



# ***Growing Godly Kids***

**Ephesians 6:4  
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**Eph. 6:4**

**<sup>4</sup> And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

- A. Tonight, we want to discover God's way for growing godly kids. In Eph. 5 & 6, we find Paul's treatise on the family. Paul devoted 12 verses on the role of husband and wife, but when he turns to the subject of parenting, he shares only 1 verse.

I don't know if that's meant to be assuring or alarming. Maybe if we would work harder on our marriage, we won't have to work so hard on our kids.

- B. I must say as a parent myself with 2 daughters, I really wish Paul would have given more than just 1 verse.

When our first was born, Carol and I quickly discovered that parenting was trial and error...mostly trial.

I remember wishing God would not have just given us a baby, but He would have sent an instruction manual.

And while I'm not one to readily read manuals, this was a case that was out of my league.

- C. I'm sure all of us who are parents have felt overwhelmed and unqualified when it comes to parenting.

But at least God didn't give us a baby with a tag attached to the toe that says, "Instructions Not Included." Truth is, God did give us instructions...and they are found right here in the Word of God.

- D.** So, tonight, I want us to look into the Parent's Instruction Manual and ask: **How do we grow godly kids?**

## **1. Parent with God's Purpose**

- A. We could start at the beginning of this verse, but let's start at the end.

“bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”  
“bring them up in the discipline and instruction **of the Lord.**”

That is, “the Lord’s discipline and instruction”

- B. I like to think of it this way: We are to parent not our way, not our parent’s way, not other parent’s way, not our culture’s way, not the government’s way...but God’s Way.

I think it’s important that we start with this premise, because parents today are being bombarded with unsound advice; and tragically, they are cashing in on it.

Ex. Let me take a controversial example:

**PICTURE: Spanking – psychologists tell us that spanking will emotionally damage your child.**

(If that’s the case I’m warped; my dad used a belt on me. Engraved on it was “I need thee every hour.”)

But God says:

***Prov. 22:15 “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”***

Spanking may be politically incorrect, but it’s biblically right.

ILL. As one parent said, “I’m not using a paddle. I’m using the board of education.”

- C. If we are to raise Godly kids, we must commit to rearing them by the Word’s standards and not the world’s standards.

And that brings us to our main point:

**What is to be your number one objective as a parent?  
Let me rephrase it: How do you know when you have been a successful parent?**

Ask 100 parents, you’ll hear:

- (1) Good education –

Is successful parenting making the honor roll, earning a scholarship, and graduating from a top-rated college?

- (2) Good, moral citizens

Is successful parenting good behavior; kids acting politely on cue; answering “Yes, Sir,” “No Sir,” “Yes, Ma’am. No, Ma’am”.

- (3) Make Lots of Money

Is successful parenting producing kids who have a good job that allows them to live a comfortable life?

- (4) Marry a nice young man or woman.

- D. There are so many other characteristics we could list, but none of those are God's marks for successful parenting.

God is not interested in parents producing kids who are all about the 4 M's.

Money, Morals, Marriage and Making Kids.

That is not success!

That's SAD, if that is what your ultimate purpose is.

- E. **The purpose of parenting** is to produce children who have one passion in this world –a passion for God and to become like Jesus.

Because that is what is going to last for all eternity.

Jesus said the Greatest commandment: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength..."*

- F. Can I let you in on this reality?  
Many kids are not leaving the nest with a passion for God!

They are not becoming MISSIONARIES. They're becoming a MISSION FIELD!

Parents, we must parent with God's Purpose in Mind!!!  
Every day we must have this goal:

I am called by God to grow godly kids!

Parents with God's Purpose

## **2. Parent with God's Wisdom**

- A. As you look at Paul's instruction on parenting in Eph. 6:4, I find it interesting Paul knows that the aim and goal of parenting is to produce kids who have a heart for God, but even more intriguing is that Paul begins his instruction on parenting to the fathers.

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to (anger)..."

- B. That lets me know that it's not just the responsibility of the mother to parent the kids; it's also the responsibility of the father.

And more importantly, it shows the influence a father can have on his child (positively or negatively).

We could do an entire series of messages on the role of DAD! Dads, your kids need you!!!

