

“Dad’s Duties” (Ephesians 6:4)

Dean Karnazes¹ is an astounding man. He’s a Greek-American ultra-marathon runner. Among his many accomplishments, he’s run a 135-mile ultra-marathon across Death Valley in 120-degree temperatures, and a marathon to the South Pole in negative 40 degrees. He is also the world record holder for the longest continuous run in history—350 miles in 81 hours with no sleep! Even more impressive, he ran 50 marathons in 50 states in 50 consecutive days. His 50th and final marathon was the New York City Marathon which he finished in three hours and 30 seconds. To cap off this incredible achievement, he then ran back from New York City to the place where the first of the 50 marathons began, St. Louis, Missouri, covering nearly 1,300 miles along the way.

Dean’s a guy who is not afraid of a challenge. The man is a freak of nature! I have no idea how he can do what he does. As I read about this man’s accomplishments I couldn’t help but think, I want to take his physical stamina and convert it into spiritual stamina. I want to be to fathering what Dean Karnazes is to running. I want to be the best! Now if I wanted to be an ultra-marathoner, I would read everything that Dean Karnazes has ever written. He would be my authority. In the same way, if I want to be the best father I possibly can, I will study everything my heavenly Father has ever written. To put it plainly, I must consult the “manufacturer” when it comes to seeking advice on the “product.” God is the creator of children and has filled the Bible with examples and principles on how to shape and guide them to spiritual maturity.² A good example can be found in Eph 6:4 where Paul says *it is easier to bend a child than mend an adult*. In just a few simple words Paul gives three duties that a father is called to fulfill for his children.

1. Dads must encourage their children.³ Paul states this command in the negative when he writes, **“Fathers, do not provoke your⁴ children to anger.”** The first word of this verse requires some explanation. The Greek plural noun behind the translation “fathers” (*pateres*) can refer to both parents.⁵ Furthermore, in 6:1 Paul commands children to obey their parents and in 6:2 he commands children to honor both father and mother. So this verse is applicable to mothers as well. However, in 6:4 Paul changes words to denote that he is specifically speaking to fathers.⁶ I would suggest that this statement has particular relevance to fathers for at least three reasons. First, God is identified as our “heavenly Father” in Scripture.⁷ It is natural, then, for children to translate their view of their earthly father to their heavenly Father.⁸ Second, in Greco-Roman and Jewish writings, fathers were responsible for the training of their children. Finally, Paul addresses fathers because they are God’s ordained spiritual leaders on whom the primary responsibility for child training rests.

Interestingly, the command “do not provoke your children to anger” would have been absolutely revolutionary in Paul’s day. In the first-century Roman Empire, the father had absolute control over his entire family. Moreover, the father’s control was for life. He could imprison, scourge, shame, and punish his son. He could even sell him into slavery up to three times, or have him killed. The son’s position in the community was of no consequence. Even though he may be a magistrate, he was still under his father’s authority. In fact, the father had more authority over his children than a master had over his slaves.⁹ Now not every father in the Roman Empire exercised his authority inappropriately, but these practices were legal in that day.¹⁰ The point is: Christianity introduced consideration for the feelings of children into parental responsibility. This was a significant breakthrough, which again reminds us that the Bible is a radical, God-inspired book.

Essentially, the command “do not provoke¹¹ your children to anger” forbids making unreasonable demands on children in the everyday course of family life. As dads, there are many ways that we anger or exasperate our children. We need to be aware of the mistakes we make and seek to prevent any further damage in our relationship with our children. The following section exposes some of the mistakes we commit and what we can do about them.

