

## God's Design For The Family (Part 2) – Eph 6:1-4

Eph 6:1-4. This is the second of two parts on God's design for the family. Critical, because a breakdown in the family leads to all *kinds* of issues. Issues that span generations and derail countries. Including the *redefinition* of family, and calls to disrupt it. God's design is critical.

And this passage is part of what it means to *submit* to one another. 5:21. First it was wives submitting to husbands, then husbands to the Lord, and now children to parents. 6:1.

[1] *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* [2] *“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),* [3] *“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”* [4] *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* (ESV)

The first part of God's design for the family, from last week, is that . . .

**Kids should obey and parents should require it (v1)**

That means, kids . . .

- **Do what your parents say**
- **In everything**
- **The first time**
- **With a good attitude**
- **It's the right thing to do**
- **It pleases the Lord**

And parents . . .

- **Don't take “no” for an answer**
- **Discipline for disobedience**
- **Start right away**

That's the first part of God's design for the family.

Second, was . . .

**Honor your parents from birth to death (v2-3)**

Based on one of the 10 Commandments. It not only blesses them, but your life depends on it. A long life and good life.

Which brings us to the third part of God's design.

**Don't just raise your kids, disciple them (4)**

Shape them. Mold them. Influence them. *Bring them up*, [as it says in 4b], *in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*. Or the nurture and admonition of the Lord as the old King James says it. Either way, it's a reference to the essence of biblical discipleship. Bringing your kids up *in the discipline and instruction of the Lord* is discipleship.

Unfortunately, most parents just *raise* their kids. Doing only what's needed to feed them, clothe them, and make them happy. Hoping their kids pick something up along the way. And they do. Except it's not the truths of God's *Word*, it's the lies of the world.

In addition to providing the bare necessities, parents should instill *truth* in them. Inspire godliness in them. Help them think. Shape their worldview. We *raise* cattle; we *raise* corn; we *raise* cane. We *disciple* kids. And between this passage and Deuteronomy 6, we find 7 ways.

First, disciple them . . .

• **By teaching and leading them according to God's Word**

If you're going to *bring* [your kids] *up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*, you have to *teach* them such things. And *lead* them in such ways. Actively. Because it doesn't happen by itself.

And those things, those ways, are found in God's Word. The Bible. That's where the discipline and instruction of the *Lord* is found. Not in the latest bestseller, or your favorite podcast, or your go-to blog; but the Bible. It contains his way of living, and his way of thinking.

So don't just *raise* your kids, convey the truths and principles found in the Bible. And show them how to *apply* those principles. Be an instrument of sanctification in their lives, instead of just stagnation. Be a means of molding them into the image of *Jesus*, instead of leaving them to the image of the world.

If parents spent as much time training their kids for *godliness* as they do for sports, or music, or academics; we'd live in a different world. *For while bodily training is of some value* [1 Tim 4], *godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.* (1 Tim 4:8)

Don't just *feed* your kids, give them the bread of life. Don't just potty train them, disciple them; according to the Word.

➤ Now, if that feels overwhelming to you, if you don't know where to start, let me encourage you to focus on 4 things.

First, tell your kids **who God is**.

Not who you *think* he is, or how you *imagine* him to be, but how he's described in the Bible. Teach them that he's all-powerful, all-knowing, and all present. Teach them that he never changes, never sins, and never fails. Teach them that he's both loving and just; merciful and severe; gentle and firm. Tell them who God is.

Second, tell them **how God works**.

How he sometimes creates and sometimes destroys. How he reveals himself in nature, and communicates in Scripture. Tell them how he sometimes works through miracles, and most times works through us. And tell them how he always works things together for good. Tell them how God works.

Third, tell them **what God requires**.

From our love and devotion, to our heart and life. Tell them he requires perfect righteousness, and gives us his own. Tell them he requires sinlessness, and shows us mercy. Tell them he requires perfection, and extends his grace. Tell them he requires holiness, and makes a way. Tell them what God requires.

And last, tell them **how God saves**.

