally depending on the presence and power of God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; 6:4,18). Since the Spirit of God dwells in us, He empowers and strengthens us to do the will of God, to obey the commands of God and to overcome whatever obstacle or challenge that confront us, including our family life (Philippians 2:13, 4:13; 2 Corinthians 9:8; James 4:7; 2 Peter 1:3). As Christian parents, you must find your strength in the empowering presence of the Spirit of God so that you could lead your family for the glory of God and raise a godly generation for the honor of Christ.

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**2. *Parents must refrain from* \_\_\_\_\_.**

In just one verse, the Apostle Paul defines the task of godly parenting through a negative command, "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger*" and a positive directive, "*bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4). Godly parenting, according to Paul, entails refraining from provoking your children. The term provoke means to rouse to anger, to enrage, to bring to a place of deep seated wrath, to exasperate to the point of resentment. This parental instruction is so countercultural and radical in light of the prevailing custom during the time of Paul whereby fathers harshly exercised absolute authority over the life and death of their children. In our own life setting, even Christian parents may intentionally and unreasonably provoke their children to anger through physical and verbal abuse, excessive discipline, showing favoritism, unfair criticism, setting unrealistic achievement goals, comparing them to others and overprotecting them. Nothing could exasperate and provoke your child's heart to anger and resentment than hypocrisy or inconsistency and parental neglect (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Matthew 23:3; 2 Samuel 13-18). Neglecting the cry of our family for our time, presence, attention and affection is neglecting our God-ordained calling to love and serve the precious people that the Lord has entrusted to our care.

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