- **Mistake #1: Hypocrisy.** If there is one thing that children despise it is hypocrisy. Dads who are one person at church or work and another at home have no credibility. Our children can sniff out hypocrisy better than anyone. So do not live a life of duplicity. Your children will call you out every time! Positively, children can soak up a lot from their parents: opinions, interests, accents, tastes in food, and character. They can soak up knowledge of Jesus, too, if it's made available. Even though we may not be perfect dads, if our children know that we are sincere, authentic, and faithful, we will have their respect and admiration.
- **Mistake #2: Pride.** Many fathers fail to admit when they are wrong. Lori's grandpa likes to talk about the time he was wrong back in 1966—when he thought he was wrong about something. When dads falsely accuse their kids and are unfair in discipline, show favoritism, fail to keep promises, make light of problems, and tease children, there needs to be an apology. Dads should be the first to apologize. Rick Warren has said, "If you don't make at least three mistakes a week, you must not be trying hard enough." Often, if you don't have anything to apologize for, you must not be trying hard enough as a dad. In order to foster a home of humility and unity, dads must display humility and confess their sins. When this occurs, the wife and children will be more prone to be humble and confess their sins as well. This cultivates humility and unity.
- **Mistake #3: Favoritism.** Some dads find it easier to get along with one child more than another. Typically, this son or daughter is similar in personality or interests. As a result, dads can prefer one child over the others. Kids pick up on this immediately and it breeds severe resentment and bitterness. Therefore, as dads we must be careful to treat all of our children equally. Time, activities, and words of praise should be equally spread out among our children.
- **Mistake #4: Failure to communicate.** Many dads are bumps on a log. By the time they get home from work, they are wasted and don't have anything left in the tank for their children. Yet, younger children in particular love to talk. If we fail to listen and engage, we will frustrate them. Furthermore, a day is coming when your children won't want to talk to you like they do now. Instead, they will want to talk to their friends or spend some time alone. However, if you learn to listen and communicate with your children now, you will have a strong relationship when they are adults.
- **Mistake #5: Failure to encourage.** Parents can expect more from their children than they can ever deliver. For these perfectionistic parents, the child's performance is never good enough. I've never once met a person who said, "When I was young my parents encouraged me too much." I don't think it is humanly possible to encourage children and teens too much. Yet, I know a lot of young people and adults that have told me that their parents did not verbally affirm them or express their love. My goal is always ten affirming words to every one constructive criticism or rebuke. The bottom line is this: Kids need to know that they are somebody at home. Many young people are going after significance outside the home because they're not finding significance inside the home. They are rejected, provoked, exasperated. As dads, we need to find ways to encourage our kids.¹² They need to know that we love them solely because of who they are.
- **Mistake #6: Failure to take time.** Children spell love T-I-M-E. Parents who emphasize "quality time" over "quantity time" are misguided. Children need both quality and quantity time.¹³ Sadly, due to busyness and laziness, we can fail to sacrifice for our children, making them feel like an intrusion. We must understand, however, that regardless of what we accomplish in this life, if we fail with our children, we have failed. Lori and I look forward to the day when we will have more freedom to do more things together. I'll bet when that day comes, we'll remember these days and wish we had them back. In other words, raising children is a serious responsibility and privilege; we should treat it that way and give our best to this high calling. The world says we ought to pursue degrees, titles, salaries, and accomplishments. But if you look intently into the eyes of your child, the things that are truly important will become clear. The title you hold will fade, and your accomplishments will someday be forgotten; it is the investment you make into the spiritual life of your children that will outlive you and carry on into eternity.¹⁴

As dads, we have all been guilty of these mistakes. After this sermon, we will continue to make mistakes. This is why we need to rely upon the Holy Spirit. In the general context of Eph 6:4 is 5:18b where Paul commands Christians to “be filled with the Spirit.” Christian parents need the fullness of the Spirit so they can be sensitive to the needs and problems of their children. Dads, we must recognize that *it is easier to bend a child than mend an adult*.

[Dads must encourage their children. Paul now shares a second duty.]

