

Do Not Provoke Your Children To Anger – Pt. 2 – Give Them Law To Live By

INTRODUCTION:

1. Last week we began to examine some of the reasons for the breakdown of our society's morals, values, and conscience that we are witnessing.
 - A. As I pointed out then, these lessons are motivated by the shooting of six individuals in Nashville by a woman who had planned this hateful crime and others in hopes of much carnage.
 - i. It troubles me not simply because of the evil that was done, but also because who did it, why, what is being reported about it, etc.
 - ii. It troubles me because it is happening so regularly that we are no longer surprised by it!
 - B. Though the world has its reasons about why it happened and what should be done, what we are seeing is the product of failed homes/families where parents have *provoked their children to anger* by failing to provide what their children need to live meaningful and productive lives.
 - C. As a result, we have a generation of people who are:
 - i. **Confused**, with no idea who they are, even biologically, what their life's purpose is, how to cope with life's difficulties, or what, if any, hope they have for the future.
 - i. **Angry** at life, their parents, society, religion, and God. And Satan is telling them that rage, violence, and vengeance, or simply giving up on life is what they should do to fix it.
 - ii. **Lashing out** in irresponsible, violent, and hate-filled ways with little or no concern or conscience about what they are doing and who they are doing it to.
2. So, I want to continue our thoughts on how parents can avoid **provoking their children to anger**.
 - A. For, if parents do not get busy and fulfill their God-given roles, this downward spiral our country is in is going to continue and grow much larger.
 - D. With this in mind...
 - i. Last week we talked about how parents must give their children **love to live with**.
 - ii. Today I want to talk about another vital piece of the puzzle parents must provide for their children, which is **law to live by**.
 - iii. Yes, children need law to function properly and grow up to be profitable and happy adults.

BODY:

I. Children cannot set their own rules.

- A. In fact, adults are incapable of doing so (Jer. 10:23-24 – "I know, O LORD, that a **man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.** ²⁴ Correct me, O Lord, but with justice; not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing."").
 1. Jeremiah hit on one of the biggest problems we face today, which is that everyone, including parents, are trying to direct their own steps. And they do not know what they are doing!
 2. One can only find the correct way to live, as Jeremiah said, by looking to God.
 - a. God's way is the way of righteousness (showing us what to do), peace (benefits us as we live), and hope (gives us reason to live).
 - b. To reject or simply ignore God's way, however, is to choose a life of ignorance, chaos, emptiness, and ultimately destruction...as we are seeing everywhere.
 3. So, if parents do not look to God to direct their parenting ways, things will not end well.
- B. One of the areas where we are failing miserably to establish godly rules and boundaries is the areas of electronic devices and the internet.
 1. Much of what we are witnessing today is the results of parents allowing their children to grow up with unfiltered, unchaperoned, and unlimited access to electronic devices, and more importantly, the internet.
 - a. Kids are spending hours every day looking at their phones, computer screens, and playing video games.
 - b. And they are being captivated by various apps and websites that are designed with very destructive intent, such as China's TikTok. Parents, do your research!
 2. One result is kids are growing up without social skills or an understanding of how life works.
 - a. Living real life, with a real job, and real people, etc., is not the same as the virtual world.

- i. I hope I do not have to tell you, but interaction on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc., is not equal to interacting with real people face to face in the real world!
 - ii. And, having “friends” on Facebook or whatever some other app might call them, is not equal to having and interacting with real friends and knowing how to be friendly!
 - iii. And getting and keeping a job is much more difficult than it is in some simulated game life like “The Sims” or “Restaurant Dash.”
 - b. So, kids are failing miserably in the real world where they must interact with real people face to face, and deal with other people’s flaws as well as their own, and do so with courage, compassion, competence, and patience.
 - i. In life you cannot simply delete or block people and attitudes you do not like.
 - ii. So, when the real world is insensitive, and does not line up with their way of thinking, and will not go away, they become confused, angry, and lash out or simply give up.
 - iii. So, we then have another victim, another ward of the taxpayers, another angry protestor, or another shooter.
- 3. If that were not enough, parents’ failure to set proper rules and electronic devices and the internet are **paving the way** for their child to become addicted to porn and perversion, and to be exposed to the ungodly philosophies and ways of the LGBTQ+ community and the social change warriors so prevalent today.
 - a. These perverse groups are organized, have a well-defined agenda, and are actively watching for anything in your child’s online presence that will give them a way to approach and indoctrinate them.
 - b. You can think that young Billy or Suzie would never do this or that, but open access to the internet, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc., are open doors to porn and ungodly thinking and will soon destroy the innocence in them that you cherish.

