

Father's who Edify

Colossians 3:21

KJV

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

AMP

Fathers, do not provoke or irritate or exasperate your children [with demands that are trivial or unreasonable or humiliating or abusive; nor by favoritism or indifference; treat them tenderly with lovingkindness], so they will not lose heart and become discouraged or unmotivated [with their spirits broken].

Okay, we have some context. Let's look at the KJV more closely...

When I read this scripture, I see three parts:

- First there is the context regarding whom it is addressing. In this case Fathers
- Second all the Fathers are given a command: "Do not provoke your children
- Third we are told why we as Fathers receive this command: "Lest they become discouraged

God the Father

Do we as Fathers have an example to follow?

Yes we do...

Consider the Lord's Prayer in which Jesus taught that we should call upon God the Father. He said: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." God himself is the great Father.

This is going to be extremely unpopular to say, but although God is God and he has given us a choice to serve him or not, he is NOT everyone's Father.

I ask you to consider two scriptures this morning:

John 8:42-44

Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. ⁴³Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me! ⁴⁴For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

So here we see Jesus saying that God the Father is not the Father of those who do not love him.

Let's now look at Romans 8:9-15

But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children, Now we call him, "Abba, Father."

It is sad that not everyone can lay claim to having God as their Father. He has a few simple requirements:

- John 1:12 – You must receive Christ
- John 1:13 – You must be born of God
- Romans 8:14 – You must be led by the Spirit

Now turn with me to Matthew 7:11

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Okay... So... Father's Day

Since God is our Father instead of the evil one, we have an example of Fatherhood to follow. This morning do you believe that if a Father learns from the example of God the Father that he will be successful?

As a dad of three girls, my role as Father is simple... I am to live as an example to my children so that they may see what God the Father is like through my example.

I am far from perfect, but as a Father I strive to reflect God to my children. In my failures I teach them Grace and humility, in my accomplishments I teach them to strive for the mark. It is what I am striving for... and here is a heads up... The kids are watching.

I have talked to some people about their fathers and have heard comments that I cannot even repeat in polite company. I have seen "fathers" abandon their children, I have seen some that are abusive and so on... In short, not everyone's experience with their father has been a good one.

Some people's image of a father reflects so poorly, that people have said: "If God is a Father, I want nothing to do with him..."

If thoughts of your father bring you frustration, anger and sadness; you can overcome this... You can have the Joy of the Lord. God offers his fatherhood to those who accept him as their divine father. He freely offers this gift to all who receive his Son Jesus and who are willing to be led by the Holy Spirit.

Don't discourage your kids

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged

With this scripture in mind, I thought: "I don't want to discourage my kids, I want to encourage my kids. Isn't that what every father wants for their kids?"

Unfortunately NO!

Yet as good fathers, we want to teach our kids to have hope when they feel discouraged. We want them to be happy, confident and full of the joy of life.

So if I am told not to discourage, then I can actually look at this from the positive sense of the scripture and not just avoid discouragement, but like the good father, I will be there to encourage, lift up, edify my kids. I will instill in them through my faith in God the Father, confidence and courage to do anything.

I will teach my kids Philippians 4:13 which tells them that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them.

Seems pretty obvious doesn't it. Seems like common sense. Problem is common sense isn't so common anymore.

Let me add a little insight to take this beyond a lesson of Fatherhood.

Corinthians 2:9-13

But, as it is written,

*“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love
him”—*

These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

What do you think the Apostle Paul means when he says that we are to give hope instead of discouragement?

He means hope in GOD.

Paul is telling us that we should teach our kids to have hope but hope in what?

- Do I place my hope in money?
- Do I place my hope in fame?
- Do I place my hope in my marriage?
- Do I place my hope in my intellect?

To me it is clear what he is saying... He is telling us that we need to not discourage our kids, but rather instill in them a real, solid and undeniable hope in God.

Fathers we need to exemplify God in our actions. We need to show our children hope in God through our own hope in God. Kids start learning even before the lessons are taught by observation.

So if dad and mom are going through a tough time, the kids are going to pay attention to how you deal with it. Do they see you defeated and downtrodden or full of joy because you tell them that no matter what the circumstance there is always hope in God.

Do we hide what is happening from our kids or teach them that life does have challenges, but they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them? Do we allow ourselves to become discouraged or do we determine that even if we are feeling discouraged that we will trust God?

I am a firm believer in building up a child's confidence to accomplish whatever they desire in life, but let me ask you yet another question. As a Father do you stop at instilling confidence in their selves to the child or do we instil confidence in God in our children? Mankind may make mistakes and fail, but God wont. Consider some of the great men of the bible. Abraham had some serious issues and yet he was considered a friend of God. Why? Because of Abrahams faith in God.

As Christian Fathers we need to not only instil confidence in our children, but confidence in God.

We need to prepare our kids for life and there is no better way that teaching them to have strong faith in God.

Finally, we come to not provoking your Children

What does Paul mean?

Simply put... Dad's, don't be such a heavy disciplinarian that you break your kids spirit and discourage them. Be the example of hope for your sons and daughters by showing got it for me

There are many dysfunctional families in our region of the country. The most important and effective things a Father can do are:

- Be a Christian Father – A new man in Christ Jesus

- Be a man who places his hope in God not just his own abilities
- Be the protector, encourager and edifier of your family.

What am I saying?

- We as Christian fathers are taught to exemplify God
 - 1 Peter 1:16 - since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."
 - Luke 6:36 – be merciful even as your Father is merciful
- We as Christian fathers watched our fathers, I used to imitate him as a kid, he was awesome and so I honoured him.

This is the same with God. Many of us desire to teach our children and so do so and enjoy the process and see our kids develop. This is important. But to me, even more than my teaching my child, I need to know who I am before God and what my relationship to my heavenly Father is like, because my children will be watching.

Do as I say, not as I do is often heard, but is a cop out on our responsibilities as Fathers.

My final point is this Dads...

Ephesians 6:1 - Children, obey your parents as you would the Lord, because this is right.

Fathers and Mothers are to be obeyed by their children.

Fathers we are to obey God the Father.

Fathers you are the head of the home, your to be the protector of your family and take responsibility for the moral life of your family. This morning I urge you to strongly consider what has been said today. Take up that responsibility and bring hope and encouragement to your family.

The only way I know to be 100% effective in this is to be sure that I am placing my confidence, hope, faith and happiness in my God.

Prayer