

A Daddy's Work

Ephesians 6:4

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the father's standing at his son's sentencing, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #3656.
 - 1. There is no doubt that many children who are sentenced to prison ought to have their parents stand at their sentencing.
 - 2. Although there clearly comes a time where one is responsible for himself and cannot blame his parents for his lot in life, parents do play a huge role in the behavior of their children.
 - a. Children learn how to behave from their parents, and parents who do not train their children appropriately do their children and society a great disservice.
 - b. This morning we want to think about what Paul says about raising children.
- B. Paul classifies a daddy's work in two ways: first he looks at a daddy's work negatively, and then he looks at a daddy's work positively. Let's think about a daddy's work.

NEGATIVE: DO NOT PROVOKE TO WRATH

- A. "You, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath."
- B. The term "provoke to wrath" means to make angry and would involve behaviors which would drive a child to angry exasperation or resentment.
- C. In the ancient world, fathers often provoked their children to wrath.
 - 1. Children were often taught by beating them, not spanking but actual beating — this was standard in education and childrearing.
 - 2. Fathers were considered responsible for this education and expected to beat their children.
 - 3. Paul says, "Don't beat your children, don't provoke them to wrath."
- D. There are several ways that fathers can provoke their children to wrath:
 - 1. Fathers can provoke their children to wrath by expecting too much from their children.
 - a. Fathers need expect much from their children, but fathers also need to remember that their children are just that: children.
 - b. Children are not always capable of doing what we think they ought to do.
 - c. There are many times that I think R.J. should be able to do something, and I scold him for not being able to do it. Tammy comes and says, "Honey, remember, he's four."
 - 1) We need to be very careful about asking our children to do things they are not capable of doing.
 - 2) Fathers, let us resolve not to expect too much from our children.
 - 2. Fathers can provoke their children to wrath by favoring one child over another.
 - a. If a father openly expresses favoritism to one child over another, the other children will resent the child and the father.
 - b. Great disaster comes to families when one child is favored over another.
 - 1) Do you remember the harm that came to Jacob and Esau because each parent had a favorite?
 - 2) Do you remember the reaction of Joseph's brothers to their father's favoritism, how they sold Joseph into slavery and lied to their father that he had been killed?
 - c. Let us not show favoritism to our children!
 - 3. Fathers can provoke their children to wrath by excessive discipline.
 - a. Every child needs discipline and parents that withhold it do their children and society a huge

disservice.

- b. But, too much of a good thing is not profitable, either.
 - 1) If we fathers are overly harsh with our children, we will make them afraid of us, push them away, and encourage them to rebel.
 - 2) When we are angry with our children, let us walk away and withhold punishment until we are able to do so fairly, not excessively.
 - c. Anger has often caused problem upon problem.
 - 1) “A quick-tempered man acts foolishly” (Prov. 14:17). Hasn’t each one of us been angry and acted foolishly at one point or another?
 - 2) “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (J s. 1:19-20).
 - a) If we are overly angry with our children, our children will not see the righteousness of God.
 - b) If we spank out of anger and give more than is deserved, our children will not see the righteousness of God.
 - c) If we lash out in anger and say what we ought not, our children will not see the righteousness of God.
4. Fathers can provoke their children to anger through neglect.
- a. In today’s society, to build a career, one must often be absent for extended periods — either through business trips or late nights at work.
 - b. But, we fathers need to take time to nurture and care for our children.
 - 1) There is a text that is quite interesting in this regard — “To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (Js. 4:17).
 - 2) Fathers, if we are so busy with other things that we do not give time to our children when we do we need to give them time, we sin, and we greatly err.
 - 3) Illustration about the boy’s wanting his dad to at least say, “Oh!,” *Encyclopedia of 15, 000 Illustrations*, #3643.

POSITIVE: DO PROVOKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, v. 4b

- A. “Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”
- 1. “Bring up” means to nourish, to provide for with tender care.
 - a. We fathers need to be there for our children, to provide for them with care, to nourish them, to raise them.
 - b. So many fathers today take the attitude of just conceiving a child and then walking away without any thought of how that child will be reared and without any part of playing a role in the child’s life.
 - 1) We don’t have any fathers like that here this morning; but, we are unusual in today’s society.
 - 2) Let us take an active role in the lives of our children, let us assist in raising them.
 - 2. “Training” refers to child rearing, education, and the term often refers to the discipline needed to make that training possible.
 - a. Parents must discipline their children.
 - 1) “He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (Prov. 13:24).
 - 2) “Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction” (Prov. 19:18).
 - 3) “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15).
 - 4) “Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die”

(Prov. 23:13).

- b. What I'm about to say is not politically correct, but it's biblically correct: If we do not spank our children when they do wrong, we sin against our children.
 - 1) If we allow our children to grow up without spanking, they will think that actions do not have consequences, they will not learn that they must obey an authority figure.
 - 2) If we allow our children to grow up without spanking, our children will get out of control, and then it will be too late to correct them.

3. "Admonition" refers to instruction or warning.

- a. The qualifying phrase "of the Lord" makes clear that Paul is here calling on fathers to instruct their children about spiritual matters.
- b. Parents have a serious responsibility to instruct their children in spiritual matters.
 - 1) God has always expected a new generation to learn his truth from their parents — Deut. 6:20-25.
 - 2) "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

B. We fathers have employment that we enjoy.

- 1. I dare say that many of the fathers assembled here this morning enjoy their careers, you enjoy your work and you find satisfaction in it.
- 2. But, our careers are just that: work.
 - a. We have a far more important job in which we are engaged in a daily basis.
 - b. That job is:
 - 1) In negative terms: not to provoke our children to wrath.
 - 2) In positive terms: to provoke our children to righteousness.
 - c. Are you a father who is able to fulfill those serious obligations?
 - 1) Are you a child of God, a father who is walking with the Lord, and who sets the proper example for your children?
 - 2) Do you need to come this morning and become that father?