

It's Not Father's Day (But You're Still the Dad)

Part 1: Head of the Home

The husband is expected to be the 'head of the house.' This principle goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden and has been echoed throughout scripture. The Apostle Paul explicitly states that the man is the head of the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). Wives are taught to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22). But what about fatherhood? Two short verses apply:

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart. (Colossians 3:21)

That doesn't really seem like much to go on, but let's consider these scriptures more closely.

To provoke someone to anger is to be the cause of the anger. You have done something or said something or NOT done or said something that causes another person to become angry.

The word exasperate is the idea of making someone so exhausted through your actions or speech that they simply want to give up and get away. Exasperation affects one physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Both scriptures are written in a negative sense, more like a prohibition: *Don't do this!* So, what are some specific things that should be avoided?

Paul does not enumerate, yet by applying the Golden Rule we might ask, "What kinds of things would provoke *me* to anger or exasperate *me*?" The following is a general list that might help you get started.

Fathers can exasperate their children...

- When they do not listen.
- When they discipline in uncontrolled anger.
- When they are frequently unreasonable — *"No questions; just do it. Follow my orders!"*
- When they are frequently overbearing — *Children often bullied and treated more like slaves than family members.*
- When they are frequently harsh — *Yelling. Insensitivity. "Just deal with it. Get over it!"*
- When they are frequently critical—*"You never do anything right. You'll never amount to anything. You can't do that, what a foolish idea."*
- When they are generally unyielding—*Rule #1: Father knows best. If there are any questions, refer to Rule #1.*
- When they administer consequences that do not fit the offense, yet with no apology.
- When they intentionally tease to the point of embarrassment (especially in public).
- When they are clearly in the wrong, but refuse to apologize.

Head of the home is not synonymous with king or dictator or master. *Head* implies leadership. As the leader of the home God expects Fathers to govern with a keen mind that considers each individual in the family. A good father understands differences in personalities, abilities, and even personal interests. He listens to his wife and to his children. He is willing to admit to his own failures and shortcomings.

Father's Day is a day in which fathers are honored. The real question: *Do you lead every day in such a way that you are deserving of honor?*