

Hey, Dad, the Vacation Is Over

When August comes, and we know school will soon start. All of us will be sure to get our kids ready to start back to school. School supplies, vaccinations, and new clothes—all of these and more will make our children school ready. Almost 100% of the parents that I know take this responsibility seriously. Yet many of us are indifferent to the need of that other education—the spiritual education of our children. The Bible is clear in its command: “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Eph 6:4.

Bring them up.

The first part of the command is to bring them up, and it’s directed to fathers. The word *bring up* is translated *nourish* in Eph 5:29 and refers to Christ nourishing and cherishing the church. In the Revised Version the word is translated *nurture*. Therefore, fathers are to nurture their children with spiritual nourishment.

In the discipline.

The Greek word used is *paideia* and denotes “the training of a child, including instruction”; hence, “discipline, correction,” “chastening suggesting the Christian discipline that regulates character.” (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers) The point is that fathers must secure the Christian education of their children. Therefore, both secular education and spiritual education are commanded.

Instruction of the Lord.

The Greek word here *nouthesia*, lit., "a putting in mind" (nous, "mind," tithemi, "to put"), is used in 1 Cor 10:11, of the purpose of the Scriptures; in Eph 6:4, of that which is ministered by the Lord. *Nouthesia* is "the training by word," whether of encouragement, or, if necessary, by reproof or remonstrance. In contrast to this, the synonymous word *paideia* stresses training by act, though both words are used in each respect. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers) The source of the teaching is from the Lord. The father is expected to carry out the instruction and training of his children by word, action, and example. The saying – like father like son – could not be truer. In word and deed, fathers teach their children for good or for bad.

Many fathers ignore the responsibility.

In spite of the very specific teaching, many fathers ignore the responsibility to provide their children with opportunities for spiritual growth. Here are a few specific steps a father can take:

- Have their children in Bible classes on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening
- Bring their children to all the services of the church.
- Attend the Bible studies and services of the church, setting a proper example.
- Make the children’s spiritual education as important as their secular education.

Get a good start now.

Just as we want our children to get off to a good start at school each August, let’s resolve to get them off to a good spiritual start by having them at all the services of the church **with us**. This is a command specific to fathers. It cannot be delegated. However, single moms, take notice your vacation is over too. Start now.

Study questions.

1. What are the two charges given father in Eph 6:4? _____

2. Explain the comparison of Christ to the church and fathers to their children.

3. How do discipline and training go together? _____

4. What are the three ways a father is to carry out the teaching of his children? _____

5. List four steps a father can take to advance the spiritual education of his children _____

6. Describe the role of single moms in regard to the spiritual training of children in homes without a fathers. _____