2. Dads must discipline their children. In this second duty, Paul will discuss what is to be done to the child: “**but bring them [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**” The word translated “bring them up” (*ektrepho*)¹⁵ is the same word that is translated “nourishes” in Eph 5:29. In this context, Paul commands Christian husbands to love and nourish their wives like they do their own bodies. In 6:4, Paul uses this same term in the context of child-rearing to remind dads that it is not enough to nurture the children physically by providing food, shelter, and clothing. A dad must also nurture them emotionally, mentally, socially, and spiritually (cf. Luke 2:52). It is also important to note that the verb rendered “bring them up” is a present tense imperative in the middle voice. You may be thinking to yourself: “I didn’t come here for a lesson in Greek grammar.” I can appreciate this response; nevertheless, these facts are critical to understanding this passage. First, Paul is saying that fathering is an ongoing process. “Bring them up” is in the present tense, meaning it is a continual process which occurs over many years. As long as our children are under our roof, we are to be directly involved in raising them up from one level of growth to the next. Second, fathering is a nonnegotiable. “Bring them up” is in the imperative mood, meaning it is a command. This verse does not give us advice or suggestions, but an admonishment that is binding. Here is God’s authoritative command addressed to every father, a nonnegotiable requiring our obedience. Third, fathering is every dad’s responsibility. “Bring them up” is in the middle voice, meaning this is our personal responsibility. No one else can bring them up for us. It cannot be delegated to a school, day-care center, church, or grandparents. It cannot even be solely turned over to Mom to do. Raising children is every dad’s business. The buck stops with us.¹⁶

Of course, it takes courage and commitment to bring up our children in the Lord. This is especially the case when it comes to discipline. It’s easier to wimp out, be passive, and push the discipline of the children off onto Mom or someone else. There was a little boy whose father was away on a business trip. He said to his mother at dinner, “I want to be in charge tonight, Mom.” She said, “Okay, you can sit at the head of the table in your father’s chair.” The boy’s sister thought her brother was too young to be in charge, so, as sisters will do, she decided to challenge him. She said, “Okay, if you’re in charge and you’re the man of the house, how much is two plus two?” The little boy looked at her and said, “Ask your mother.” He had passive parenting all figured out.¹⁷

Biblically speaking, dads are responsible for discipline in the home. This doesn’t mean that moms don’t discipline the children. They do! Moms can’t always say, “You just wait until your father gets home!” However, dads oversee and ensure discipline in the home. But we must do so with grace and love. In other words, don’t require the death penalty for every offense. Don’t shoot a mosquito with a cannon. Don’t crack a nut with a sledgehammer. Be balanced in how you mete out discipline. Don’t be extreme in leniency or severity.

So what kind of discipline is appropriate?¹⁸

- **Verbal reproof.** This would be either a gentle rebuke, stinging reprimand, or stern warning, depending upon the wrong committed. This form of discipline should be used with minor infractions and first-time offenses. This is exactly how God disciplines us. When we read His Word, it stings, rebukes, reproofs, and corrects us (2 Tim 3:16).¹⁹ It is very important to watch your words. One slip of the tongue could affect your child for the rest of his or her life.

- ***Withholding privileges.*** It is essential that our children understand that everything in their lives is a privilege. This means they do not deserve dessert, TV, video games, or the car keys. When we take away these privileges, they may be broken over their sin because of the loss of meaningful activities or pleasures. Moreover, they may also grow to appreciate these privileges more. God does this with us in our Christian life. Our disobedience can lead to a forfeiture of God's blessing and may even disqualify us from participating in various aspects of ministry. Even worse, we lose eternal rewards as well.
- ***Natural consequences.*** When we tell our children to take their lunch and homework to school every day and they forget, they may need to suffer the consequences. Too often as parents, we bail our children out. Yet, this does not teach them responsibility. It is better to allow your child to learn his or her lesson so that they may not repeat the behavior. God also follows the principle that whatever a Christian sows that will he reap (Gal 6:7).
- ***Isolation.*** This refers to sending your child to his or her room or banishing the child from fun activities. We are social beings who enjoy contact with other people. To be deprived of fun interaction with others is usually painful. When a believer rebels and refuses to repent, God uses church discipline as a form of isolation that is intended to bring the person to repentance (Matt 18:15-17).
- ***Additional work.*** This means additional chores in the home or yard. Frequently, when one of our children disobeys or rebels we send that child to do bathroom duty, fold laundry, or work outside in the yard. This allows the child to think about his or her behavior and also cool down. It can also serve to increase the child's work ethic. God Himself disciplined Israel when they failed to obey Him, resulting in the additional work of wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.
- ***Spanking.***²⁰ Spanking is reserved for major offenses committed, such as deliberate disobedience or a defiant attitude. Regardless of what many psychologists say, spanking is essential. Before we can discipline our children, first, we must discipline ourselves. If we are out of control in anger or rage, we have no right to discipline our child for his or her lack of control. Also, our discipline must be fair and consistent. Additionally, when we conclude our discipline, it is imperative to say, "I love you and I am convinced of better things concerning you—good works that will accompany this discipline" (Heb 6:9). *It is easier to bend a child than mend an adult.*

