

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“Fathers, Don’t...”

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God placed husbands and fathers in leadership roles in their families. The husband “is the head” of his wife (*Ephesians 5:23*). The father leads in “nurturing” his children “in the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (*Ephesians 5:4*). Knowing authoritative leadership can be abused, God adds what a husband and a father must not do. The husband is not to be “bitter” toward his wife (*Colossians 3:19*). A loving husband must not, as a father, “provoke” his children “to wrath” (*Ephesians 6:4*) and “discouragement” (*Colossians 3:21*) How does a loving father avoid discouragement and deep seeded wrath in his children while fulfilling his role in disciplining his children?

A father must not abuse his children verbally. His “rash” words can “pierce like a sword” and break the “spirit” of anyone, especially one’s own children (*Proverbs 12:18, 15:4*). To approach a moment of discipline with a barrage of verbal insults, leaving a child’s self-worth crumbling from within, is abusive. Allowing parental frustration to reach high decibels of yelling is intimidating to the ears of children. Mere intimidation, and lack of self-worth are never the products of constructive

discipline. They produce discouraging wrath.

Godly fathers, you must not apply unjust and excessive punishment in disciplining your children. Such harsh and unfair discipline produces discouraging wrath in the heart of your child. Don’t allow how embarrassed you feel to be the barometer of how hard you come down in applying needed discipline. Let the punishment fit the crime. God encourages us to find that balance in *Ephesians 6:4*. While fathers are not to “provoke their children to wrath,” they can avoid such discouraging wrath while at the same time nurture them in the “chastening and admonition of the Lord.” A father being consistent in applying the chastening rod can do so while communicating corrective discipline in love (*Proverbs 13:24*).

Fathers, you should not live as a hypocrite before your children. If they see you do things that you punish them for doing, wrath will seethe with discouragement. “Do as I say, not as I do” is not a godly admonition in the Lord.

Fathers, when you sense anger in your children, do not let their anger choke off other

important emotions they might feel. Address wrath, and guide them in how to control their anger as they mature. Approach them as Paul does the Corinthians whose feelings were “hemmed in” or “straightened” against him: *O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open” (2 Corinthians 6:11-13).*

Fathers, overcome seething wrath in your children by letting your child who is being disciplined know he or she is loved. Follow Our Heavenly Father’s encouraging words: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights” (*Proverbs 3:11-12, cf. Hebrews 12:5-6*). Children needing correction should not escape the pain of discipline, but should know they do not have to improve their behavior in order to be loved. They are already loved, but need correction. “The fruit of righteousness” is discipline’s goal. Such are the “do’s and don’ts” of a father seeking the eternal well-being of his children.