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Sermon Notes

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## **Bring Your Children Up in the Lord**

### **Ephesians 6:4**

#### I. A Vision of the Future

##### A. A Glorious Assembly of the Redeemed

***Revelation 7:9-10*** *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

What a sight! They were elect from before the foundation of the world... chosen in Christ before the world began; they will be there in heaven, celebrating the awesome saving work of God through the blood of Christ... but the question comes:

***Revelation 7:13*** *Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes-- who are they, and where did they come from?"*

##### B. How Did They Get There?

###### 1. Thrilling Conversion Accounts: Saul of Tarsus

a. People who lived lives of rebellion against God, fighting Christians, fighting the gospel, living opening in sin...

b. Perhaps leaders in another religion: like

i) Rabi Maharaj: descended from a long line of Brahmin priests and gurus; trained as a Yogi; meditated for many hours each day; but became disillusioned and depressed by Hinduism, eventually radically and stunningly converted to Christ

ii) Lee Strobel; Yale educated in law, a journalist for the Chicago Tribune, avowed atheist; converted to Jesus when investigating biblical claims about Christ; he was trying to expose and debunk Christianity, and ended up being converted

iii) C.S. Lewis: atheist, intellectual enemy of the gospel; eventually became what he called “the most dejected and reluctant convert in all of England”... he’d been fighting Christ and the overwhelming truth of the scripture, until he could fight no longer

2. Bold Missionary Endeavors: William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, John Paton, Elizabeth Elliot,

a. William Carey, labored in India for seven years before seeing his first convert, a man named Krishna Pal, come to faith in Christ; Krishna Pal had first heard of Jesus while working as a carpenter for some Moravians near Serampore; he had broken from Hinduism and was embracing theism through Islam; one day, while going to a river to bathe, he slipped and dislocated his shoulder; he sent his children to the mission for help and a doctor named John Thomas took care of his shoulder and spoke with Krishna about the healing of his soul; he gave him a tract in Begali; Krishna started visiting the mission frequently, and eventually Carey and his team led him to Christ! When news of this emerged, his fellow Indians mobbed him and called him a traitor... but he was baptized anyway! He eventually was instrumental in leading dozens of Indians to Christ

b. In heaven... we’ll meet him and other converts won by bold missionaries all over the world

3. Heroic Evangelists: George Whitefield, Billy Graham

a. I love reading storied of George Whitfield’s tireless proclamation of the gospel; how he crossed the Atlantic Ocean thirteen times in a sailing vessel in the years before the American Revolution; how he preached over 18,000 times to as many as 10 million hearers... how many people in heaven will be there because they heard a life-changing sermon by George

Whitefield? Like perhaps Nathan Cole, a self-righteous farmer in Kensington, Connecticut, who yearned to hear Whitefield because everyone was talking about him, but who in the end felt his foundation of self-righteousness broken to pieces and he trusted Christ

- b. In 1957, Billy Graham had a monumental crusade in New York City that lasted 16 weeks, 110 days, 100 services, 2 million attended, 56,000 claimed to trust Christ as their Savior
- c. In heaven we'll hear the stories of all those converted by powerful traveling evangelists like Bunyan, Whitefield, and Billy Graham

#### 4. By Far the Most Productive: Christian Parenting

- a. This morning, I am interested in a far more common avenue of grace that our sovereign God has ordained... that of children converted by their Christian parents
- b. Of that multitude greater than anyone could count standing before the throne in white robes, those who are ascribing their salvation to Christ, and are worshipping him in white robes... how many of them will give secondary credit to their parents as the primary evangelists and disciplers?
- c. Three generations after Carey, how many Indian Christians were there who were converted by godly Indian parents?
- d. Three generations after Judson, how many Burmese Christians were there who were converted by godly Burmese parents?
- e. Three generations after Hudson Taylor, how many Chinese Christians were there who were converted by godly Chinese parents?
- f. Missionaries BUILD THE BRIDGE... but parents are KEY in building the generational structure of the church in a tribe, a language, a people, and a nation
- g. Far more people will be in heaven because their parents raised them from infancy to know the scriptures than those who were

converted by evangelists from atheism or secularism or materialism

5. THE MOST EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM IN THE WORLD IS DONE BY PARENTS IN THE WARMTH AND FAITH OF A CHRISTIAN HOME

C. The Great Commission Starts at Home

***Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."***

The most effective discipling ALL ROUND THE WORLD is done at home; making disciples of your own children! Teaching them to OBEY EVERYTHING CHRIST HAS COMMANDED!