II. Children need parental law to live by

- A. From birth children require the oversight, guidance, and rules provided by their parents.
 - 1. Godly parents will demand obedience **for their child’s good** (Eph. 6:1-3 – “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is **right**.² Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),³ so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.”).
 - a. God says obedience is **right**, and that it promises to bring them **good**!
 - b. That is because kids are not capable of making decisions that will lead to a meaningful and long life on this earth!
 - 2. Children need the **foundation** of a godly path to follow set before them by their parents to guide them through this difficult, fearful, period of their lives.
 - a. What kind of life do parents expect their children to have when left to themselves in a world where they are told that they cannot even approach their gender with any certainty, that they cannot look at their own body to know whether they are a boy or a girl?
 - b. It is no wonder that these children are crashing and burning!
- B. Parental law requires accountability. Your child must answer for his/her actions.
 - 1. This means you must resist the *rule of emotion* that leads you to the misguided conclusion that “I love my children too much to discipline them.”
 - a. That could not be farther from the truth (Prov. 13:24 – “He who withholds his rod **hates** his son, but he who **loves him disciplines him diligently**.”).
 - b. If you want to challenge that wisdom, to believe that modern thinking knows better, then you are questioning God’s own way with us (Heb. 12:7-11 – “It is for **discipline** that you have to endure. **God is treating you as sons**. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children **and not sons**.⁹ Besides this, we have had **earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them**. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our **good**, that we may **share his holiness**.¹¹ For the moment all

discipline seems **painful** rather than pleasant, but **later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** to those who have been trained by it.”).

- i. So, our perfect heavenly Father disciplines us for our good, for our holiness.
 - ii. And, that discipline is often painful, and can be very painful.
2. So, parents that fail to hold their children accountable, that fail to make them face the consequences of disobedience, are not showing the love their children need and deserve!
- C. Establishing godly rules and boundaries, and enforcing them, are difficult things to do, especially if it means reversing a path that you may have already taken.
 1. But you are only going to get out of your parenting effort what you are willing to put into it.
 - a. God has revealed a “cause and effect” law for parenting (Prov. 22:6 – “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”).
 - b. Satan knows this rule and that the opposite is true as well. So, he is doing his best, with great success, to keep parents, including Christians at times, from following it.
 2. You cannot “fold” in your enforcement despite the groaning, whining, and crying of your children (which, by the way, you can stop if you want, seeing YOU are the parents)!
 - a. Children want what everyone else has, they want to be accepted by their peers, etc. But they do not know what they need or what is best for them.
 - b. So, you need to set godly rules and boundaries whether your child likes it or not.
 3. That brings me back to the subject of electronic devices and the internet I mentioned before.
 - a. If you want your child to have a chance to successfully navigate this world, you as their parents need to be godly wise and set rules and limitations concerning:
 - i. Whether your child even needs certain devices, especially a smartphone.
 - ii. How much your children can use these devices.
 - iii. Access to certain apps. For, you can block access to apps. And ones like TikTok should not be allowed. They are designed to addict and degrade, and are filled with filth, porn, etc. Your child may say they are not, but they are ignorant of lying.
 - iv. Texting and calls. For, you can limit them to...and you should.
 - v. **Access to the internet.** That means they do not need internet on their phones and must not have access to it without you being there with them to chaperone! So, parents, if you have done this, you need to end it right now!
 - b. These things must be done despite the griping, their angry protest, and despite their promises to “never do this or that.”
 - c. For, Satan knows that young people, especially young boys, are easily hooked and addicted through these devices and the internet. So, he wants you to give in!

