

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

Fundamental principal of authority: Anyone with authority must be careful and mindful as to how he/she uses that authority!

Fathers. With the definite article: **The fathers.** The Greek word *pater* is primarily translated *father or fathers*. But the Greek word lays a broader inclusion than just males. The word father, forefather, ancestor or founder or head, as in *our forefathers or founding fathers* certainly does not exclude women. Here it is used to represent the founding or producing of the children and therefore should be translated **The Parents**

The parents. Fathers and mothers or whichever has the responsibility for the rearing of the children.

The parents do not exasperate your children (ever been exasperated?)

This is the *Present Active Imperative* of Greek verb *erethizo*.

It is translated: not embitter; not aggravate; not provoke; not exasperate; not be hard on your children; not irritate;

Do not make your children resentful; do not anger your children.

Do not vex your children; do not fret and harass your children.

So here, we have some 10 or 11 different English words for this Greek word directing on rearing children. And be sure you get down *children*. Girls can also be exasperated! (as well as exasperating—sorry).

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

And parent, don't be in denial, you can provoke your child. It is not always them rebelling. To get a handle on this word, it can be used for a good and desired response or for negative responses. In 2 Corinthians 9:2 it is used to stimulate or encourage service of the Lord. The word therefore has multiple uses. You will notice here it is with the negative: **not...do not excite, arouse, provoke, embitter, etc.** It can be used without the negative. And here, parents, is where you have the opportunity to teach your children about life. Just as they can be provoked, they can also be encouraged.

This verse, with the negative emphasizes the abuse of authority. The husband can abuse his authority and so can the parents.

Parents often abuse their authority over their children in various ways.

1. Keep on nagging about inconsequential things to the point of aggravating the children. And by the way husbands, you can do this to your wives. Unfortunately, many parents do not have the ability to understand what needs to be hit hard, and all the time, and what should be by-passed lightly, easily and not all the time.
2. One of the first things a person who has authority must do is to determine what you make an issue out of and what you just let slide: "pick your battles." This is important for husbands and for parents. Many parents are nags on their children, all the time. It is wisdom to determine what is an essential issue and what is not. For example, a parent can become a nag over something as important as spiritual issues. My mother did not make us go to church, but if we chose not to go to church we could do nothing but school homework during the time of church. So, of course, we chose to go to church!! But a

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

parent can just keep beating the child with going to church etc. to the point the child resents going to church. It is no longer enjoyable, being with friends, and it certainly is no longer enjoyable to learn about the Bible.

3. One reason some parents exasperate their children or provoke their children is that they themselves are exasperated, they themselves are resentful about things in their own lives. Parent, you have to take care of your own problems and not take them out on your children. That is part of your training responsibility. Teach your children how to take care of problems in their lives. And remember, their problems may not seem important to you but they are important to your children. And as a parent you have the challenge, the responsibility, the opportunity, to teach them how to take care of problems in life. But if you don't know how to take care of life's problems, how do you think you are going to teach your children how to take care of life's problems? This is why you go to church, and sit under a pastor who studies the Word of God and teaches the Word of God. The Word of God is a light in your life on handling problems and this is what you have the privilege of teaching your children.
4. The father has problems at work; the mother has problems with her own body—pre-menstrual, menstrual and post-menstrual. These are very real problems for the parents along with financial issues etc. So, you have to learn how to handle and solve your own problems without pouring them on the children and causing the children to become vexed because you are vexed. They become upset, even frustrated because they do not know what to do and they become

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

nervous. Then, the fathers add to it because after a hard day at work they come home and want to be left alone, to relax. His wife does not get to relax so she becomes angry at her husband, their father, in front of them. Now they are really exasperated. So, they live in a world, a home, where they get a lot of unnecessary pressure from their parents because their parents don't know how to handle their own problems.

And as we live at a time when most preachers are not biblical teachers, problems mount at home, so the children reach outside of the family for answers, for relief. They turn to drugs, or sex or just being frustrated with life.

5. Parent there are three essentials in being a parent:

- (1) For the parents to know how to handle their own problems of life,
- (2) Then determining what is really important in your teaching and training of your children,
- (3) Then determining how to teach these essentials.

And again, there is nothing more important than their learning about God, Jesus Christ and the Bible. But oh, you must have wisdom how to teach these things where they are enjoyable and not a 'turn off.' Learn these things and let the inconsequential things be passed off with humor.

6. Another area is to exasperate your children by failure to teach them who they are. Self-identification. This is the theme of the old story 'Alice in Wonderland.' Why are so many children vexed?