[Dads must discipline their children...The third duty that Paul provides is...]

3. Dads must instruct their children.²¹ In this third duty, Paul will discuss what is to be said to the child. Again, Paul writes, "**but bring them [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**" "Instruction" denotes correction by word of mouth, including advice and encouragement (cf. 1 Cor 10:11; Titus 3:10). Paul writes that dads are to bring up their children in the instruction of the Lord. This means every dad must take responsibility for the instruction of his children. When the Supreme Court handed down its ruling against required prayer in the public schools, the famous editorial cartoonist Herblock published a cartoon in the *Washington Post* showing an angry father waving a newspaper at his family and shouting, "What do they expect us to do—listen to the kids pray at home?" The answer is: Yes! Home is the place where the children ought to learn about the Lord and the Christian life. It is time that Christian parents stop "passing the buck" to Sunday School teachers and Christian day-school teachers, and start nurturing their children.²² *It is easier to bend a child than mend an adult.*

Children need to be instructed in many important areas, however, for our limited purposes, I will just share a few.

- **Teach your children how to read and study God's Word.** We can get upset because our country has taken the Ten Commandments off the walls at school. But what I want to know is: are the commandments hanging on the walls of our homes? Are we teaching God's truth to our children? God never commanded the school to teach your children God's Word. If the school does, that's a bonus. But we need to ask, are we doing our job at home?²³ When dads spend time with their kids, the Word should be formally and informally delivered (Deut 6:6). Dads should care more about their kids' loyalty to Christ than anything else (e.g., health, intellect, material prosperity, social position, protecting them from trials and misfortunes). Dads should then teach each of their children how Christianity works in life. As the child matures, ask your son or daughter how he or she is doing spiritually. Dads, you are responsible to help your children grow spiritually. Will you make a commitment to help your children develop an appreciation for God's Word?
- **Teach your children how to pray.** Young adults often dismiss prayer because they never see their dad's pray. It is seen as trivial and unimportant because it is not a priority in the home. But if children see dad pray and dad prays with them, prayer can be esteemed in the home. It is also very important to pray with and for your children.²⁴ Our prayers don't have to be fancy; they just have to be sincere. Will you make a commitment to pray with your children every night before they go to bed? Not only are your prayers effective (Jas 5:16b), they will show your children that you care about them. Furthermore, when a dad prays for his children he creates a bond that becomes stronger with each day.
- **Teach your children how to share Jesus.** It is critical that children learn how to present the good news of Jesus Christ. If there is one thing in this life that your children ought to know it is the gospel. Ensure that your child has a clear understanding of how a person enters into a relationship with Christ. When your children share Jesus with others, encourage them. Let your child know that God is pleased. My children have often approached a neighbor or a stranger and asked, "Do you believe in Jesus?" Now that can seem like an awkward approach. My fleshly temptation is to try to explain to my children that there are better ways of presenting Christ. However, if I do this, I will unintentionally shut them down. Instead, I tell them, "What you just did is the most important thing that you could possibly do. When you tell others about Jesus, my heart and God's heart are pleased. We are both incredibly proud of you."
- **Teach your children to love the church.** In most cases, a child will learn to love or hate (i.e., ignore) the church from his or her parents. A parental commitment to a local church makes all the difference in a child's world. This is especially true with dads. If a mom attends church alone, there is a 25% chance of the family joining her, but if a dad attends church alone, there is a 90% chance of the family joining him. Dads, your commitment to your local church will help determine the spiritual growth and commitment of your children. I tell my children, "As a family, we will attend church every week unless we are sick. When we are out of town, we will attend church somewhere else and be a blessing to another pastor and church family."
- **Teach your children how to be a godly spouse and parent.** We often assume that we can teach our children the value of being a godly spouse and parent once they graduate from high school. But the truth is children make up their minds what is important when they are young. Therefore, it is especially important that we speak well of being a godly spouse and parent. I tell my children that apart from their relationship with Jesus Christ, the most important pursuit of their lives ought to be being a godly spouse and parent, if the Lord permits. For example, I tell my little daughter, Jena, that I want her to grow up to be a woman of God like her mom. I want her to have a gentle and quiet spirit. I want her to prioritize her husband and children. I do this with my boys as well. *It is easier to bend a child than mend an adult.*

