

Provoking Parents "Provoking our Children to Embrace Righteousness"

Introduction:

1. The word "provoke" means "to call into action, to move, to stir up."
2. As parents, we are provoking our children, either positively or negatively.
 - **Ephesians 6:4** - are we provoking our children to be angry and rebellious children?
 - **Hebrews 10:24** - or are we provoking our children to love and good works?
3. Do you desire your child to grow up and love God, respect the things of God, live a godly life that honors the Lord? I can assure you, it will not happen by accident.
 - Many parents are hoping that their kid will turn out alright. They are just trying to get their kid thru childhood and teen years and keep them out of any serious trouble.
 - How sad! **Illustration:** Super Bowl - the coach says, "Our goal for this game is to simply keep any of our players from getting injured."
4. As a parent, you must have an intentional, Biblical strategy for raising up a child that loves the Lord and that lives a godly life. **Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4**
5. God wants the Christian parent to be proactive, not reactive. If you wait until your child gets into trouble to begin implementing Biblical principles, it may be too late.
6. We live in a world today in which Satan is trying so hard to completely blur any line between right and wrong. They teach children today situational ethics that is rooted in a humanistic world view. They teach that there are no moral absolutes, but rather they teach amorality (there is no right and wrong).
7. Yet, notice what that Bible says in **Psalm 11:7**. God is righteous, loves righteousness, and takes notice of a righteous person.
8. How do we define right and wrong? God's Word is the definition of righteousness (**Psalm 119:172**). There **are**, in fact, moral absolutes because God's Word defines right and wrong.
9. Parents, it is vital that we instill in our children the principle of righteousness, and teach them to embrace righteousness, as defined by God's Word. Why is this so crucial?
 - Because doing right brings peace. **Psalm 37:37**
 - Because doing right brings God's strength. **Psalm 37:39**
 - Because doing right brings joy. **Psalm 32:11**
 - Because doing right brings life. **Proverbs 11:19, 12:28, 21:21**
 - Because doing right brings reward. **Proverbs 11:18**
10. Is there any parent who doesn't desire these things for his or her children? Then we must teach our children to obey God and always do right as defined by His Word. When we instill this habit of doing right in them, other areas of training and spiritual development will follow more easily. For example:
 - **Ephesians 6:1** says, "*for this is right.*" When children have learned to accept the concept of righteousness, it only makes sense to obey their parents. Why? It's right!

- They have no problem reading their Bible each day. Why? It's right, therefore we do it. Stay morally and sexually pure, respect authority, go to church, listen to the right kind of music, etc.

How do parents instill the concept of righteousness in their children?

First, teach righteousness as a precept.

1. In other words, teach it directly - over and over again. Tell children, "We always do what's right." Do they always do right? No, but at a young age they begin to be predisposed to that conviction.
2. Make it a topic of family discussion. Pick a verse and read and discuss it.
Psalm 11:7; Romans 6:12-13; 1 Corinthians 15:34
3. Children, by their very nature, tend to do what they do because they want to or do not want to. They tend to be motivated by what is fun or not fun. Though this is as natural as the old nature that they were born with, we need to instill in them a higher way of living.
 - Rather than doing what they want to do, we must teach children to do what they ought to do - to do what is right.
4. Virtually every child has said, "Oh mom, I don't want to." We need to teach our children that this is not the issue. If it is right, then that settles it. "But dad, this isn't fun." That is not the issue. If it is right, then we do it.
5. So much of our modern culture is based upon the fun motive. Fun is not wrong, but a philosophy of life based upon having fun is not only shallow, but also very dangerous.
6. If parents reinforce the fun principle in adolescence, it can lead to tragic results.
7. We must root the principle of righteousness into the lives of our children long before they reach the crucial teenage years. Righteousness is said to be a "*buckler*" and "*shield*." It will keep them out of so much trouble.

Second, apply the principle of righteousness.

1. Talk without action means very little. If you teach your children that we always do right, but then don't insist upon it in their daily lives, your teaching will mean little.
2. You have to back up your words with action. When they want to disobey, you must insist upon obedience. Why? Because it is right. **Colossians 3:20**
3. They want to listen to the wrong kind of music, watch the wrong kind of movies, display the wrong attitudes, play instead of do their homework, you simply say, "No way." Why? It is not right.
4. There must be daily application of the principle of righteousness in our children's lives. Any child can understand the basic Bible precept of righteousness (right and wrong).

Third, teach righteousness by example.

1. You have heard it said, "More is caught than taught." What we do speaks louder than what we say. Our walk talks louder than our talk. **2 Timothy 1:5**
2. Inconsistency on the part of the parent will do more to breed rebellion than virtually any other thing. Children can spot hypocrisy a mile away.

3. But a consistent example will do more to reinforce what we say than anything else.
4. But if your life is not consistent with what you teach, you are sowing the seeds of rebellion and they will grow.

Fourth, teach righteousness early and long.

1. When they are able to understand speech, begin to instill the principle of righteousness. Continue this through the teen years until they leave the nest. **2 Timothy 3:15**
2. This will provide a foundation that will serve your child well his or her entire life. **Matthew 7:24-27**