

Sermon Topic: Parental Guidance Needed, Rev Don Wong (Father's Day Special)

¹⁸ *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.* ¹⁹ *Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.* ²⁰ *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.* ²¹ **Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged** (Colossians 3:18-21)

⁴ *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but **bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*** (Ephesians 6:4)

Introduction

As the leader of the household, fathers have a great privilege, and a great responsibility to make a difference and shape the lives of their children and the next generation.

Teach Your Child

- The word “teach” in Hebrews is *Yadah*. It means “to discern, to find out or to discover”
- Psycho-social development from a child to a youth:
 - Up to 12 years old – Childhood (Phase of Equipping)
 - 13 to 19 years old – Teenagehood (Phase of Exploration)
 - 20 to 25 years old – Young Adulthood (Phase of Establishing Worldview)
- Parents are the most effective influencers in a young child's life. Children take cues from their parents' behaviour and parents must teach them to discern.

Discipline Your Child

- The word ‘discipline’ comes from the word disciple. Jesus modelled how to discipline through his interactions with his disciples.
- Self-growth consists of these 3 essentials:
 - Mistake – learning from mistakes (trial and error)
 - Model – modelling after someone or something
 - Mentor – there are mentors in their growing up, as every child needs a Mentor.

Engage Your Child

- We are living in a world of influence, a world of “virus”. In order to teach and discipline our child effectively, we need to engage them or someone/something else will become their hero and frame of reference.
- Engaging children/youth requires time and commitment.
- Children need to be shown that they are their parents' priority.
- The operational domains of a child/youth are family, peers and school. Children, particularly those in the teenage phase, face many pressures in their life and feeling that they are understood and accepted is important to them. Time and effort must be taken to establish and maintain a relationship with them.

Discussion Questions:

1. In our culture, what are a father’s duties to his children? To his wife? To his parents? To his community?
2. What is your favorite memory of your father? What do you like best about your father?
3. In Ephesians 6:4, what comes to mind when you think of the phrase “provoke to anger”? How does that affect a relationship between father and child?
4. Ephesians 6:4 says fathers need to lead in training their children. But Paul goes further to exhort fathers to train them ‘in the Lord’. Why is this necessary when personal experiences, self-help books, TED talks, expert’s advise are easily available to equip a father?
5. How does parenting your child changes when they move into young adulthood?
6. If you are a father, what will you do differently with your child(ren) because of what you discovered through this sermon?

What I Will Do More Of	What I Will Do Less Of

Helpful Insight:

In the Greco-Roman world, standard punishment for children was heavy beatings. Paul here charts a new course among ancient writers in discouraging excessive discipline (Eph 6:4). It is easier to be severe or indulgent in training children, but children need discipline and admonition combined with a gentle understanding of their needs and limitations.

Authority and discipline must be exercised with sensitivity and moderation. Children who are exasperated by such unreasonable demands may rebel, and rebellion leads to godlessness. **A child treated with harshness all the time without the gentleness of the father is very difficult to win back to the Lord.** Fathers are to reflect the love of God the Father, are to be tenderhearted and considerate in dealing with their children. Why did Paul not address mothers here? Because most mothers are already nurturers by default. Fathers are more prone to be too rough and harsh with their words and actions.

A fathers' primary task is to train their children in righteousness and to exercise discipline in the home. The ultimate responsibility for nurturing children in the faith lies with the father. In many of our homes, fathers leave that to the mother and the father focuses on providing. That is an unwise way to run a family. Fathers (and mothers) must be concerned not just for their children's physical health but also that they grow into mature people spiritually and psychologically/emotionally in the home and in the church. Most fathers, even Christian fathers, give that responsibility to the mothers, but it takes – not a village – but both a mother and father to raise a child.

(A devotional by Gene Brookes on Ephesians 6:4)