This morning, I am advocating this pattern so clearly celebrated by Paul in Timothy's life:

***2 Timothy 3:14-15 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.***

D. THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE DON'T EVANGELIZE/DO MISSIONS OUTSIDE THE HOME! If the numbers are right, still 40-45% will have NO Christian influence at home and need a missionary/evangelist to lead them to Christ... I DID... at MIT!!

E. AND it Does NOT MEAN Every Child Raised in a Christian Home Comes to Faith!!

**Jesus said plainly: *Matthew 10:34-37 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- <sup>36</sup> a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' <sup>37</sup> "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than***

*me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*

Many children rebel and betray the faith of their parents... there are NO GUARANTEES, and every child has to come to his/her own faith in Christ by the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit

BUT... there are many things we parents can and must do to be instruments in the redeemer's hands for the conversion of our children

## II. The Eternal Accountability of Parenting

### A. Central Responsibility: Evangelize Your Children

***ESV Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.***

### B. "Fathers": Primary Responsibility Goes to Fathers

### C. BUT... "Mothers" in View Too

#### 1. Think of Proverbs

***Proverbs 6:20-23 My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. <sup>21</sup> Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck.***

#### 2. Think of Timothy with his mother Eunice

#### 3. Think of heroic mothers in church history

- a. Felicitas in ancient Rome: she and her seven sons all martyred in Rome; said to Roman prefect who was trying to get her to renounce Christ, "While I live, I shall defeat you; and if you kill me, by my death I shall defeat you all the more." Emperor Marcus Aurelius ordered that she and her seven sons each be killed in different parts of the city
- b. Monica and Augustine: that godly mother suffered through the years of her wayward son's immorality and paganism; for years she wept and prayed for Augustine's conversion, and her prayers were finally answered

c. Susana Wesley and her children, John and Charles Wesley: she gave birth to as many as 19 children; ten survived to adulthood; she was a beautiful mixture of piety and practical godliness in the home; made it a point to spend at least one dedicated hour per week with each child, pouring the gospel into them

d. Charles Spurgeon and his mother:

[Spurgeon's testimony] "I cannot tell how much I owe of the solemn words of my good mother.... I remember on one occasion her praying thus, 'Now, Lord, if my children go on in their sins, it will not be from ignorance that they perish, and my soul must bear a swift witness against them at the day of judgment if they lay not hold of Christ.' That thought of my mother's bearing a swift witness against me pierced my conscience... How can I ever forget when she bowed her knee, and with her arms about my neck, prayed, 'Oh, that my son may live before Thee!'"

4. Fathers and Mothers must work in concert

a. Ephesians 5—headship and submission

b. Ephesians 6—Fathers leading their children... in beautiful concert with their submissive wives

### III. The Negative: Do Not Provoke Your Children to Anger

<sup>ESV</sup> ***Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.***

A. The Beautiful Balance of Scripture: Negatives, then Positives

B. Fathers Are Limited... The Children Belong to God!!

1. The father has highest human authority over the child, with the mother second in command
2. BUT parental authority is not absolute!
3. Your children are not YOURS... they belong to GOD, for He alone made them, and he alone sustains them and he alone can save them and he alone will judge them

***Job 10:10-12 Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, <sup>11</sup> clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? <sup>12</sup> You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.***

4. Fathers are restrained in their authority by the higher authority of God...
  - a. Our children belong to God
  - b. So... if He should choose to take any of them early in death, we have no right to question God or charge God with wrongdoing...
  - c. Job is our role model here... when God took his seven sons and three daughters in ONE DREADFUL TERRIFYING DAY

***Job 1:21-22 The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." <sup>22</sup> ¶ In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.***

- d. All our parenting should be done with a constant sense of God's higher and greater role in their lives
- e. Our children are not our playthings, our slaves, our alter egos, our self-focused hope for future glory
- f. They are GOD'S and he has entrusted them to us for a short time

#### C. The Prohibition: Do Not Provoke Your Children to Anger

1. NIV: "Do not exasperate your children"
  - a. Don't tempt them to sinful anger
  - b. Ultimately, don't be a cause for your children to REBEL and RUN from Christ and from the gospel because of your bad example and bad parenting
2. The focus: the tender hearts of your children
  - a. Children can become discouraged, dismayed, beaten down, repressed, ultimately enraged

