

Raising Children

Biblical principles for parenting

Children as God's Heritage

Psalm 127:3-5

(See Psalm 127:3-5)

Psalm 128:3

(See Psalm 128:3)

Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Malachi 2:15

And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Children are not accidents, burdens, or obstacles to personal fulfillment but gifts from God—His heritage and reward. 'Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.' Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

God's first command to humanity was 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth'—establishing procreation as divine calling, not merely biological function. God seeks godly seed (offspring) through marriage.

This biblical view counters contemporary culture's attitude toward children as optional accessories, financial liabilities, or impediments to career and pleasure.

Children are blessings, not burdens; treasures, not troubles; heritage, not hindrances.

Parents are stewards of these precious souls, accountable to God for their nurture and training. The comparison to arrows is instructive—arrows must be carefully crafted, aimed at proper targets, and released at the right time.

So parents shape character, direct affections toward God, and eventually launch children into adult life and ministry. Children are investments in eternity, opportunities for discipleship, and means of extending godly influence beyond one's own lifespan.

This perspective transforms parenting from duty to privilege, from burden to calling. It motivates sacrifice, justifies investment of time and resources, and provides joy even in parenting's difficulties.

Those who embrace children as God's heritage receive blessing; those who reject or resent them forfeit joy and despise God's gifts.

Training in the Lord

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

[6] And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: [7] And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

2 Timothy 3:15

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Biblical parenting centers upon deliberate spiritual training, not merely providing physical necessities or academic education. 'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' Fathers (representing both parents), provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. From a child Timothy knew the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Training implies intentional, consistent effort to shape character and instill truth. It is not passive hoping children turn out well but active cultivation of godliness.

This training encompasses multiple elements: teaching Scripture and doctrine, modeling godly living, explaining God's ways in daily situations, correcting foolishness, establishing godly habits, providing appropriate responsibilities, and creating a home atmosphere that honors Christ. The Deuteronomy 6 principle indicates that training occurs constantly—sitting, walking, lying down, rising up—not merely in formal devotions.

Parents must saturate home life with biblical truth, making God's Word central to daily conversation and decision-making. Training recognizes that children are born sinful, not innocent; bent toward folly, not naturally wise.

Therefore, parents must actively counter indwelling sin, teaching self-control, honesty, respect, diligence, and love. This training prepares children not merely for earthly success but for eternal life and godly service.

Discipline and Instruction

Proverbs 13:24

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Hebrews 12:5-11

[5] And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: [6] For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. [7] If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? [8] But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. [9] Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? [10] For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. [11] Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Proverbs 29:15

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Proverbs 23:13-14

[13] Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. [14] Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Biblical parenting includes loving discipline—correcting, rebuking, and when appropriate, administering physical chastisement. 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.' The Lord's discipline of His children provides the pattern: 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth...'

No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.' The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. These

passages, though countercultural, establish that loving parents discipline disobedience and foolishness.

The 'rod' refers to physical chastisement (spanking), administered calmly, appropriately, and in love—never in anger or excessively. Discipline must be:

1. consistent—enforcing stated rules, not arbitrary
2. appropriate—fitting the offense and the child's age
3. explained—children should understand why discipline occurs
4. loving—administered for the child's good, not parental convenience
5. followed by restoration—discipline should end in reconciliation and affirmation.

The goal is not to break the child's spirit but to break the will's rebellion against authority.

Undisciplined children grow up lacking self-control, disrespecting authority, and unprepared for life's demands.

Disciplined children learn that actions have consequences, that authority must be respected, and that God's ways lead to blessing.

Teaching God's Word

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

[6] And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: [7] And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. [8] And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. [9] And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Psalm 78:4-7

(See Psalm 78:4-7)

2 Timothy 1:5

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Proverbs 1:8

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

Parents bear primary responsibility for their children's spiritual instruction—teaching Scripture, doctrine, and God's ways faithfully and consistently. These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. Paul commends Timothy's genuine faith, which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. These passages establish that spiritual education belongs first to parents, not to church programs or Christian schools (though these support parental responsibility, they don't replace it).

Parents must teach Scripture systematically, explain doctrine clearly, answer questions patiently, and apply truth to daily situations. This requires that parents themselves know God's Word—you cannot teach what you don't know.

Family worship, Scripture memory, catechism, bedtime Bible reading, discussing sermons, and addressing life situations biblically all contribute to teaching God's Word. The goal is not merely cognitive knowledge but heart transformation—that children would set their hope in God, trust His promises, love His ways, and walk in obedience.

Faithful teaching across generations preserves biblical faith and produces believers equipped to serve God and teach the next generation.

Modeling Faith

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Philippians 4:9

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

1 Timothy 4:12

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Joshua 24:15

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Children learn more from observing parents' lived faith than from formal instruction alone—parents must model the godliness they teach. 'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,' Paul tells the Corinthians—not arrogance but recognition that example teaches powerfully.

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Joshua declared, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD,' demonstrating visible commitment. Hypocrisy—demanding of children what parents don't practice—destroys credibility and embitters children.

