



Gospel-Centered Families

Parenting Part 2: Gospel-Centered Discipline

How to Prepare

Ephesians 6:4

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-discipline.html>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/parents-obey-god-and-require-obedience>

Sermon Outline:

Ephesians 6:4

1. Gospel-Centered Discipline is Motivated by Love.
2. Gospel-Centered Discipline Starts With Yourself.
3. Gospel-Centered Discipline Focuses on the Heart.

Ephesians 6:4

Family Relationships

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 6:4.

INTRODUCTION

Here is a question or two to help introduce the topic and jump-start discussion.

1. What do you think of when you hear the word "discipline?" What are some positive connotations surrounding that word, and what are some negative connotations surrounding that word?

a. (*The biblical use of the word "discipline" means essentially to train and correct.*)

2. What does the statement "discipline without direction is drudgery" mean in your own words?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. Gospel-Centered Discipline is Motivated by Love.

3. How does Ephesians 6:4 show us that discipline is motivated by love? In what way is a parent displaying love for God and love for their children when they discipline their children in a biblical way?

4. Why is it loving for God to discipline His people? Why is it loving for parents to discipline their children?

II. Gospel-Centered Discipline Starts With Yourself.

5. What does it mean that discipline starts with yourself in the context of parenting? What elements of self-control do we see in Ephesians 6:4?

6. Describe in your own words what controlled, consistent, and Christ-centered discipline looks like? What are the dangers of disciplining children without having self-discipline in these areas?

7. How do we grow in self-discipline in our own lives? What can we do if we struggle with self-discipline when it comes to disciplining our children?

III. Gospel-Centered Discipline Focuses on the Heart.

8. What is the true aim of bringing up (nurturing) children in the "discipline and instruction of the Lord?" In what way does discipline that only focuses on behavior fall short of the true aim of discipline?

9. How are behavior problems and heart problems (lack of love and sin in the heart) connected? Why is it necessary to focus on correcting heart problems (lack of love and sin in the heart) when you are correcting behavior problems?

10. Why does the gospel have to be at the root of all discipline? What might that look like in your own life and in the life of a parent?

a. (We cannot change people's hearts, but the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ and the power of God unto salvation. It is the truth that changes hearts. Parents and children alike need the gospel to be the foundation for all discipline, because Jesus is the one who makes our hearts clean. Without Jesus, no amount of behavior modification will make our hearts clean. But when we are pointed back to Christ and trust in Him, our hearts become more like His, and our behavior, likewise, becomes more like His.)

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Eph. 6:1–4 Children and Parents. The submission of 5:21 is further explained as meaning that children should submit to their parents. This submission takes the form of obedience to them. Parents are to nurture their children in the Lord.

Eph. 6:4 Fathers. As earlier, Paul begins his admonition with a negative action to avoid, followed by a positive action to develop (see note on 4:28). Paul addresses the responsibility of fathers in particular, though this does not diminish the contribution of mothers in these areas (see Proverbs 31).
provoke . . . to anger. Obedient children are particularly vulnerable, so a domineering and thoughtless father's actions would be discouraging to them (Col. 3:21). bring them up. Parents play a crucial, God-ordained role in the discipleship of their children "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1); see Deut. 6:1–9. Parental discipleship in the discipline and instruction of the Lord should center on the kinds of practices already outlined in Ephesians 4–5.