III. Children need God’s law to live by.

- A. Children were not created to live out their lives by their parents’ rule and oversight!
 1. Children need much more!
 - a. Children can follow their parents’ guidance and be unprepared for life and eternity.
 - b. You must give them a greater law by which they are to live.
 2. So, above all else, parents must teach their children to know and submit to God’s law.
 - a. This was true for Israel (Deut. 6:6-9 – “These **words**, which I am commanding you today, **shall be on your heart.** ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”).
 - i. Note the amount of time and diligent efforts that was required.
 - ii. Yet, Israel failed in this for the most part causing great loss, which should be a healthy warning to us.
 - b. This is true for Christians (Eph. 6:4 – “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but **bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**”).
 - i. So, the opposite of provoking a child is training and instructing them in the Lord!

- ii. Parents must teach and enforce God’s law in their child’s life if they hope for them to avoid the confusion, anger, lashing out, and hopelessness characteristic of our day!
 - iii. This role is primarily laid on fathers, not mothers, though both are to be contributors!
 - iv. For, as the man of the house, you are to be the **leader** of the house. And as the leader of the house, you are to lead your family to the Lord and His law.
- B. For children to truly live by God’s law, parents must instill in them a **love for God’s law**
1. Children need to see its real value for their life. They need to see...
 - a. How it brings *stability* and *good* (Psa. 1:1-3 – “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! ² But his delight is in the **law of the Lord**, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He will be like a **tree firmly planted by streams of water**, which **yields its fruit** in its season and **its leaf does not wither**; and **in whatever he does, he prospers.**”).
 - b. How it gives *understanding* of life (Psa. 119:97 – “Oh, how I **love Your law!** It is my meditation all the day. ⁹⁸ Your commandments **make me wiser than my enemies**, for they are ever mine. ⁹⁹ **I have more insight than all my teachers**, for Your testimonies are my meditation. ¹⁰⁰ **I understand more than the aged**, because I have observed Your precepts.”).
 - c. How it provides the *firm foundation* on which to stand and face life (Psa. 119:165 – “Those who love Your law **have great peace**, and **nothing causes them to stumble.**”).
 2. They need to **witness its value in their parents’ lives.**
 - a. By your obedience to the Lord:
 - i. Jn. 14:15 – “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”
 - ii. 1 Jn. 5:3 – “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”
 - iii. So, they need to see that God comes first, before sports (no matter how good your child is), school (no matter how smart they may be), money (no matter how much you may think you need), and fun (no matter how much they want it).
 - b. In your relationships, witnessing how God’s word makes your marriage, family life, your interaction with brethren and the world much better.
 - c. In your career, seeing how God’s word is played out in your work ethic, in your approach to your employer, and your interaction with fellow workers.
 - d. Life in general, witnessing how the word helps you deal with life’s problems, adversities, and even death, helping you rise above depression and anxiety, and to avoid all sorts of harmful behavior.
- C. And as is true concerning parental law, your child must be held accountable to God’s law.
1. Unchecked disobedience to God’s law trains your child to do evil (Eccl. 8:11 – “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.”).
 2. The world tries to justify inaction by the idea that “kids will sow their wild oats!”
 - a. But that ignores the fact that God will hold them accountable (Eccl. 11:9-10 – “Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. ¹⁰ So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.”).
 - b. And, the time is coming where God will bring fiery retribution on the **disobedient** (2 Thess. 1:6-8 – “For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and to **give relief to you who are afflicted** and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in **flaming fire**, ⁸ **dealing out retribution** to those who **do not know God** and to those **who do not obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus.”).

CONCLUSION:

1. So, give your children the **godly law** they need to live by. And hold them accountable to it.
 - A. It is the only thing that can successfully navigate them through this murky mess of a world we are living in.
 - B. And it is the one thing they can count on to never fail them, to always point them in the right direction, throughout their lives.
2. Of course, you may be on the other end of this discussion, and you are hurting, you are angry at life, you are empty, and you are looking for something better than what Satan and the world has sold you.
 - A. If so, then the gospel of Christ is the real and only answer.
 - B. It can heal you, bring you peace, give you the purpose for living you need, give you salvation from your sins, and give you hope to live for now resulting in eternal life in the end.
 - C. Will you come to Jesus in F-R-C-B?