

**“FATHERS, PROVOKE **NOT** YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH”**

TEXT:

***Ephesians 6:4:***

***And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.***



Today's children are angry - two world wars, a "police action" in Vietnam that snuffed out 50,000 young American lives, the unsettling in the Middle East and the growth of ISIS - scary headlines each day.

The plain, unadulterated fact is that today's children are rioting against today's conditions.

This is not a new story - - - The failure of fathers! The Old Testament history of Israel presents a classic example. Here are some striking paragraphs out of the Book of Numbers:

***Numbers 14:25: Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.***

**WHY?**

***Numbers 14:22-23:***

***<sup>22</sup> Because all those men which have seen My Glory, and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to y voice;***

***<sup>23</sup> Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it:***

**Numbers 14:29-33:**

***29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward which have murmured against Me.***

***30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.***

***31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.***



***32 But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.***

***33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.***

That is a long time to get sand in your shoes, and with every step to remember that it was dad's stubbornness and unbelief that were to blame. **I think those forty years produced some angry children don't you?** Amid the burrs and the snakes, the thirst and the constant tramping, I think those "teen-agers" who had to turn away from the well watered valleys of Canaan must have felt riot and rebellion in their souls. Their lives had been confiscated. They had been pushed into a world not of their own choosing.

Their parents had handed them a bill to pay, a debt that wasn't of their own making.

### **The FATHERS and MOTHERS**

**- For those FORTY YEARS of exile -**

**were NOT WORTHY of the RESPECT**

**of THEIR SONS and DAUGHTERS.**

How would you have liked to have been one of those teen-agers? And what about today? Well, Parents, there's plenty to make the teenager angry! There's enough in the modern home to provoke the teenager.

When millions of children hardly know who will be their next daddy or mamma from day to day, how can you keep from provoking riot in their souls? Do parents have a right to walk out, to tear up holy vows of matrimony taken before God's altar? - Then treat their vow as scraps of paper, the solemn covenants given to one another?

Can you expect teen-agers to respect rules and regulations? When a young one is told that "quitters" and three and four time losers are his parents, isn't it a sort of miracle you are asking of him to stick to anything very long? How can they exercise a sense of loyalty?

They are apt to ask the question,

- "Why are Dad and Mother out in this wilderness?"
- "Who is responsible for this mess anyway?"



### **TODAY'S HOME LIFE:**

Listen, there's no doubt about it, today's children are angry about their home life.

The child is even deprived of home cooking.

Today's baby starts out feeding on formula.

It grows up on a can-opener, and then graduates to a national cake-mix.

His finest memories of today's kitchen are memories of built-in appliances and the brooding presence of the deep-freezer.

### **BACK THEN:**

- ♥ And the kitchen used to be the place where Mother made cookies a couple of times a week;
- ♥ Where the odor of homemade bread built a memory that stayed with you as long as you lived;
- ♥ Where you could lick the icing off the missing spoon;
- ♥ And mother handled her rows of spices and seasonings like a master organist handles the stops on the console of his instrument.

To pull a line from yesterday's hit song, *Memories Are Made of Things Like These*.

## TODAY

- ✓ Today's children hardly know their parents.
- ✓ A doctor and nurse bring them into the world.
- ✓ A baby-sitter tutors them and tucks them in bed,
- ✓ And some youth organization teaches them the facts of life.

NO WONDER YOUTH IS IN REVOLT! How much further can they be provoked?

## NOBODY WANTS TO BOTHER WITH THE YOUTH.

- School teachers are deserting them.
- Ten thousand teachers a year forsake the profession in the state of California, alone.
- There's more money to be made working in a factory than sitting behind a desk.
- There's no place to play, either.
- Property is too valuable for sub-divisions, freeways and skyscrapers.

Why use such valuable land for playgrounds? Supervised recreation is a gimmick we can't afford. We've got to cut down somewhere, so we'll take it away from the children. They can't talk back.

## BUT THE YOUNG ARE TALKING BACK.

Their revolt,

Their organized resistance,

Their flaming anger is a language we ought to listen to.

They are trying to shock us into sanity and sobriety.

Will we wait until it is too late?

**KING DAVID waited until it was too late – in Old Testament times.**



***2 Samuel 18:33: And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"***

All those crocodile tears David shed could not bring a dead boy back to life. Regrets are poor companions. David's own sin killed that boy. Dad grew lazy and lusty in middle age. He became too busy with his love affairs to take care of his business properly.

He sat in the parlor, when he should have sat in the gate of the city and dispensed justice and wisdom. His boys grew up and hardly knew their dad. They became a pack of hoodlums, raping and killing, carrying knives and running in gangs. They never knew what home life was.

David was a big success in the eyes of the people, but he was a washout at home. He thought about Absalom a little too late in life.

I will say, again, our older generation is provoking the younger generation.

### **YOUTH IS RIOTING AGAINST THE LACK OF AUTHORITY IN THE HOME!**



- There's no one to tell the boy or the girl to pick up his or her clothes and hang them up.
- No one tells them to do the chores around the house.
- No one to see that there are more A's on the next report

## AUTHORITY

card or certain privileges will be curtailed.

- What about that curfew, no one to tell them to be in at 11:00 p.m.
- No one to tell them that Sunday school and Church are compulsory!

A wishy-washy, spineless apathy has replaced the time-honored position of Head of Household. And are today's children happy about it? NO, they are not. They cast envious eyes toward the hard discipline of totalitarian ideologies. They lose respect for courts and law enforcement agencies that handle them with kid gloves.

