

Dear Dad:
EXASPERATE NOT
Colossians 3:21

Dear dad, does the discipline in your home exasperate your child?

I. THE CAUTION

A. THE RULE: Do not exasperate

- Do not make them resentful or bitter

B. THE REASONS: Why is this caution commanded?

1. The Danger of Losing Heart (Col.3:21)

a. This involves a spirit of sullen resignation

b. They are unmotivated and feel like giving up

c. They are broken in spirit

2. The Danger of Losing Their Temper - Ephesians 6:4

a. "Fathers provoke not your children to anger"

b. This is an emotional outburst a flaming fire

c. They will strike out in anger and be out of control

C. THE RESPONSIBILITY

1. This warning does not mean you should not discipline your children

2. This does not mean that your children will never be upset and if they are you are not disciplining them correctly.

3. This does mean that it is never right to discipline them to the point where they are absolutely frustrated trying to figure out what you expect from them.

D. A REVIEW: **What kinds of discipline exasperate a child?**

1. *Unfair discipline*

a. Disciplining for childishness.

- There is a difference between foolishness or immaturity and rebellion or sin

- See I Corinthians 13:11

b. Disciplining without listening to the child

1) Sometimes parents make unfair assumptions about what happened or who is guilty

2) We must be willing to listen to the child - Note James 1:19-20 and Prov. 18:13

3) Listen when they are small and they will talk when they are teens!

c. Use Discernment

- Differentiate between house rules that are used to maintain order and God's rules which are a much higher standard.

2. *Undependable discipline*

- a. Confusing enforcement:
 - 1) The parent is inconsistent with the discipline
 - 2) One parent disciplines and the other does not
- b. God consistently enforces His rules > You sin, you suffer!

3. *Unclear rules*

- a. Unannounced rules: Made in the heat of the moment without thoughtful consideration
- b. Confusion about the details or the enforcement because it is never clearly stated
- c. A child never knows for sure what the rules are or how they will be enforced so why try keeping them (exasperation)
- d. God made one rule in the Garden and made it very clear - Gen. 2:16-17

4. *Unrealistic rules*

- a. Too many rules
- b. This can easily become Pharisaic - Matthew 23:4
 - An abuse of power and authority whereby the parent becomes dictatorial
- c. The goal should be to keep the rules simple > Work on one or two things at a time

5. *Unrewarded obedience*

- a. Children need to be praised - Proverbs 16:24 and 3:27
- b. Doing right with no recognition or reward will be frustrating and lead to exasperation
- c. The perfectionist (proud) parent that focuses only on negatives will discourage the child - See Psalm 69:20

II. **THE COMMAND** - Ephesians 6:4

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but ...”

A. THE GOAL:

- 1. “Bring them up” > Nourish and feed them through childhood
- 2. The idea is to actively and continuously work with them
- 3. The goal is to develop a Christ-like child who conforms to Christ’s image - Rom. 8:29

B. THE GUIDELINES

- 1. Nurture > Show them how!
 - a. This is patient and consistent effort toward a goal
 - b. This is a calculated effort toward change
 - c. This involves diagnosing what is wrong and seeking to correct it > Surgery
- 2. Admonition > Tell them why!
 - a. Self-discipline is encouraged with a focus on consecration and not just correction
 - b. This is a reasoned appeal to the heart of a young adult encouraging change and self-discipline.

III. THE KINDNESS - I Thessalonians 2:11**A. BE A HELPFUL AND INSTRUCTIVE DAD**

1. Exhorting: Call them to your side for instruction > Be a coach
2. Encouraging: Appeal to their will by explanations > Be a trainer
3. Imploring: Emphatically compelling them to give their best effort > Be their cheerleader

B. AVOID HARSH AND OPPRESSIVE PARENTING

CONCLUSION: Dear dad, are you training or tormenting your child?