- b. We desire to cherish, nurture, love our children
- 3. The child must be brought to broken-hearted repentance over sin, faith in Christ, and deep love for God and for the things of God
- D. Specifics: What Provokes Children to Wrath? What “Exasperates” Children?
  - 1. Lack of discipline AT ALL... the child allowed to ROAM FREE and never have his/her will challenged (more on that in a moment)
    - a. Most of the injunctions I am about to give seek to restrain from doing it too harshly or in a way that will provoke them to wrath
    - b. BUT it is ironically true that NO DISCIPLINE AT ALL will end up feeding their fleshly pride and rebellious hearts and make them children of wrath serving the devil

***Proverbs 13:24 He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.***

Beyond this, there are an array of WRONG WAYS to discipline and train a child... ways that will provoke them to anger

- 2. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND: Excessive strictness
  - a. Some parents see the overall LAXNESS of parental discipline and overreact the opposite direction
  - b. They feel, “The more strictness the better...”
  - c. Like the Old Woman in the Shoe

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe.

She had so many children, she didn't know what to do;  
 She gave them some broth without any bread;  
 Then whipped them all soundly and put them to bed.

The great danger here of course is not merely PROVOKING THE CHILDREN TO WRATH but abusing them. Even if the discipline is not abusive, it can still be a dominant theme...

- 3. Lack of love for the children



- a. A cold, loveless parenting... never holding the children, never cherishing them, never telling them how much you love them
  - b. Or perhaps, not enough... so stern, so angry with them, failing to find your joy in their blessing
  - c. Do your children feel that you delight in them? Do you tell them regularly how much you love them?
4. Hypocrisy in parents: Christianity is not lived out before them
- a. Children are observing you constantly... they can smell out the inconsistencies; if you say you love God and do not keep his commands, they will see you are a liar!
5. Parenting in anger
- a. Parenting in anger... remember I spoke about carnal anger usually being motivated by PRIDE or INCONVENIENCE; I wonder how many spankings have been given in ANGER by a father or mother who is sinfully angry at the child... motivated by being embarrassed in public by the child, or motivated by the inconvenience the child's carelessness has cost in breaking something in the home
  - b. Parents MUST be Spirit-filled before disciplining the child... NEVER IN ANGER, or it will easily become abuse
6. Injustice
- a. Sometimes the parents discipline mechanically with no opportunity for the child to be heard, to express his/her side of the story
  - b. The parent may feel that the child has no right to speak, that all they must do is listen and take their discipline
  - c. We celebrate our legal system in which *habeas corpus* guarantees that no one accused of a crime may be deprived of life, liberty, or property without DUE PROCESS OF LAW, and that process includes a trial in which his/her case is heard fairly

- d. We delight in that fairness, that justice, but we may deny it to our children
  - e. NOW of course, the child can abuse this and feel that ANY DISCIPLINE AT ALL is UNJUST... but if there is a consistency and a sense of justice in the process, the child is less likely to be provoked to wrath
7. Excessive protection:
- a. some parents seek to remove their children in every way from all the dangers of the world; they are extremely protective, and keep them close at all times; they parent in fear of physical and spiritual harm all the time, and the children are not allowed to go out into the world and try things and grow and develop
8. Excessive control
- a. Some parents expect absolute obedience to parental commands throughout every moment of the child's life at home
  - b. While this is in one sense the biblical standard, the problem comes when the parent covers the child's life thick with commands... every moment of the day is defined by some parental rule
  - c. Parents have to be sure not to become "control freaks" especially as the child grows and rightly needs to make more and more decisions for himself
  - d. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was speaking of adult men and women he knew that never got married because their parents selfishly made them feel guilty if they left them to get married... they basically taught their kids that they were born into the world for the sake of the parents
9. Failure of parents to encourage children
- a. If the parents hardly ever encourage, but instead are always pointing out failures, ways it could have been done better, deficiencies, the child will feel "I CAN NEVER MAKE HIM HAPPY!"