- C. It's amazing the difference a godly dad will make on his kids.  
Stats: so clear: remove dad from the picture, and a kid can have difficulty the rest of his life...and a lot of that is because kids (esp. sons) find their identity in their dad.

Dads, don't ever underestimate that you have so much influence!

Your presence; lack of presence, your words, your lack of words, your involvement, your lack of involvement is all being soaked up by your child.

In fact, Paul realizes this and issues a word of caution.

- D. Can you imagine that?  
We have to have caution with our kids.

ILL. Almost everything you buy today comes with a word of caution.

I opened a box with an electrical component inside, and I found a piece of paper with words emblazoned in RED: CAUTION!

Well, kids come with a word of CAUTION, too...and it's don't provoke them to anger...or better, **rebellion!**

- E. There's a lot of sound advice in that one statement, and what Paul is really driving at is parenting must be done with God's Wisdom!!

Many people think that parenting is "black and white";  
"If it worked for my parents, it works for me."  
"It worked for Child No. 1, it will work for Child No. 2."  
"My philosophy is just beat the kid good."

ILL. Every time I think about philosophy of raising kids, I think about Mark Twain who had very interesting philosophy on child rearing.  
He said things run pretty smoothly until your child reaches 13. That's the time you need to stick them in a barrel, hammer down the lid nice and snug, and feed 'em through the knothole. And then, when they turn 16, plug up the knothole.

Do us a favor, don't take his advice.

- F. What we need is God's wisdom in parenting our kids.

*Prov. 24:3-4 "By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."*

Let me share with you some wisdom/caution in parenting.

### **(1) Wise Parents Avoid Being Too Restrictive**

- a) Many parents have an improper view of parenting. To them, parenting is synonymous with rules and restrictions.  
After all we have to guard our children from this godless society.

It's being more than an authority, but an authoritarian.

Chuck Swindoll - It's erecting a brick fortress with unbending rules and non-negotiables by super-intense parents.

Key word: **Control**.

- b) Limits & boundaries are necessary, but imposing rules that are rigid will lead to rebellion.

May not be outward rebellion, but inward.

ILL. It's the parent who demands their kid sit down; he obeys, but he thinks, "I'm sitting on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside."

- c) The parent who rules their kids with an iron fist, may argue they are only PROTECTING their kids, but what they are really communicating is they don't TRUST their kids.

Do you know what a kid will do who senses you don't trust him or her? REBEL

And when the kids obey, it's not out of love for their parents, but out of fear of their parents.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that kids are to fear their parents. They are to HONOR their parents; Our job is to teach them to respect our authority.

- d) That is best done by setting limits & boundaries, but most importantly, it's accomplished through loving relationships with our kids.

**Josh McDowell – "Rules without Relationship lead to Rebellion."**

- e) The reason I mention avoiding being too restrictive is because it cuts across the grain with the grace of God.

Jesus did not come to lock us up, but to set us free.  
"If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (Jn. 8:36).

Wise parents avoid being too restrictive.

Then, the parenting pendulum can swing to the other side...

## **(2) Wise Parents Avoid Being Too Permissive**

- a) Some parents abdicate responsible parenting with passive parenting.  
Do you know what people call these kids?  
"spoiled brats."

And what they lack in spiritual values, parents think the church will make up.

But listen to Eph. 6:4: “Bring them up” – that is you, mom and dad, are to bring them up.

Doesn't say, “The church is to bring them up.”

If you don't bring them up, someone else will: peers, schools, or social media (TikTok or Snapchat or Instagram)

- b) So, it is vital that we are actively parenting our kids, but not being too permissive.

**Prov. 13:24 says “He who spares his rod hates his son.”**

If you are being too permissive, you are not showing real love. Doing more damage in the long run than the short run.

- c) Parents who have this attitude make this argument:

- I don't want to lose my kid.
- I don't want to lose my kid's love;
- I want to keep peace in our home.
- I don't want an argument; child running away; all the threats that go along with it.

And how many of you have heard this from your child: “You don't love me,” or worse, “I hate you.”

- d) But passivity communicates to your kids: Mom and Dad don't really care what you do.