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

Exasperated? Because they do not understand who they are and what is and is not expected of them.

This is why it is so important to teach your children who they are in relationship with you and then with relationship with Jesus Christ.

First, they identify themselves by relationship with you, their parents, but please understand this is not going to last all that long. They will soon go on a journey in their souls and in their lives to learn who they are. And you, dear parent, have the privilege to teach them to identify themselves with Christ. And as you fade from the picture, Christ becomes dominant and they will make choices in life that center on their relationship with Jesus Christ. Choices about drugs, choices about sex, about education, about what to do with their time, with the choice of friends, about the way they dress. They do not need you to nag them about these things if you spend your time on the enjoyment of being in Christ and allow them the freedom to make these choices with your guidance and help and encouragement.

7. Another area where parents cause their children to be exasperated is by your unfairness. One thing every parent needs to know, children pick up on unfairness in a hurry. They know when they have done wrong and deserve to be disciplined but they also know when they are being unfairly treated. Here is a good place for the introduction of the story of Cinderella where the step-mother and step-sisters were completely unfair to young Cinderella. And a fairy god-mother comes and rescues her. Well, parents, there is no fairy god-mother, but there is Jesus Christ. Please teach, train them what to do with

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

unfairness in life, even from you. Let them know that you know sometimes you may not always be fair. But they should find rest and peace in their souls not from you or from your fairness but from the Lord.

8. This area of exasperating your children may surprise some parents. Bullying! This is when a parent is bullying their children to act and think like an adult. They are not adults. At times, they like to think they are, but in truth, they are not. And you, as a wise parent, need to know that. So parents, do not bully them to be something they are not. That is setting up standards or giving them freedoms they are not ready to handle. Children love to know the limits, the boundaries. If they do have limits and boundaries and curfews they are confused. They have to be in by 8, then as they demonstrate they can handle that, it goes to 9 and so forth. You are teaching them how to demonstrate they deserve more, how to control their time and their mouth. Childhood is a wonderful stage of life, do not cheat them out of enjoying their childhood. Allowing a child to enjoy their childhood is a very excellent and wise use of authority. It is much better preparation for life than trying to make them act like adults.
9. This Greek word is an excellent teaching tool. As they grow up and learn that you as their parents can exasperate them, by your conduct, they will learn that they themselves can exasperate others, including you, their parents. But the teaching goes beyond this! As they grow, they must be taught about arousing or exciting action in others. Your little girls must be taught as to how she dresses. She can 'arouse' boys just by the way she dresses, and that can be very dangerous for her. Your sons need to learn about not arousing girls

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

sexually. And listen parent, they already know this, they just do not know or understand how dangerous these things are in relationships. So you as a wise parent have the opportunity to teach them how to dress, how to act, how to treat girls. Your son should learn to treat a girl as one who belongs to the Lord. One who belongs to some future guy, her husband. And your daughters need to learn not to provoke desires in boys, but to understand they belong to the Lord and to some future woman who will become their bride, just as you would hope your future husband is well treated. So, the Greek word can be used with the negative—*do not exasperate* or without the negative, encourage, excite to be a servant of the Lord.

10. Exasperation and love! Let them know they are loved. This is why you care about how they dress, how they talk what they do with their time and who they pick as friends, because you love them! It is one of the biggest difficulties in life to grow up without love. Discipline them, even spank them, but never let them go to bed without a hug, a kiss and a “I love you!” They will not like the discipline, but they know they need it when it is given in love. And parent, what are you teaching your children? About the love of Christ for them. How Jesus Christ loves them! And yes, He may have to discipline in life, but He disciplines out of love. Teach them not to run away from discipline but to learn from it. You will be doing them one of the greatest favors you can give them. And when they are older adults they will remember they were loved; you cared about them riding their bike in the street; you cared about what they put into their bodies; you cared about what they did with their bodies; you cared about their growing up knowing Jesus as a

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

personal friend. Don't exasperate them about whom they choose to date, teach them about morality, teach them the truth about love and they will have to make their own decisions. Your making them mad is not going to cause them to make sound judgments. But your letting them know they are loved and what love is and what love is not—these are the things that will guide them to make good decisions. These are the things that will motivate them to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, their Savior-friend.

The parents do not exasperate. The *present tense* is used to guide you as a parent throughout the years your children are under your authority. *Active voice* is used to remind parents that you do this occasionally by abusing your authority. *Imperative mood* to reveal God's desire for the wise parent. Some people never understand authority and therefore, they will inevitable abuse authority.

your children. You get it? You brought them into this world, they are your responsibility, they are your challenge, they are your privilege to teach, to train, to love.

so that. This conjunction with the negative introduces a purpose clause. The purpose: why parents should not exasperate their children. This introduces the result of provoking them.

