Raising Children in a Godly Way
Colossians 3:20-21
March 15, 2026

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:20-21 (ESV)

[20] Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.
[21] Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

MAIN THEME

Paul now turns from marriage to parenting, showing that the gospel reshapes every relationship inside the home. A Christ-centered family is not built on control or chaos, but on joyful obedience and gracious leadership.

Children are called to obey their parents "in everything." This obedience is not merely cultural expectation — it is worship. It "pleases the Lord." When children learn to obey their parents, they are learning to respond rightly to God's authority. Obedience reflects trust in God's design for order and flourishing in the home.

At the same time, fathers are warned not to provoke or embitter their children. Authority in the home must never become harsh, unreasonable, or constantly critical. Continual agitation, unrealistic expectations, or anger-driven discipline can crush a child's spirit and lead to discouragement. Paul's warning guards the heart of the parent.

Instead, parenting is to reflect God's grace — firm yet loving, consistent yet compassionate. Discipline is necessary, but so is praise. Correction must be balanced with encouragement. The goal is not mere compliance, but hearts formed "in the training and instruction of the Lord."

In an ALL IN home, parents are devoted to one another and to their children. They model repentance, forgiveness, and grace. Children learn obedience not through fear, but through love that mirrors the Father's heart.

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. Obedience that Pleases the Lord

Colossians 3:20; Ephesians 6:1; Luke 2:51

• Why does Paul say obedience “pleases the Lord”?
• How does obedience in the home shape a child’s understanding of God?
• Why is obedience different from earning salvation?
• How can parents teach obedience as worship rather than mere rule-keeping?

2. Authority Without Provocation

Colossians 3:21; Ephesians 6:4

• What does it mean to “provoke” or “embitter” a child?
• How can constant criticism discourage a child’s spirit?
• What is the difference between loving discipline and harsh control?
• Where might you need to replace irritation with patience?

3. Discipline Shaped by Grace

Hebrews 12:7; Proverbs 1:8

• Why is loving discipline part of God’s design?
• How does encouragement strengthen a child’s heart?
• What role does praise play in healthy parenting?
• How can parents model repentance when they fail?

4. An ALL IN Home

Colossians 3:17; Joshua 24:15

• What visible signs show that Christ is honored in a home?
• How do prayer and Scripture shape the tone of family life?
• What habits build unity between parents?
• What would change if every parenting decision asked, “Does this reflect God’s grace?”

PRAY

Dear Lord, thank you for designing the family to reflect your goodness. Teach children to obey with joyful hearts that please you. Teach parents to lead with patience, wisdom, and

grace. Guard us from harshness or discouragement. Help our homes reflect your kindness, your order, and your love. May we be devoted to one another and raise our children in the training and instruction of the Lord. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

• Ephesians 6:1–4 — Parenting in the Lord
• Proverbs 22:6 — Training a child
• Hebrews 12:5–11 — Loving discipline
• Psalm 127:3–5 — Children as a gift from the Lord
• Deuteronomy 6:4–9 — Teaching God's Word diligently

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

Christ transforms every relationship.
Colossians 3:22–4:1