As in share the Gospel with your kids. No Gospel, no discipleship. I don't care how good your kids are. Without the Gospel, without telling your kids how God saves, none of the rest matters. Straight A's, big trophies, advanced degrees, nothing.

So tell them how God saves, by forgiving our sin. How he saves, by considering our faith as righteousness. How he saves, by counting the death of his Son as our own; and *his life* too. Tell them how he saves by dwelling within us to seal us, keep us, and never leave us.

4 categories to help you teach and lead your kids according to God's Word. I would even encourage you to pick up a copy of the Parent Resource List from Coram Deo Kids. A list of age appropriate Bibles and guides. So that you *disciple* your kids, instead of just raising them.

Second, disciple your kids . . .

- **By loving God yourself (Dt 6:5)**

This one comes straight from Dt 6. Where *Moses* gives instruction on discipleship in the family. And I'd like for you to turn there. [Dt 6:4-9](#).

In [v4](#), Moses says:

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. In other words, there's no council of Gods or divine pantheon, just Yahweh. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One, triune God. So it makes all the sense in the world that Moses would say in [v5](#) – You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

Disciple your kids *in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*, by loving the Lord yourself. Because you won't commend what you don't cherish.

If you don't love God, you'll never teach your *child* to love him. If he's not *your* greatest joy, he probably won't be *theirs*. If he's not *your* treasure, he won't be their treasure. Disciple *them* to love God, by loving him yourself.

Third, disciple them . . .

- **By knowing the Bible yourself (Dt 6:6)**

[Dt 6:6](#) – *These words that I command you today [Moses said; referring to the words of the Old Covenant and the laws surrounding it] shall be on your heart.* An admonition to know the Bible yourself, because you can't teach what you don't know.

It's the weakest link in most families. Even "good" families. They teach their kids about life, but not *Life*. They impart truth, but not *Truth*. They show them the way to success, but leave out the way to God. They give them a view of the world, but not a *biblical* worldview. Why? Because they don't have it themselves. And the result, is young adults who are spiritual runts, or completely lost.

So whatever you do, don't neglect your *own* discipleship. Don't neglect to read and study the Bible yourself. Don't neglect to soak it up every chance you get through preaching and small group and Bible study. Because you can't teach what you don't know.

➤ It's the very next verse. [V7](#). *You shall teach them diligently to your children [God's commands], and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*

The 4<sup>th</sup> way to disciple your kids in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, is . . .

- **By constantly talking about it (Dt 6:7)**

Constantly *talking* about God's way, God's truth, and God's life. When you sit, when you walk, when it's bedtime, and when you awake. Make *every* moment a teaching moment.

If you have some windshield time with your kids, ask them what they're learning in the Bible; what they read most recently. And if they can't come up with anything, tell what *you're* learning. I used to take our girls out to breakfast every week for just that reason. To talk about *them*, and talk about the Lord.

If something out of the ordinary happens in the course of life, a car accident or sudden illness or natural disaster, seize the opportunity to talk about it from *God's* perspective; found in the Bible. How we live in a fallen world. How he works even in suffering. How he never leaves us or forsakes us.

*Make* opportunities to talk about the Bible, *look* for opportunities to talk about the Bible, and *seize* opportunities to talk about the Bible. Constantly.

5<sup>th</sup>, disciple your kids . . .

- **By never forgetting it (Dt 6:8-9)**

Never forgetting God's Word. [V8-9](#) – *You shall bind them [the truths of God] as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.* The point being, keep the things of God ever before you so you never forget them. That's how you disciple your kids best.

Not that we're obligated to follow the *particulars* of this command, by tying phylacteries to our body, little verse boxes; but the principle. We *are* obligated to keep the principle. Which is never forget.

➤ I was sitting in high school physics one day, when I noticed my friend drawing a string around his finger. With his pen. He was meticulously drawing a circle around the base of his index finger, complete with a bow on top.

And I was like, "What are you doing?" "Reminding myself to do something after school. Instead *tying* a string around my finger and cutting off the circulation, I'm drawing it. It's safer." It was his way to never forget. If I did that now, I'd just forget what the string stands for.

