

Personal Work of Being Parents 10-15-17 AM

In Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21, there are commandments given to parents of how it is they are to relate to their children. There are two warnings, and an admonition. *Do not exasperate so that they don't lose heart. Do not provoke your children to anger. Bring up in the discipline & instruction of the Lord.*

What does it mean to avoid exasperating our children? To exasperate is to discourage them or dishearten them. It is to take from them a desire, in the context, the desire to pursue God. It is our behavior that exasperates our children.

Exasperation happens when we are unreasonable. There are several ways that we can be unreasonable as parents. One common mistake is the expectation of perfection. Our children lose heart when there are expectations that they cannot satisfy. They walk away from us saying "why try"? Another danger is when we expect obedience without an explanation. While there is a time for the age old admonition of "because I said so", it should be few and far between. Our Heavenly Father provides us with explanations for His commandments. He says to us that we should reason with Him (Isa. 1:18).

Exasperation happens when we are hypocritical. Perhaps it is the case that we are dishonest in our conduct. We put on a face of spiritual behavior before our brethren that we take off when we are apart. Hypocrisy disheartens our children. Hypocrisy destroys lives, especially those of children. Yet no one realizes they are acting the hypocrite. We demand our children obey us, but we do not obey God. We demand they honor us; do we honor others? We tell them that God is important, but in the actions of our lives we declare otherwise. God, as a Father, is true to His word (Num. 23:19). We need to learn that lesson.

Exasperation occurs when we are unloving. Older women were to teach younger women to love their children (Titus 2:3). These means learning to make the sacrifices necessary for their spiritual growth. When we are guilty of loving other things more, we dishearten our children.

Exasperation occurs when we are spiritually disabling. Many Christian parents undermine the effect of the Gospel by not supporting spiritual pursuits. Meaning, when there is a bible study or opportunity to be with other Christians, are we encouraging our children to be present? Parents who take their kids to sports or school events over spiritual opportunities exasperate their children, even if their children want it this way.

Christian parents need to understand that there is only one goal in Christian parenting: to raise a child who is known by God. Nothing else comes close; not the need for a good job, education or spouse. In fact, when we place this goal as our focus, these other things tend to fall into place. "Raise them.... in the Lord" is the commandment. In this there are two requirements: 1) Discipline / training / nurture; 2) instruction / admonition.

Training, discipline and nurturing:

- 1) You are leading them in righteousness
- 2) You are explaining to them righteousness
- 3) You are disciplining them in righteousness

Instruction and admonition

- 1) You are aiding their understanding
- 2) You are a living example of the Mind of God
- 3) They know your love for God is above all

Few personal works result in the great benefits that this personal work brings. Having children who love God benefits us. It gives us honor and respect, and provides for us life satisfaction.