**We just think we've outgrown the need for spanking.**

### Old Fashioned Woodshed Tactics:

I've always thought that one of the sweetest descriptions of old-fashioned woodshed tactics, which produced so much character for so many American generations, is found in one of the most unlikely portions of the Bible - the letter to the Hebrews:

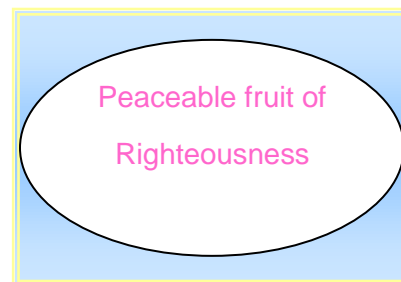
### HERE IT IS!

#### *Hebrews 12:11-13a*

***<sup>11</sup> Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.***

***<sup>12</sup> Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;***

***<sup>13a</sup> And make straight paths for your feet . . .***



There's nothing like old-fashioned spanking administered by parental discipline to "**make straight paths for the feet.**" Young people aren't happy under this present-day system of "pass the buck" attitude among parents. They are tired of being messed with in school, in the home and in the church.

## IN THE CHURCH

Even in the church, it is the same. Today's children are segregated. The idea of a family pew is a thing of the past. Dad no longer has his family sit with him in church.

From infancy, the child is segregated in the house of God. He is inbred with the idea that the younger child is a nuisance to older people in their worship. So he makes the rounds of fringe auditoriums until he is old enough to get away from it all.



The old idea that Dad and Mother were responsible toward their children, to sit with them in church and to see that they heard the Gospel, and felt the Gospel, that they should be first to lead their children to the altar and kneel beside them and pray with them, is an outmoded idea.

The outmoded idea – that Mother and Dad must be free from such encumbrances in church.

Youngsters must be turned over to specialists from nurseries to church gymnasiums. Fathers, you are provoking your children to wrath! Why have parents? You don't see them anyway! Mother is never there to help you with your homework and lessons after school. She is too busy with her favorite television program or her club activities, so daughter is sent over to her girlfriend's, and instead they meet the gang down at the corner drugstore. And we ask, "Why delinquency?"

May God help me to impress you with this text! This storm and riot among today's youth is protest and violence against our present social structure. Something is wrong! That is what all this trouble is saying.

## JACOB'S FAMILY

Nowhere in all the Bible is this truth as obvious as in Jacob's family. Say what you will, there is a difference between the ten brothers and the other two boys, Joseph and Benjamin.

Ten were born before the influence of that all night prayer meeting and wrestling bout with God which turned Dad from a schemer and unscrupulous merchant into a prince and patriarch; the other two bore the marks of that experience of sanctification and holiness.

Parent, I want to ask you a straight question, "Were you at the altar of God today?" You say, "Preacher, Why?" - Because your children are going to reflect your character. The sins left unconquered in your life will rise in the lives of your children to haunt you.

I know where Reuben and Gad and Naphtali got their streak of lying. They got it from their daddy - - Jacob. Jacob needed that night with God. Might you be a dad who needs a night alone with God?

### **WHAT ABOUT THIS GENERATION?**

*One more thought:* Will fathers and mothers provoke their children to such evil and riot and insubordination that the wrath of God will fall upon this generation?

Evil can become so malignant. Youth can become so unrestrained. Riot and delinquency can reach such excess that the tragedy of Eli and his sons can be repeated. Eli provoked it. The boys reaped God's wrath. Here is that recorded in:

**1 Samuel 2: 12, 17a, 30-31, 36:**

**<sup>12</sup> Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial [the devil]; they knew not the Lord.**

**<sup>17a</sup> Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord:**

**<sup>30</sup> Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, ". . . for them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.**

**<sup>31</sup> Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, . . .**

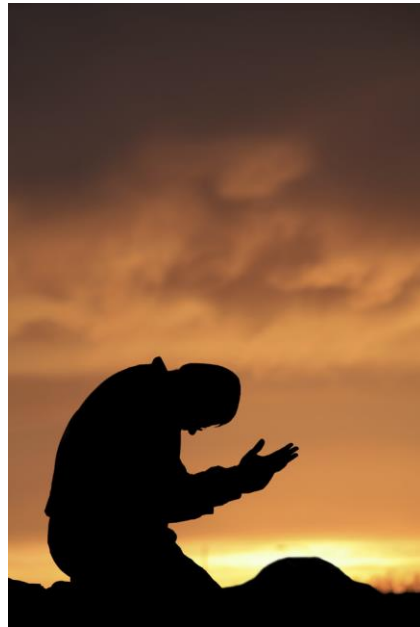
**<sup>36</sup> And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread,"**

That is what happened to one noble house in history - - the story where men who were princes became beggars and it started with the wrong kind of living in the home. God help us today!



## Parents,

- ♥ Don't you think it is time for you to come to the altar?
- ♥ Isn't it time for you to seek God's help?
- ♥ Isn't it time for you to ask, "What have I done to my Children?"



Ask yourself, "Would I want to live in the kind of home and atmosphere that I am providing for my children?"

It is time for parents to do some thinking and some praying, and there is no better time than the present.

Face your own soul and your God now! Ask for the pardon for your sins and help for the future. The Lord Who knew an earthly **mother's** love will not turn you away.

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