The point is this: make sure "out of sight, out of mind" doesn't apply to the Word of God. Make sure you keep him and his truth ever before you. It's one of the reasons Becky and I have Bible verses on our walls; or little quotes that convey biblical truths. It's why I use a verse for the lock screen on my phone. And memorize it to hide it in my heart.

Do whatever it takes to never forget. Do whatever it takes to keep God's Word and God's way ever before you. Otherwise, you'll miss some golden *opportunities* to disciple your kids, and may even fail altogether.

6<sup>th</sup>, and back to Eph 6:4, disciple your kids . . .

- **By holding them accountable**

Part of any discipleship, any training, is accountability. When I was in college, going into my senior year, my basketball coach designated me and another senior to hold the team

accountable for our summer workouts. NCAA coaches aren't allowed to coach in the off-season, so they basically tell the captains to do it. Good plan.

Except in parenting, there *is* no off-season, and you can't very well delegate it to your kids. You're the coach, captain, athletic director, and trainer all in one. And you'll never get *your* players to step up, if you don't hold them accountable. They won't step up, grow up, or look up. You have to make them *apply* what you're teaching. You have to make them *follow* the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

If that means going to kids club or youth group, send them to youth group. If that means going to church, bring them to church. If that means having devotions, require it.

Not that you're disciplining them to be little moralists; to do what's right because that's the rule; good for *goodness*' sake. But that you're disciplining them to *love* what is right. To *want* to live God's way. Making them *do* the right things, that *lead* to godliness.

You can't *make* them love the Lord. You can't *make* them love what is good. But you sure can hold them accountable to the things that *lead* to it. And should. Disciple your kids by holding them accountable.

And then last, disciple them . . .

- **By shepherding their heart**

This is where the *first* part of v4 comes in. *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger*. Don't exasperate them with senseless decisions. Or frustrate them with unfair punishment. Or incite them with demeaning embarrassment. Or crush them with a lack of hope. Don't do that.

Shepherd them. That's the *other* side of the coin. Disciplining your kids is not just refraining from doing what's bad, but doing what's good. It's caring for them emotionally and spiritually, just as much as you do physically. It's concerning yourself with what they think, as much as what they do. It's discerning their motivation, as much as you scrutinize their action. Shepherd their *heart*.

And start in your home. Cultivate an environment of *love* in your home; full of warmth, laughter, forgiveness, and peace. So that hopefully, it seeps into their heart and fills them up. Just like the warmth of an incubator seeps into baby chicks, and fills them with life.

The opposite of provoking your children to anger, is shepherding their heart.

➤ And don't miss the fact that Paul addresses *fathers* here. Not that mothers are *exempt* from provoking kids to anger. Or have no *role* in disciplining them. Prov 1:8 says – *Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching*. Your *mother's* teaching. Indicating that she too has a role to play. And she can *certainly* provoke her kids to anger.

But Paul addresses fathers here for 3 reasons I think:

- (A) They're the *head* of the family.
- (B) They're ultimately responsible for the discipline and discipleship.
- (C) They're *not naturally nurturing*. Some are, but most aren't.

All of which is a recipe for disaster.

And means that dads have to be extra *careful* in discipline, and extra *intentional* in shepherding. Clothed in righteousness and filled with the Spirit. Constantly learning and constantly growing. Firm, yet gentle. Strong, but tender. Requiring a high standard, but quick to show mercy. Just like our *heavenly* Father.

If you're going to disciple your kids according to *God's* design, you have to shepherd their *heart*. Starting with the incubator of your home, and the love of *God* in your life.

7 ways. 7 ways, to not just raise your kids, but disciple them.

Prayer – Lord, will you bless those who are all about this? And use their example to influence others? Will you help those who struggle, but want to do better? Give them the discipline and desire to follow through. And for those kids and students in homes who could care less, will you protect them and direct them to those who *do* care? Find us faithful to live by your design.

## **You Are Loved**