

LIVING THE NEW LIFE: *IN PARENTING*

Colossians 3:20-21

One of the challenging tasks of adult life is raising the next generation. This is further complicated by a society around us that rejects Christ and biblical standards for marriage and child-rearing. In this respect, our experience is very similar to that of the people to whom Paul wrote.

The foundation of raising godly children is the marriage. Even the presence of one godly person in the relationship can help. When both parents are walking with the Lord, it greatly helps, but there are still others in the family ... those children!

All of us have to recognize that our sweet and adorable children were born with the old nature, not the new nature. Look at some examples from these scriptures:

Genesis 4:1-8

1 Samuel 2:12

1 Samuel 8:1-3

We could go on and on with examples of children who did not follow their father's walk with God. *What instruction does Paul give fathers about raising their children (3:21)?*

Why do you think he would tell fathers this?

The word Paul uses, *do not aggravate*, is used only one other time in the New Testament. *What insight do you gain from its use in 2 Corinthians 9:2, "... it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving"?*

In the parallel passage in *Ephesians 6:4*, fathers are told to "*not provoke*" their children to anger by the way that they treat them. *How does this add to your understanding of what fathers were not to do?*

The legal status of children under Roman law was still more disadvantaged. Technically speaking, they were the property of the father; so, for example, the formalities for adoption were essentially the same as for the conveyance of property The child under age in fact was no better off than a slave (a point Paul had been able to put to good effect in Gal. 4:1–7).¹

What further instruction does he give fathers in Ephesians 6:4?

How would you advise a father to carry out this responsibility?

Why should children always obey their parents (3:20; Ephesians 6:1-3; Exodus 20:12)?

Are there times when a child should disobey their parents? When, if any?

Can you back your stance up with Scripture?

In *Colossians 3:20* and in *Ephesians 6:1-3*, Paul addresses the behavior that is expected of children. This word has reference to the relationship of a younger person with their parents. They are the progeny of their parents. It does not necessarily refer to the age of the child. Certainly small children were included, but it also referred to one's ancestry (*Matthew 3:9*). Paul recognizes that there is a time coming when one's relationship with parents will change (*Galatians 4:1-2*).

What rules did your parents impose on you that you hated, but now see the wisdom of their rules?

¹ James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 249.