

Provoking Parents
"Provoking our Children to Love the Truth"
Proverbs 2:1-6

Introduction:

1. The word "provoke" can carry a positive or a negative connotation.
 - 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** - we are provoking our children to be angry and rebellious children.
 - **Hebrews 10:24** - or we are provoking our children to love and good works.
3. Do you desire that your children grow up to love God, respect the things of God, live godly lives that honor the Lord? I can assure you, it will not happen by accident.
4. As parents, you must have an intentional, Biblical strategy for raising up children that love the Lord and that live godly lives. **Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4**
5. God wants Christian parents to be proactive, not reactive. If you wait until your children get into trouble to begin implementing Biblical principles, it may be too late.
6. We live in a world that specializes in telling lies to our children. Children are inundated with false and destructive ideas constantly. There is only one way to overcome this.
7. Parents must provoke their children to love the truth of God's Word. We must develop in our children a hunger and desire for truth.

What happens when parents provoke their children to love the Bible?

1. As parents intentionally strive to get God's Word in their children, notice in our text that there is a three-fold progression that takes place: **Proverbs 2**
 - Their children have a teachable spirit to receive truth. vs. 1-2
 - It is the idea of parents spoon-feeding children and saying, "Here you go, you need this, now listen." This must begin young.
Illustration: You make them eat their veggies as you spoon-feed them.
 - Next, their children develop a desire for truth. vs. 3
 - It is the idea of a child saying, "I want more; can I have more?"
Illustration: They develop an appetite for their veggies.
 - Next, their children seek truth for themselves. vs. 4
 - It is the idea, "Let me dig for this truth and get it for myself."
Illustration: They become teens or adults and get their veggies for themselves.
2. Parents, do you know what happens when you instill in your children a love for God's truth? Look at verse 5. Notice the conditional word "then." In other words, if the conditions of verses 1-4 are met, here is what happens:
 - First, your children will understand what it is to have a healthy respect and reverence for the Lord. Without the truth of God, children will not appreciate the Lord and all that He has done on our behalf through Christ.
 - Second, your children will acquire the knowledge of God. Without the knowledge of God's Word, they have no knowledge of God.

3. Parents, your children have souls and spirits inside their bodies that desperately need the knowledge of God. So many children today are growing up in spiritual ignorance. (**Proverbs 19:2**) - We feed their bodies, but what about their souls and spirits?

Why is it so crucial that parents provoke their children to love the Bible?

1. Parents - without God's Word your children have absolutely no way to gain godly wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. vs. 6
2. What is the result? This text lays it out clearly. Without God's Word, your children:
 - Will pick the wrong friends. - vs. 11-13, 20
 - Will take sin lightly. - vs. 14
 - Will live a life of dishonesty. - vs. 15
 - Will continually make bad decisions. - vs. 16-19
3. So many times, kids get involved with the wrong kind of people and become involved in destructive things, and parents ask themselves, "Why did they do that?"
4. It is because the children lack wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. If they are ignorant of God's truth, how can they make good decisions? They cannot and will not.
5. But notice what happens when God's Word gets inside your children - vs. 9-11
Psalm 119:1-3 - This is God's preventive principle. It is the key to preventing adolescent rebellion. **Psalm 119:9, 11** - Get them in the Word - the younger the better!
6. We can teach our children how to play ball, ride a bike, play a video game, get an education, cook, clean their rooms, etc. but if we do not store up spiritual truth in them, what have we accomplished? Are we preparing them for life?

How do parents provoke their children to love the Bible?

1. Some of you may be thinking, "Yes, I agree, my children need to know God's truth, but that is why I take them to church."
2. Unfortunately, your children are out there in a Satan-controlled world for hours upon hours each week, and you certainly don't think that an hour or two at church will overcome that.
3. Parents, do you want your children to turn out godly, and love the Lord? The surest way to insure this is to see that your children are in God's Word every day. You must develop in them the habit of going to God's Word each and every day. Send them on a treasure hunt each day. vs. 4-6
4. Habits are developed through repetitive actions. A parent may say, "Make them read God's Word? I think we should read the Bible because we want to, not because we have to." Do you make them brush their teeth, do their homework, take a bath, put on underwear, eat their food, etc?
 - Then why wouldn't we see to it that our children adopt a spiritual habit that will have a positive impact for the rest of their lives?
5. Let me provide a few practical tips:
 - Start early. (If they can't read, you read it to them.)
 - Plan their reading.
 - Younger kids - one verse in the morning and one at night.
 - Increase the goal appropriately with age.
 - Provide positive incentive.

- A chart with stars on the refrigerator
- Special treat at the end of the week
- Enforce the policy.
 - Keep them accountable - "Did you do your Bible reading last night?"
 - As long as children live under your roof, the basic policy of the household is, "We are going to the Word of God every day."
- Be an example.
 - If you are not in God's Word daily, you need to begin right away.

In Conclusion:

1. God in His grace and love has communicated with sinful man. He has given us wisdom by giving us His Word. He has not left us in darkness.
2. He sent His Son to this earth to make it possible for us, as sinners, to be reconciled to Him.
3. As wonderful as all this is, if your children are ignorant of God's truth, it does them no good.
4. The greatest gift you could ever give your children is not the latest video game system, a new car at 16, braces for their teeth, or a college education. The greatest gift is for you to develop in them the habit of seeking God's Word each day!