

# The Parent's Role of Preparing Children for a Relationship With God

Ephesians 6:1-4 explains proper relations between parents and their children. It says "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.' And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

The commentaries in the MacArthur Study Bible explain this passage, in part, as follows: "The child in the home is to be willingly under the authority of parents with obedient submission to them as the agents of the Lord placed over him, obeying parents as if obeying the Lord Himself." "A Christian father's (or parent's) authority over his children does not allow for unreasonable demands and strictures that might drive his children to anger, despair, and resentment." The bringing up of children in the training and admonition of the Lord "calls for systematic discipline and instruction, which brings children to respect the commands of the Lord as the foundation of all of life, godliness, and blessing."

The Bible teaches that parents should train their children in the way they should go (to be responsible citizens). Too many children today are neglected by letting them have their way and consequently they show little to no respect for the rules or laws of parents, teachers, employers, law officials, governmental authorities and God. Children must be taught to respect authority and to obey the rules of these authorities (unless they contradict God's laws) and taught the consequences of their actions. They must be made to suffer the consequences, especially when they are young, so they can learn responsibility for their actions. Unfortunately some consequences are life altering, especially later in life, so they must learn from their mistakes when they are young.

A parent is to show a child that the parent is in charge and should be respected. The parent sets the rules and if the rules are broken, the child will be disciplined and have to suffer the consequences of their actions. The parent is also to show love, care, mercy, compassion, respect, understanding and forgiveness. Whenever a child does break the rules they should be calmly counseled on the rules and consequences again, and counseled on how to avoid consequences in the future. The parent is also to stress to their child that they still love them. In this way the child will learn to love and respect their parent and eventually they will learn to love and respect God.

Later in life the child will see how God has rules and set parameters. The child will know to respect God and obey His rules. The child will also realize that if these rules are not obeyed, they may have to suffer consequences. If they were forgiven and loved by their parent, they will understand that God still loves and forgives them. If the child was taught how to communicate with their parent, they will be better prepared to communicate with God through prayer, reading or hearing His word, and meditating on what they read or heard. God stresses to His children that even though they occasionally misbehave, He still loves them.

Children are God's gift to parents, and parents are to be good examples to their children. To be good parents and an early example of God to their children, they must also communicate with God. It is the parent's responsibility to prepare children for a relationship with God.

For advise on how to change your child's attitude, behavior, and character, read Dr. Kevin Leman's book "Have A New Kid By Friday" and pray daily for guidance from God.