**Classic example: 1 Sam. 2:12, 22-25;** Eli & his wicked sons, Hophni & Phinehas rebelled even in their middle age...Bible says they were worthless men who did not know the Lord; they lived a party life and made a mockery of worship.

But Eli would not discipline his kids...and he paid the price.

**Nugget of wisdom:**

**Peace always comes with a Price.** (That's BIBLICAL) God brought us peace...by the shedding of His blood.

If you trade correction for peace in your home, the price for peace will be greater later.

If you will trade peace for correction now, the price for peace will be less later.

Ex. Easier to deal with minor misbehavior early than major misbehavior when it's too late.

- e) Tragically, many parents who are “softies” when it comes to rules, eventually see their kids go off the deep end in rebelling, and the parents lose their cool

and become Gestapos trying to correct their kids. So, the pendulum swings the other direction.

- f) What a child needs from us is balance.

Teach...

- **Relationship** (you talk; listen; care; encourage; trust)
- **Righteousness** (godly expectations; will include rules),
- **Responsibility** (giving them opportunity to follow your rules), which includes holding them accountable for their actions; teaching them consequences for disobedience.)
- **Rewards** (praise and promotion; more responsibility; bigger and better rewards for God-honoring behavior.)

### 3) Wise Parents Avoid Crushing Their Kids

- a) *Prov. 15:13 "A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken."*

*Prov. 17:22 "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones."*

Replace the word "broken" with "crushed."

- b) It's very important that in parenting we not crush our children's spirit.

Paul says we are not to provoke our children to anger – and part of that can be a crushed spirit – that is, they become discouraged.

### Article: 12 Ways Parents Provoke Children to Anger

1. Neglect Time with Your Children
2. Model Sinful Anger
3. Scold Your Children Harshly
4. Find Fault with Your Children Constantly
5. Refuse to Listen to Your Children
6. Permit Your Children Too Much
7. Demand Too Much from Your Children
8. Set Double Standards or Changing Standards
9. Compare Your Children to Others
10. Break Your Promises
11. Chasten Your Children in Public
12. Show Favoritism

- c) You may not realize this: but as a parent you hold the key to their future;  
Can I tell you where that key is? It's right there in your mouth. There's power in your words.  
The best parents are those who are always encouraging their kids, even when they fail; and the result: kids learn mom & dad love them no matter what.

- d) **Nugget of wisdom:** Kids need to know you love them not because of what they do, but because of who they are.

I love them because they are made in the image of God.  
Encouragement motivates them to do their best for God.

- e) But if we ever crush their spirit, it can mark them for life.

1. Parent with God's Purpose
2. Parent with God's Wisdom

### **3. Parent with God's Truth**

- a) The Bible says "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." That is, get God's truth in their heart.

You see, the greatest need is for our kids to know Jesus...to become His disciple.

Because you can't parent your kids all their life.  
But God can.

They are going to one day be out of your nest, and the question is:

Who are they going to live for?  
For the World?  
Or for God?

- b) That means, parents, you only have a small window of time to pour Jesus into their lives.

And instead of giving them more world, give them more WORD.

Instead of teaching them SUCCESS. Teach them SIGNIFICANCE.

Instead of pushing them to become CHAMPIONS ON THE FIELD. Teach them to become CHAMPIONS FOR CHRIST.

You are right now growing your kids.  
Choose to grow godly kids!

Conclusion:

### **Jonathan Edwards vs. Max Jukes**

Jonathan Edwards' legacy includes: 1 U.S. Vice-President, 1 Dean of a law school, 1 dean of a medical school, 3 U.S. Senators, 3 governors, 3 mayors, 13 college presidents, 30 judges, 60 doctors, 65 professors, 75 Military officers, 80 public office holders, 100 lawyers, 100 clergymen, and 285 college graduates.



Max Jukes: He lived in New York at about the same period as Edwards. He didn't believe in Christianity.

Jukes' descendants included: 7 murderers, 60 thieves, 190 prostitutes, 150 other convicts, 310 paupers, and 440 who were physically wrecked by addiction to alcohol. Of the 1,200 descendants that were studied, 300 died prematurely.