10. Unreasonable expectations of achievement

- a. Some parents put extreme pressure on their children to excel
- b. They are really just living out their ego and need for accolades through their children
- c. This could be in academics or athletics or music or religion
- d. The children become little performing monkeys, and often the last issues comes up as well... the parents RARELY encourage the child for their successes, always pushing the child harder and harder

11. Inconsistency in discipline

- a. Sometime the parent is lenient, sometimes quite strict
- b. The child can never tell what's going to happen next

12. Favoritism

13. Failure of parents to sacrifice cheerfully

- a. Expressing WHAT A BURDEN the children are!
- b. Acting like the children are there for their own pleasure and whim

***2 Corinthians 12:14-15 children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. <sup>15</sup> So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well.***

E. Parents: This is a good opportunity to reflect and repent, as needed!

IV. The Positives: Nourish, Train, Admonish... In the Lord

***Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.***

A. All Parenting to be done "In the Lord"

- 1. Parenting a subset of the "Spirit-filled life"

a. Ephesians 1-3 Salvation through the blood of Christ

b. Ephesians 4-6 What kind of life we should live as a result

***Ephesians 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.***

***Ephesians 5:18 be filled with the Spirit***

The husband-wife relationship can only flourish to the glory of God as each are filled with the Spirit

So also the parent-child relationship can only be done as we are filled with the Spirit

CHILDREN are a marvelous blessing from the Lord, but they can also be exceptionally taxing, and can quickly get us into a very CARNAL state in which we can not rightly parent them

Parents MUST be filled with the Spirit

Parenting “in the Lord” is Christian parenting... done by redeemed people, sinners saved by grace, and living by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God

2. This separates Christian parenting from moral parenting by pagans

a. Every nation acknowledges the vital importance of training children from an early age

Image of an “apple in a bottle” ... the mystery of how a fully formed ripe, red apple could be inside a bottle with a tiny, narrow neck and no seams in the glass? Answer: put the bottle on the actual apple tree with the bud growing up inside the bottle; get the apple when it is a tiny bud, and it will grow into the bottle

People all over the world know this... they use the tender hearts of children to indoctrinate them in their world philosophies... raising them as moral philosophers, or atheists, or Muslims, or Nazis, or Communists

Moral parents with no religion at all know how to train children to be moral: to work hard, to respect others, to obey the Laws of the state, to be socially adept, to be frugal, trustworthy, self-sufficient, polite, well-mannered at the dinner table, thankful to those who give them gifts – saying “Please” and “Thank you”, and all manner of other basic rules of the road for success in adult life

Christian parents will do many of these same things, teach many of the same morals; Look up George Washington’s “Rules of Civility”

Rules about how to treat others with respect, how to handle bodily needs with propriety, how to not spit into the fire or speak too loudly for the occasion, how to not turn your back to someone who is speaking to you... etc.

Frankly, ancient Greek and Roman fathers would have had their sons trained in similar morals and patterns of Greek or Roman virtues: piety, honesty, obedience to the state, duty, loyalty, courage

The word Paul uses here “*paideia*” would have been well-known to the Ephesians; it was generally carried out by the aristocratic classes to prepare sons to come into their inheritance; philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates and others had schools in which children were trained in *paideia*...

So all around the world, everyone knows the need to train children

**BUT we are doing it IN THE LORD**... by the pattern of the Lord’s Book, the Bible, for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ!

3. Nourish “in the Lord”... Train “in the Lord”... Admonish “in the Lord”
  - a. With constant reference to the Lord Jesus Christ... as though Jesus were their true parent
  - b. With constant reliance on the power of the Lord Jesus Christ

- c. With a goal to please the Lord Jesus Christ
- d. With a sense of bringing them to the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved
- e. With a sense of the LORDSHIP of the Lord Jesus Christ... for obedience

## B. Nourish

1. The first word Paul uses positively is “nourish”, but translated “bring them up”
2. Same word Paul used in the husband section concerning the wife, and what Christ does for the church

***Ephesians 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,***

3. The image is one of gentle FEEDING of the children... but the food here is far more than physical
4. Of course, a godly father will see that his children get enough to eat physically every day; children come into the world completely helpless; if someone doesn't protect them and feed them, they will most certainly DIE
5. It would be unthinkable for a godly father not to do everything he can to feed his children their daily bread:

***Psalm 37:25 I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.***

6. But it is obvious in the context that merely feeding them physically is nowhere near enough... their SOULS must be fed the food of the Word of God