Paul's words **“but bring them [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”** serves to remind us that the goal of godly dads is that their children will come to obey the Lord Himself. In all the words that describe the roles of a father, I like the word “coach” the best.²⁵ What does a coach do? He brings out the best in his players. When Michael Jordan played basketball at the University of North Carolina, his coach was the legendary Dean Smith—one of the greatest coaches in the history of the sport. Dean Smith was a great basketball coach, but was he a great basketball player? He was probably okay, but he was no Michael Jordan. And yet, Michael Jordan attributes a great deal of his success to his college coach, Dean Smith. Dean Smith didn't have to be a great basketball player to make great basketball players. He just had to know the game, and know how to bring out the best in his players. The sign of a great coach is that he produces players who are better at the sport than he'll ever be. The sign of a great coach is that he empowers his players to pass him by.²⁶ Our goal is to empower our children to pass us by—to be more successful than we are, to be better husbands than we are, to be more holy than we are, to reach more people for Christ than we do, to become greater than we'll ever become. That's a father's goal, to bring out the best in his children to the extent that they pass him by.

Being a father isn't easy. There's no question about it. In addition to the things we have talked about today, you've got a job to worry about, financial pressures to deal with, a marriage to keep strong, and many other obligations to take care of. But dads, I want you to keep this in mind: Regardless of how successful or unsuccessful you are at work, the place where you will make the greatest difference in this world, where you'll have the greatest impact with the longest lasting results is in the lives of your children. They need you more than you could ever know, more than they could ever say. They need you to be an example to them. Bring out the best in yourself so you can help bring out the best in them. They need a teacher. Make it a joy for them to learn what you know about life, so that you can bring out the best in them. They need you to be a coach. They need you to empower them to play the game well, even to the extent of passing you by, and their achievements eclipse yours. This is what a father does. He leads by example, he teaches, he coaches in order to bring out the best in his children.²⁷

My family always dreamed of adopting a dog from the animal shelter. Three years ago, we adopted a basset hound that we named Jerome. We loved Jerome and he loved us. Sadly, he really wanted to be an inside dog, but that was not possible because Lori and Justin are both allergic to dogs. Furthermore, Jerome had trouble obeying. He would continually run away and he had an incessant barking habit. This led to problems with our neighbors. Consequently, this past November we had to give Jerome away. We picked a lovely family in Tenino that we knew would take good care of him. This family was perfect. When we visited them, the wife and children were kissing Jerome on the mouth! They also assured us that Jerome would be an inside dog who would sleep in their bed! Giving Jerome away was particularly difficult for Lori and Jena. They cried for days because they missed him. In February, Lori called Jerome's new owners and asked if we could stop by and visit him for Jena's 7th birthday. The family informed us that Jerome ran away from them on the Chehalis Trail while they were visiting relatives. Sadly, they told us that this happened two months prior! Lori was devastated and knew that she couldn't tell Jena what happened. At this stage in Jena's life she had a death phobia. So Lori began praying for Jerome to come home. She was seeking her own personal *Homeward Bound*. Even though she knew it was absolutely ridiculous, she found herself running outside to look every time a dog barked or coyote howled. After pretty much giving up hope, at the end of April—four months after Jerome had begun roaming the streets, we received a call from our local animal shelter informing us that they had Jerome. We were beside ourselves! We knew immediately that we should take Jerome back. The difference, this time around, is that we are working hard to train him. We walk him. We spend time with him. We even purchased a remote-controlled shock collar before bringing him back home. Here's the thing though: Our goal must be to work as hard at training our children as we do Jerome. Some dads tie the dog up at night and let the kids run loose! Other dads are more concerned about their golf swing than their offspring. This should not be the case in our church. As dads, we must always work hard in disciplining our children.

