

Series on Marriage and the Family – Sermon 12 - 4/07/10 (am)

Do Not Exasperate Your Children

Ephesians 6:4

Theme: Parents must not exasperate their children.

The Pain of Child-Rearing (Genesis 3:16)

Does Genesis 3:16a-b just refer to the pain of the labour ward?

Unlikely!

Genesis 3:16b is a specific example of a more general Genesis 3:16a.

It may mean that the pain associated with childbirth continues in other ways throughout the life of a father or mother.

Can anything minimise such pain?

Yes! Obedience to the instructions of Ephesians 6:4.

Ephesians 6:4 - Only an Instruction for Fathers?

1. Paul is reinforcing the headship of a father.

2. Paul is not excluding mothers:
children are to obey their mothers and
this implies training.

The Don'ts and Do's of Parenthood

Paul introduces two big principles:

- 1. Do not exasperate your children –
6:4a.**
- 2. Train them in the instruction of the
Lord – 6:4b.**

Do not exasperate your children
(Ephesians 6:4a)

Generally:

Parents are not to abuse their
authority over their children.

They must not act to harm the child's
development.

They must not give a jaundiced view of
parenthood.

Parents should not make children
vulnerable to sin by:

provoking them to wrath/anger (AV,
NKJV, NAS),

being hard on them (CEV),

exasperating them (NIV).

*How many 'angry young men', hostile
to society at large, have learned their
hostility as children in an
unsympathetic home?*

John Stott

in "Ephesians"

Specifically:

how may parents exasperate their
child?

Through:

- Severe discipline.
- Constant negativity.

- **Economical encouragement.** *Spare the rod and spoil the child—that is true. But beside the rod keep an apple to give him when he has done well. (Martin Luther)*

- Unreasonable expectations. A child need not be an exact copy of his/her father/mother to be a success!
- Unrealistic expectations.
- Showing favouritism to a sibling. *Cf.* Jacob and Joseph
- Not keeping promises.

- Not taking your child's problems seriously.
- Making no allowance that your child is growing up.
- Unhealthy interference when your child is making his/her own home in marriage or singleness.

*Are you ever guilty of exasperating
your child?*

You must guard against it!

Conclusion – Results of Provocation to Anger?

The results of exasperating your child can be far reaching and damaging.

Parent-child relationships are damaged and can be very hard to repair!

Christian testimony is damaged and the child can develop an antagonistic attitude to the faith of his/her parents.

It is easy to be a bad parent...

...and very difficult to be a good
parent.

Paul's instruction in 6:4a is so vital.

*Parents must guard against
exasperating their children.*