***Matthew 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"***

7. A godly father will NOURISH the souls of his growing children on spiritual bread, the word of God... so they can truly feed on Christ who is the true bread from heaven

***John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.***

8. The nourishing a father must do for his children is a daily feeding on the scriptures... so that their souls will develop a robust faith in Christ

***Romans 10:17 faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.***

- a. Daily times in the scripture... "family altar"; father leading by reading the Bible, discussing it and making it plain, singing praise songs, and praying together
- b. So also the Father can nourish his children in the Word of God constantly as they live their lives:

***Deuteronomy 6:7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.***

- c. Continual flow in the Word of God... feeding, nourishing their growing souls
- d. When they see a magnificent sunset, the parents speak God's Word to the little ones: how God causes the sun to rise and fill the world with light (Psalm 19) and how one day the Sun will be replaced by the glory of God (Revelation 22)
- e. FEED THEIR SOULS with the richness of the Word of God
  - i) Milk when they are toddlers, barely able to speak: **"God is love" 1 John 4:8**
  - ii) Meat when they are older and can handle it:

***2 Peter 3:7 the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.***

9. The idea of nurture, of BRINGING CHILDREN UP is the idea of a gradual progression, little by little, from immaturity to full maturity in Christ

***Proverbs 4:18 The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.***

Like a DIMMER SWITCH... not an ON-OFF switch... the child will understand more and more of Christ and of the gospel, of the depths of the Word of God more and more as the parents BRING THEM UP in the Word

C. Train:

<sup>CSB</sup> ***Ephesians 6:4 And fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but nourish them in the training and instruction of the Lord.***

1. Here is that word *PAIDEIA*... the concept of a systematic preparation of the child for adult life
2. It involves all the basics of education... of shaping your child's MIND, getting them ready to think
  - a. It begins obviously with language... the "mother-tongue" and here is the invaluable assistance of a godly MOTHER who teaches the "mother tongue" to the infant through scriptural truth, through gospel language!!
  - b. Beyond that comes all the basics of a full education... parents, not governments are responsible for this
  - c. God holds parents accountable for the education... government can be a USURPER when it seeks to REFUTE parental role, parental authority

German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the father of German nationalism:

"Education should aim at destroying free will so that after pupils are thus schooled they will be incapable throughout the rest of their lives of thinking or acting otherwise than as their school masters would have wished. ... The social psychologist of the future will have a number of classes of school children on whom they will try different methods of producing an unshakable conviction that snow is black. When the technique has been perfected, every government that has been in charge



of education for more than one generation will be able to control its subjects securely without the need of armies or policemen.”

- i) Nazi Germany openly taught that the children belonged to the state, and they set about indoctrinating them

Adolph Hitler, in a speech on November 6, 1933: “When an opponent declares, ‘I will not come over to your side,’ I calmly say, ‘Your child belongs to us already... What are you? You will pass on. Your children, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time, they will know nothing but this new community!’” “This new Reich will itself take youth and give to youth its own education and its own upbringing.” [Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 249]

- ii) We are going to see more and more of this in our nation, because the world-view enemies we have are ZEALOTS and want to STAMP OUT all dissent on LGBT themes and other issues
- iii) T4G: Al Mohler spoke of a Christian family he knew who was sending their kids to the government schools as witnesses and missionaries; but one day, one of those kids corrected the parents who were speaking about homosexuality as a sin: “Dad, that’s HATE SPEECH!” Wow... what a moment!
- iv) I am not openly advocating home schooling or private schools as the only godly options, but more and more the worldview opponents of Christianity will seek to pour their version of truth into the children’s hearts
- v) And overall, there’s just the ongoing DANGER of a SECULAR education... the separation of GOD from every subject in the schools; as though God were irrelevant to math, science, American history, English literature, etc.
- vi) God is more than just RELEVANT to all academic subjects... he CREATED and SUSTAINED everything in the universe

***Isaiah 66:1-2 This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. ... <sup>2</sup> Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD.***

3. The TRAINING of children goes far beyond the academic learning
  - a. It has to do with the positive formation of a HEART AFTER THE LORD
  - b. Yearning to see God glorified in everything!
  - c. Whether that child grows to be a scientist, banker, farmer, plumber, stay-at-home Mom, pastor, missionary, CEO... whatever they do, they will do for the glory of God and the spread of Christ's Kingdom