You may say, “My children are grown. It’s too late to do all of this. I missed it. I was working too much. I was building my business. My kids are already gone. What can I do?” Your children may be grown, but it’s never too late to pray. Psalm 127:4 says that children are like arrows in their father’s hand. If you shoot your “arrows” crooked, you can still get on your knees and pray for a good wind. You can ask God to catch that errant arrow and steer it back toward the target. Even if you missed it as an earthly parent, there is still a heavenly Father who can catch that wayward arrow and bring it back home. He has the power to turn your children back to Himself. So no matter whether your children are flying right or going off course right now, keep praying.²⁸

Copyright © 2008 Keith R. Krell. All rights reserved. All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, and 1995 by The Lockman Foundation, and are used by permission.

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any articles written by Keith Krell, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: by Keith Krell, Timeless Word Ministries, 2508 State Ave NE Olympia, WA 98506, 360-352-9044, www.timelessword.com

Scripture References

Ephesians 6:4

Colossians 3:21

Philippians 2:3-4

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Deuteronomy 11:19

Proverbs 22:6

Psalm 78:1-4

Study Questions

1. What are some specific ways I may frustrate my children unnecessarily? What can I do to correct these tendencies? Have I asked my children to forgive me for my sinful behavior against them? Do I regularly apologize and humble myself before my children? If not, why not? How can I be more transparent and approachable with my children?
2. How well do I understand each of my children's unique emotional and psychological makeup? Have I learned to parent my children according to how God has wired them? If so, how do I uniquely parent each of my children? In what ways have I successfully avoided partiality and favoritism? Read Proverbs 22:6.
3. As a dad, do I take the spiritual leadership in disciplining my children? Do I work hard at understanding the most effective way to discipline each of my children? When I approach my kids with the goal of discipline, do I do so out of a heart of love and compassion? How can I learn to better express my love for my children when I have to discipline them?
4. In my home, what encourages spiritual development in my children? What discourages it? What is the single most important step I could take to encourage the parent/child relationships in my family? Will I take this step today?
5. St. John Chrysostom (347-407 AD) once said, "What greater work is there than training the mind and forming the habits of the young?" Do I believe that this statement is accurate? How is this demonstrated in my daily life and weekly schedule? Do I intentionally seek to "bring up" and "nurture" my children in the Lord? What is the one area that I need to work on most as a dad? Today, will I ask my wife, a good friend, and the Lord for prayer and accountability?

Notes

¹ Pronounced car-NAH-sis. See Karnazes's personal website at <http://www.ultramarathonman.com/flash/>.

² David Jeremiah, "What's a Parent to Do?" *Today's Turning Point*, 5/27/2008.

³ In Col 3:21 Paul wrote, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart" (i.e., "become discouraged" ESV). So, the opposite of "provoke" is "encourage."

⁴ It is possible that the pronoun "your" (*humon*) has been inserted to remind fathers that they are to discipline *only* their own children.

⁵ See BDAG s.v. *pater* 1.b. The TEV and CEV render this plural noun "parents."

⁶ Paul switches from *tois goneusin* ("parents") in 6:1 to *hoi pateres* ("fathers") in 6:4. See Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians: Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 445.

⁷ E.g., Eph 3:14-15; 4:6; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5-6.

⁸ Gene A. Getz, *Living for Others When You'd Rather Live for Yourself* (Ventura, CA, 1985), 141.

⁹ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 795.

¹⁰ Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 191.