If parents preach honesty but lie, demand respect but speak disrespectfully, command church attendance but manifest no love for worship, teach Scripture but show no delight in God's Word, children will see through the duplicity. Conversely, when parents model authentic faith—praying genuinely, confessing sin humbly, trusting God in trials, loving others sacrificially, delighting in Scripture, worshipping wholeheartedly, serving joyfully—children witness Christianity's reality and

attractiveness.

Modeling includes letting children see genuine faith struggling with real challenges: how believers handle disappointment, process grief, resolve conflicts, resist temptation, and trust God when circumstances are difficult. Parents need not pretend perfection but should demonstrate how Christians acknowledge sin, seek forgiveness, and grow in grace.

Children who see faith modeled consistently are far more likely to embrace it themselves than those who receive only verbal instruction contradicted by parental example.

Prayer for Children

1 Samuel 1:27-28

[27] For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: [28] Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

Job 1:5

And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

Colossians 1:9-12

[9] For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; [10] That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; [11] Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; [12] Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Ephesians 3:14-19

[14] For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [15] Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, [16] That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his

Spirit in the inner man; [17] That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, [18] May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; [19] And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Faithful parents intercede persistently for their children's salvation, sanctification, and service. Hannah prayed earnestly for a child, and when God granted Samuel, she dedicated him to the Lord: 'For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD.' Job continually offered sacrifices for his children, fearing they might have sinned and cursed God in their hearts—demonstrating parental intercession.

Paul's prayers for believers model how parents might pray for children: 'We desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.' He prays that believers might comprehend Christ's love and be filled with God's fullness. Parents should pray for children's salvation (that God would regenerate their hearts), sanctification (that they would grow in grace and knowledge), protection (from physical danger and spiritual deception), wisdom (to make godly choices), future spouses (if marriage is God's will), and calling (that they would discover and fulfill God's purpose).

Prayer acknowledges that parents cannot save, sanctify, or direct children's hearts—only God can. It expresses dependence upon divine grace and power.

It provides comfort when children stray, for the same God who heard Hannah's prayer hears ours. Persistent, believing prayer for children is not optional but essential to faithful parenting.

Grace in Parenting

Ephesians 6:4

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Colossians 3:21

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Psalm 103:13-14

(See Psalm 103:13-14)

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

[7] But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: [8] So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. [9] For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. [10] Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: [11] As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, [12] That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Biblical parenting balances faithful instruction and discipline with patience, understanding, and grace—reflecting how God fathers His children. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. Paul's ministry combined nurture and exhortation: 'We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children...

As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God.' Grace in parenting means:

1. Remembering your own struggles and sins as a child
2. Recognizing children's immaturity and weakness
3. Extending forgiveness readily when children repent

4. Encouraging progress, not demanding perfection
5. Balancing correction with affirmation
6. Being patient with slow growth
7. Avoiding unnecessary rules and focusing on heart issues
8. Admitting when you as a parent fail and asking children's forgiveness.

Graceless parenting becomes harsh legalism—crushing spirits, demanding perfect obedience without patience, majoring on minors, and failing to affirm.

Children raised under such harshness often rebel or develop false righteousness. Grace-filled parenting creates security, promotes genuine godliness, and reflects the Father who disciplines in love but never crushes the contrite.

Parents should dispense both law (clear standards and discipline) and gospel (forgiveness and hope). We train children in righteousness while pointing them to the Savior who alone makes righteous.

We discipline sin while extending the grace we ourselves have received. This grace doesn't eliminate standards but applies them with patience, wisdom, and love.

Launching Godly Adults

Genesis 2:24

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Proverbs 31:1-9

[1] The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. [2] What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? [3] Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. [4] It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: [5] Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. [6] Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. [7] Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and

remember his misery no more. [8] Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. [9] Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

1 Samuel 2:26

And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

The goal of biblical parenting is not to keep children dependent but to launch them as godly, mature adults who leave parents and establish their own households. 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife'—indicating that parenting aims toward independence and new family formation.

Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man—demonstrating balanced development. King Lemuel's mother taught him principles for righteous rule—equipping him for adult responsibilities.

Samuel grew in favour both with the LORD and also with men. Launching godly adults requires:

1. Teaching practical skills—work, finances, cooking, home management
2. Developing character—integrity, diligence, self-control, perseverance
3. Establishing biblical convictions—doctrine, ethics, discernment
4. Granting increasing freedom—allowing age-appropriate decision-making
5. Encouraging appropriate courtship and marriage when ready
6. Supporting their transition to independence without controlling
7. Maintaining relationship while respecting adult status.

Parents must resist the temptation to keep children perpetually dependent or to micromanage adult children's decisions.

The goal is that children internalize biblical principles and make wise choices from conviction, not merely external compliance with parental demands.

Successfully launched young adults love God, know His Word, walk in wisdom, serve the church, maintain biblical convictions in hostile culture, fulfill vocational calling, and eventually raise godly children themselves. When parents see their children

walking in truth, they experience profound joy—the fruit of faithful parenting and God's gracious work.

As arrows released from the bow, children should fly straight toward God-appointed targets, equipped by parents but empowered by the Spirit.

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