

### **Transforming Daily**

“. . . do not provoke your children to wrath . . .”

*Ephesians 6:4*

I can't say that my dad didn't provoke his children to wrath. My dad wasn't saved until he was in his early fifties. That coupled with a career of 20 years in the military, it is safe to say that the stage was set for a great deal of provocation to wrath, not to mention the fact that he and his dad didn't have a very good relationship at all. Provoking one to wrath isn't necessarily about the absence of love. There is no doubt in my mind that my father loved me (and my siblings) and his father loved him.

I can only speculate on how my granddad and dad felt about each other, or me, but I can tell you with absolute certainty how I felt about my children when they were younger and how I feel about them now, as well as their spouses and my grandchildren. I love them dearly! However, that doesn't mean that I didn't, haven't, or won't provoke them to wrath. It isn't my desire to do so, but it still might happen. Does that make me a bad dad? Not unless, if done so, the provocation to wrath is without remorse.

According to my dad's testimony (and mine) of his dad, my dad was a better dad. According to my testimony (and that of my children), I am a better dad than my dad. According to my testimony (and prayerful desire, as it was for my dad for me), my son is a better dad than I, and his daughter (or son, if God should bless he and his wife with a boy) will be a better parent than my son. You get the picture. It should be the desire of every parent to rear their child or children in such a way that the child or children will be better parents than they.

The born again father gets a clear picture in Scripture of how he is to conduct himself by reading what Jesus says about His relationship with His Father, who is also the believer's heavenly Father. Paul shares with the reader of Ephesians that one of those characteristics of our heavenly Father is not to provoke one's children to wrath, but to train them in His Word. However, knowing what to do and doing it are two different things. As the old axiom states it is easier said than done, but that doesn't release the believing father from trying.

Patently training a child or children is harder than demanding their attention. Have you looked at your child or children's faces lately when you give them instruction? Do you expect more out of your child or children than is biblically reasonable? Do you expect more out of your child or children than you expect out of yourself? Do you expect your child or children to respond to you any differently than your heavenly Father expects you to respond to Him, and as you actually do respond to Him? Dad's love your child or children deeply and unashamedly. Tell them often, especially when they young, and even when they have grown, "I love you," and remember, do not provoke your children to wrath.