¹¹ The verb *parorgizete* ("provoke") is only used one other time in the NT (Rom 10:19). The noun form of the verb "provoke" (*orgizo*) is used earlier in Eph 4:26 where Paul warns us against the dangers of unresolved anger. Instead of harboring anger, he urges us to deal with our anger quickly and graciously. If we refuse, Satan can develop a foothold in our lives (4:27).

¹² Tony Evans, *What a Way to Live* (Dallas: Word, 1997), 241.

¹³ A recent survey revealed that the average five-year-old spends only 25 minutes per week with his father. That equals less than three weeks total time together in 18 years! On the other hand, the average child watches TV for 25 hours per week, and will listen to 11,000 rock songs during his or her teenage years. No wonder we can't influence our kids! Charles Francis Adams, a 19th century political figure, kept a diary. One day he entered, "Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted." His son, Brook Adams, also kept a diary which is still in existence. On that same day Brook Adams made this entry, "Went fishing with my dad today—it was the most wonderful day of my life!" One thousand teenage boys were asked what they wanted most from their parents. The number one answer was to spend more time with them. It takes more than three minutes a day to make a positive impact on someone's life. Great dads spend time with their children. Spending time requires effort; it is an investment.

¹⁴ David Jeremiah, *Today's Turning Point*, 5/6/2008.

¹⁵ With the intensive proposition *ek* prefixed to it, the suggestion is that fathers are responsible to take great care in nurturing their children.

¹⁶ Steven J. Lawson, *The Legacy: What every father wants to leave his child* (Sisters, OR, 1998), 113.

¹⁷ Evans, *What a Way to Live*, 249.

¹⁸ See Lawson, *The Legacy*, 131-133.

¹⁹ In 2 Tim 3:16 we find the only other use of "discipline" (*paideia*) in Paul's letters (cf. Heb 12:5, 7, 8, 11).

²⁰ Some modern psychologists oppose the old-fashioned idea of discipline, and many educators follow their philosophy. "Let the children express themselves!" they tell us. "If you discipline them, you may warp their characters." This is in error. We have a right and a responsibility to discipline our children. Prov 13:24 says, "He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly." Prov 19:18 says, "Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction." Prov 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. The rod of correction will drive it far from him." Prov 29:15 says, "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother." Prov 29:17 says, "Correct your son, and he will give you rest. Yes, he will give delight to your soul."

²¹ The Bible records the sad results of parents neglecting their children, either by being bad examples to them or failing to discipline them properly. David pampered Absalom and set him a bad example, and the results were tragic. Eli failed to discipline his sons and they brought disgrace to his name and defeat to the nation of Israel. In his latter years, even Isaac pampered Esau, while his wife showed favoritism to Jacob; and the result was a divided home. Jacob was showing favoritism to Joseph when God providentially rescued him and made a man out of him in Egypt.

²² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Rich*, Electronic ed.

²³ Evans, *What a Way to Live*, 251.

²⁴ There are many examples in Scripture of fathers praying on behalf of their children. Jairus came to Jesus asking him to heal his daughter (Mark 5); the man whose son had an evil spirit came to Jesus asking Him to deliver his son (Mark 9). Both of these children experienced God's power in their life because their fathers loved them enough to intercede for them. Job also prayed for his children. Job 1:5 says that it was his custom to offer sacrifices for his children, in case they had sinned against the Lord.

²⁵ Ken Griffey, Sr. was a pretty good baseball player. But his legacy is that he raised a superstar, Ken Griffey, Jr. Cal Ripken, Sr. was a good baseball coach, but his legacy is that he raised a legend, Cal Ripken, Jr. The world's number one ranked professional golfer, Tiger Woods, started playing golf when he was two years old because his father immersed him in the sport. Peyton Manning and Eli Manning, both professional football quarterbacks, learned their love for the game from their father, Archie, a standout NFL quarterback himself.

²⁶ <http://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/thedifferenceadadmakes.html>.

²⁷ Steve May, "The Father's Role": <http://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/thefathersrole.html?start=2>.

²⁸ Evans, *What a Way to Live*, 253.