

Ten Ways to Exasperate Our Children (Father's Day 2013)

[American culture] "... lacks any coherent and unified vision of what fathers should be." Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America*

The Bible has a clear and well-defined picture of what a godly dad should be.

Most dads I know really try hard to be the best dads they can be – yet most grown children I know seem to have real issues with their fathers.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother – which is the first commandment (i.e., of The Ten Commandments) with a promise attached to it: that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth." Ephesians 6:1-3

"Fathers, do not **exasperate** your children . . ." Ephesians 6:4

"to exasperate" = "to irritate; aggravate; cause someone to throw up their hands in frustration"

"Fathers, do not **embitter** your children lest they lose heart." Colossians 3:21

As parents, God has given us authority over our children.

But our authority as parents is not absolute – it's limited to being exercised in a godly, biblical way.

#1 – Love our children conditionally

"But while his son was a long way off, his father saw him, and was filled with compassion for him; and he ran to his son, and threw his arms around him and kissed him." Luke 15:20

"As for me Lord, if I can do no more, at least help me . . . to raise my children with the certainty, that no matter how much they screw up the rest of their lives, there was one person who loved them unconditionally – me!" Jerry Adler, "Building a Better Dad" *Newsweek*

#2 – Don't be personally involved in our children's lives

" . . . when we sit at home, when we walk along the road, when we lie down, and when we rise up." Deuteronomy 6:7

"Forget quality time. You can't plan magic moments or bonding or epiphanies in dealing with kids. What matters is quantity time . . . Ninety percent of fatherhood is just showing up." Fred Barnes, "Quantity Time" *New Republic*

#3 – Favor one child above all the rest

"Now Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons." Genesis 37:3a

"So Jacob made a coat of many colors for Joseph." Genesis 37:3b

"And when his brothers **saw** that their father loved Joseph more than any of them, they **hated** him, and couldn't even **speak to him** in peace." Genesis 37:4

#4 – Never admit we're wrong

Children don't lose respect for **imperfect** parents – just **inauthentic** ones!

#5 – Demand behavior from our children that we aren't willing to do ourselves

“... the sincere faith which first lived in Timothy's grandmother Lois and then in his mother Eunice ...”
2 Timothy 1:5

#6 – Handle family issues unevenly and secretly

Our children may not like some decisions we make – but they should be “**out in the open.**”

#7 – Always have something negative to say to our children

“... in the **nurture** of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4

#8 – Never confront our children's behavior

“... in the **discipline** of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4

“His father had never crossed him at any time or asked him, ‘Why did you do that?’” 1 Kings 1:6a

“... bring them up in the **discipline** of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4

#9 – When they get older, undermine our children's relationships with their spouses

#10 – When our children get older, continue to treat them like a “child”

“Mr. President – never miss a good opportunity to keep your mouth shut!” Chief of Staff to President Eisenhower

#1 – Love our children conditionally

#2 – Don't be involved in their lives

#3 – Favor one child above all the rest

#4 – Never admit we're wrong

#5 – Be a “rip-roaring hypocrite” by making our children do what we won't do

#6 – Handle Family issues unevenly/secretly

#7 – Always have something negative to say

#8 – Never discipline our children

#9 – Undermine their relationship with their spouse

#10 – Keep treating them like a “child”