

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR GODLY PARENTING

(Part 2: Ephesians 6:4)

The greatest good every parent can do for their children is to invest in the spiritual welfare of their eternal soul. God gives you children not merely to enjoy caring for and loving them here on earth. God gives you children to fulfill your divine commission to raise them to become fully devoted followers of Christ. The Great Commission must begin in your own home with your family and children (Matthew 28:19-20). This essential truth is reiterated and reemphasized by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:4 through this central lesson: **In order to raise a godly generation for Christ, parents must faithfully fulfill their biblical duties to their children through the power of the Holy Spirit.** Our passage presents three biblical principles for godly parenting.

1. Parents must rely on the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

2. Parents must refrain from provoking their children to anger.

3. Parents must resolve to _____ in the Lord.

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). The term "bring up" means to rear up or to nurture with tender care (Ephesians 5:29). It conveys the idea of developing, growing or bringing up to maturity.

a. Parents must nurture their children in the _____.

The word discipline literally means child training (Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 12:5-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; Proverbs 22:6). The real target of discipline is the child's heart. The purpose of your parental discipline is not merely to control the outward behavior of your children. You must address the internal heart problem of your child which according to God's Word is foolish sinfulness and rebellion (Proverbs 22:15). The ultimate goal of parental discipline is internal heart change as the child is trained to cultivate a biblical understanding of sin and righteousness and is brought to repentance and faith in Christ. As the New Testament commentator William Hendriksen said: "*The very heart of Christian nurture is this: to bring the heart of the child to the heart of his Savior.*"

b. Parents must nurture their children in the _____.

The term instruction literally means to place in the mind (Ephesians 6:4). It also conveys the idea of admonition, correction and verbal instruction. Parental instruction must be directed to the mind because the Christian life is transformed by the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Parental instruction must also be driven by and anchored upon the Scriptures. Only the Word of God can make us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15; 1:5; Ecclesiastes 1:13-14; Matthew 16:26; 1 John 3:1).