***Matthew 6:33 seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.***

***1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.***

D. Instruct = Admonish

***<sup>KJV</sup> Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.***

1. This word "instruct" has more to do with training a child away from SIN... warning, admonishing them in the fear of the Lord
2. The word comes from literally "to place in the mind"... but the use usually has to do with reasoning with sinners to repent and think rightly about sin
3. CORRECTION... rebuke...WARNING!!!
4. It is the word from which we get "nouthetic counseling"... biblical counseling that seeks to give serious WARNINGS about continuing in sin

***Acts 20:31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.***

***Ephesians 5:3-6 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup> For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.***

5. So the godly parent of a growing child will WARN his children about the deadly dangers of sin... we seek to bring them to FEAR the Lord and flee the wrath to come by seeking salvation in Christ
6. Fundamental concept: infants enter the world with a STRONG SIN NATURE... fanatically committed to SELF
7. The unregenerate child MUST be UNDER THE LAW until they come to grace in Christ

***Galatians 3:24-25 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,***

- a. So Christian parenting is a complex MIX of Old Covenant and New Covenant
- b. Old Covenant: LAW, blessings and curses
- c. New Covenant: Grace through faith in Christ
8. While they are growing, their sin natures need to be trained by discipline... by clear rules and fair punishments when they disobey
9. This is the reason for the “discipline” passages in the Book of Proverbs, which the author of Hebrews quotes that God does for us:

As the child gets older, there is MORE AND MORE COUNSELLING concerning sin; clear instructions and warnings about sin

The Book of Proverbs gives a clear example of how a godly father can WARN his growing son about the dangers of falling in with the wrong crowd, or crime, or sexual immorality, or laziness, or drunkenness, or verbal sins...

These words give a clear example of ADMONISHMENT... clear warning of the ultimate ends of sin

## V. Applications

### A. Only Christians Can Do Christian Parenting

1. What would it profit YOU to desire to raise good children and yourself be LOST?!
2. Trust in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins
3. Excellent parenting is a subset of the true Christian life, by the power of the Spirit

### B. Main Goal of Parenting: the Eternal Salvation of Your Children!!

### C. What Are We Parenting Toward?? Marks of Regeneration

#### 1. Love for God and for Christ:

[the child speaks often of God and of Christ; “Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks” Matthew 12:34 They often express love for God, for the ways he loves us and feeds us and sustains us; they often express love for Christ, affection for him, delight in what he’s done on the cross and in the Gospels]

#### 2. Love for Christian brothers/sisters

[the child delights in being with other Christians and enjoys talking with other Christian boys and girls, and adults, about the things of God; they should really enjoy going to church to be with other Christians and to worship God]

#### 3. Growth in obedience to God’s commands

[the child increasingly displays a God-ward direction of obeying God's Word because it pleases God; they have a sense of relationship with God in the obedience to his commands]

4. Love for God's Word

[you can often observe the child reading the Bible on their own; they love the Bible and enjoy being taught; they have habits of Bible intake clearly borne by love for the Word]

5. Growth in hatred of sin/evil

[they hate sin specifically because God hates it; they display a vertical dimension of sorrow for sinning and displeasing God; they are not as concerned with earthly punishments ("getting caught") as they are that God commanded something and we have sinned against him]

6. Actual temptations refused, increasing victories over sin

[they begin to put into practice the Word of God to overcome sin patterns and specific temptations – like stealing or lying or sassing or laziness or arguing with siblings or selfishness]

7. Growth in good deeds done in service to God & others

[they find ways to serve others because it pleases God]

8. Ability to explain the gospel, especially the facts of Jesus' life and the key issue of substitutionary atonement (though obviously not in those words)

[your child should be able to explain at a basic level "God-Man-Christ-Response": they should be able to trace out the basic facts of Jesus' life; they should be able to explain how our sins deserve death and hell, and how Jesus takes our sins on himself and died in our place; and how Christ's righteousness is given to us as gift; they should be able to explain justification (forgiveness of sins) by faith not by works]

9. They should have some understanding of "counting the cost"

[this is especially difficult for children, who are rightly shielded from the world's hostility and hatred for Christ]

10. Internal testimony of the Holy Spirit that we are God's children

[they should have a peace and a sense that God is saying in their hearts that they are forgiven and have become God's children]