So that they will not lose heart (KJ) discouraged. Other translations: *they might give up; disheartened; you may make them sullen and morose; to become discouraged; to just quit trying.* This is the *Aorist Active Subjunctive* of a Greek verb used only here in the New Testament. The root of this verb is *thumos* which has a variety of inferences, but in our study it refers to passion of the mind or passion of the soul.

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

Therefore, the translations that include the word *heart*. In Classical Greek, it can refer to the principle of life—mind or soul or heart denoting desire, emotion, passion, indignation, anger or wrath. But our word has the negative alpha 'a' in front of the word which negates the word: to be without passion for life therefore, to be despondent, disturbed in mind or soul or heart; to lose courage or even the desire to live, to move on, to advance.

Parents, continually nagging, continually provoking, irritating, embittering your children will eventually cause them to be discouraged to the point of despair. This is a most delicate area in being a parent. You want to break their will of rebellion but not break their spirit, their enthusiasm to grow up, to advance, to achieve in life. This is what the military has to do, breakdown the arrogant 'me' in a young soldier but not his spirit to advance. In fact, you want to instill the desire to be the best he/she can be. Question: what happens when a child loses heart? Or becomes discouraged? What does it mean he/she quits? Quits what? Parent, this is very important. Different children handle this in different ways. Some just give up trying to study, trying to please you. Others rebel and take off into things they know you would not approve, like drugs, sex, gangs, even crime. Some just run away from home with no direction and get caught up in the web of abusers.

Let's look at this in action from the OT. 1 Sam. 1:1-7

1 Samuel 1:1 Now there was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah (whom God has founded) the son of Jeroham, the son

of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

1 Samuel 1:2 He had two wives: the name of one was Hannah (what a beautiful name, it means grace, compassion) and the name of the other Peninnah; (pearl or precious stone) and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

1 Samuel 1:3 Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. (Where the tabernacle was built) And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD there.

1 Samuel 1:4 When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and her daughters;

1 Samuel 1:5 but to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, but the LORD had closed her womb.

OK, his show of partiality caused Peninnah to be provoked.

**Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21**

1 Samuel 1:6 Her rival, however, would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb.

This is exactly what parents are not to do to their children: provoke them—to embitter them, irritate them.

Now we come to why parents should not do this to their children.

1 Samuel 1:7 It happened year after year, as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she would provoke her; so she (Hannah) wept and would not eat.

She lost heart, she lost compassion for life. OK parents, sometimes your children will withdraw when you do this to them. But other times they will react and rebel and be pushed into drugs or some rebellious acts.

Colossians 3:21 ...so that they will not lose heart or become discouraged

Parents don't become the enemy of your own children. Be their teachers, encouragers. Be their parents!

Don't allow yourselves to become the cause of their broken heart. Remember, it was for those broken down in life that Jesus Christ, as God, became man and as man became the servant of man by dying on the cross.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD (THE HOLY SPIRIT) is upon me, (Jesus Christ)

**Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21**

Because the LORD (GOD THE FATHER) has anointed me To bring good news (gospel) to the afflicted (by sin); He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, (This is what sin does to the hearts of man. And in our study, parents add to the shattering of the hearts of their young children.) To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

Psalms 34:18 The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Wouldn't it be a shame, parent, if you were the cause of your child being brokenhearted and crushed in spirit? Don't let this happen! Pay close attention as to how you are parenting your children

Psalms 147:1 Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant *and* praise is becoming.

Psalms 147:3 He heals the brokenhearted And binds up their wounds.

Colossians 3:21 The parents, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

Parent, don't become the enemy of your own children.

Parents, Don't Be Your Children's Enemy
Colossians 3:21

If they fail in school, in morality, sex, drugs etc., don't be their judge.
Don't be their enemy.

Satan is their enemy.

Others will be their judge.

You be their teacher, their encouragement. Be their parent.

Please remember the world they are growing up in is anti-Christ, anti-Christianity, anti-morality, against the Bible and what it teaches about creation and salvation. This is the environment they live in day after day.

They need you.

They need you everyday.

Parent, you don't have the privilege to be occupied with only yourself.
You have young souls, young lives that need you.

Love them. Teach and train them in love. Encourage them in love.
Discipline them in love!

Bring them to Jesus Christ as their Savior-friend.