

Provoking Parents "Teaching our Children to Live Lives of Surrender" – Part 1

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 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.
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. According to **Romans 6:12-13**, there are two ways we can live our life:
 - We can obey the lusts of our flesh and do wrong.
 - We can surrender our bodies to God and do what is right.
7. In **Romans 6:11** the word "*reckon*" means "to make up your mind." So each day we make up our minds as to whether or not we will live in self-will or obey God and do His will.
8. The key to that decision is the surrender of **our** will to God. As I surrender and yield to Him, I do what is **right** rather than what I **feel** like doing. Many people have developed a habit of following the desires of their bodies. If it feels good, do it.
9. The concept of surrendering our wills to God should begin early in childhood and must be instilled by the parents.
10. The word "*temperance*" in the Bible carries this idea of giving up our wants and carnal desires and yielding ourselves to do what God would have us to do. **1 Corinthians 9:25; Galatians 5:23** - We say, "He lost his temper." He lost his temperance - control.
11. Shallow Christians do what they **want** to do; spiritual Christians have temperance and they do what God would have them do (doesn't matter how hard or uncomfortable, what everyone else is doing, what I gain or lose).
12. Parents, it is our job to instill temperance in our children and teach them to live a life of surrender to God's indwelling Holy Spirit. This is what leads to godly character.

What are the obstacles that parents face in instilling temperance in their children?

First, the law of sin that dwells in your child's flesh.

1. In the Bible, the flesh is identified as being that part of you that is unregenerate and at enmity with God. In your flesh (and your child's) is said to dwell the law of sin. **Romans 7:23**

- To live after the flesh is to live a life apart from Christ's desires and Christ's power. To live after the flesh is to live a life that pleases **me**, not Christ.
 - To live after the flesh brings self-gratification, but leads to destruction.
Romans 8:6, 13
 - Several times the word "*lusts*" are associated with the word "*flesh*."
Galatians 5:16-17
2. So, the flesh operates on the basis of what it wants, what it likes, what it desires. It is self-oriented. The flesh seeks the path of least resistance and greatest enjoyment. Every one of us is born with this law of sin in our flesh (yes, your children too).
 - **Illustration:** Children are very naturally lazy. It is the path of least resistance. It is more self-gratifying to lay around in bed or play video games than to make your bed and mow the grass.
 - **Illustration:** Schoolwork - there is no immediate gratification, so the flesh bucks it.
 - **Illustration:** The flesh loves to drag out toys, but isn't too thrilled about picking up the mess afterwards, is it?
 3. What is the only thing that the flesh is fit for? **Galatians 5:24** - Death! Living after the flesh is death. Walking after the Spirit is life. **Galatians 5:25**
 4. But this concept must be instilled in children. We don't walk after the flesh and do what **we** want to do (it's death). We walk in the Spirit and do what **God** would have us to do.
 5. Parents - how do we feed the flesh of our children? Never tell them "No," never make them do anything they don't want to, do everything for them, etc.

Second, bad habits in the parents.

1. The reality is this - the reason why many kids live lives of self-indulgence with no temperance or discipline in their life is that they see it modeled in their parents.
2. The character of parents tends to be passed on to their children. **Illustration:** kings of Israel - it was rare that the son of an ungodly king would do right.
3. This is not genetic or biological. It is acquired habits and patterns of life that each generation tends to pick up from the previous one. **Ezekiel 2:3**
4. Here is the good news. We as parents can break the generational chain and lift our own level of spiritual surrender and spiritual temperance. Habits are not easy to change, but they **can** be changed through surrender to God's Holy Spirit.

Third, living life by the "fun" principle

1. This is when people live for the sake of fun and make decisions based upon what is fun and enjoyable for their flesh.
2. There is nothing wrong with fun, but God did not create us primarily to have fun. He created us to worship, serve, and glorify Him. This means two things:
 - It means work. **Ephesians 4:28**
 - It means seeking to please God rather than ourselves. **John 4:34;**
2 Corinthians 5:15
3. The flesh lives for entertainment and fun. I am not against fun, but we have created a culture and a generation that has essentially made "fun" their goal in life.

4. Children grow up playing with their small toys as toddlers, and as they grow up into adulthood the toys get bigger and more expensive. People earn a living so they can buy expensive toys and play with them on weekends.
5. In this way of life, whatever appeals to the flesh dictates their lifestyle and choices.
6. When parents allow and encourage their children to live lives by the fun principle, it greatly hinders the instilling of spiritual surrender and temperance into their children's lives.

In Conclusion:

1. What does it do for children when they have parents that instill temperance into their lives? How does it directly impact the children?
2. How does the Christian parent instill in their children the principle of denying their fleshly desires and living a life of surrender to Christ?
3. Come back tonight and we will answer all of these questions.