



## Colossians 3.21 “Fathers Matter”

**18 Wives**, submit  
to your own husbands,  
as is fitting in the Lord.

3 important points here:

1. Who: “Wives” – only those women with a husband
2. What: “submit”
  - a. To whom: “your own husbands”
3. Why and How: “as is fitting in the Lord”

**19 Husbands**,  
love your wives  
and do not be bitter toward them.

3 Important points here:

1. Who: “Husbands” – only those men with a wife
2. What: “Love”
  - a. Whom: “your wife”
3. Why and How: “without bitterness”; “do not be bitter toward them.”

**20 Children**, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

1. Who: Children – all children have Parents
2. What: Obey **your Parents** – not all adults, **only your own Parents**
3. Why and How:
  - a. Because it pleases the Lord
  - b. In all things

**21 Fathers**, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

### 1. Who: Fathers

a. Not all men – only those with children

### 2. What:

a. “Do not provoke . . .”

i. Don’t irritate, embitter, aggravate

b. “your children”

- i. you have no right as a Father to disciple/discipline any children but your own – unless granted by their Parents.
- ii. No man may discipline my children unless by agreement, and then by word only.

3. Why: they will become discouraged

4. How: see below

**Provoke not** (μη ἐρεθίζετε [mē erethizete]). **Present imperative** of old verb from ἐρεθω [erethō], to excite. Only twice in N. T., here in bad sense, in good sense in **2 Cor. 9:2 (to stimulate)**.

- **Positively:**

**2 Corinthians 9:2** for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal **has stirred up** the majority.

- **Negatively:**

- **Here it means to nag and as a habit (present tense).** 1

- **Fathers are not to “embitter” (erithizō) their children.**

- The sense is that they are not to challenge the resistance of their children by their unreasonable exercise of authority.
- Firm discipline may be necessary, but it must be administered in the right spirit. Parents should not give in to fault-finding, nor always be nagging their children. 2
  - **Weymouth:** “Do not fret and harass your children.” 3
  - **Phillips:** “don’t over-correct.” 4
  - **Knox:** “And you, parents, must not rouse your children to resentment.” 5

Our English word **exasperate** (from Latin exasperare = **'to make rough,'** 'to irritate to anger') means to make resentful, to cause annoyance, to irritate to a high degree, to provoke to anger, to rouse to rage, to inflame to an extreme degree, to irritate intensely, to infuriate.

To cause (an unpleasant feeling or condition) to worsen or be aggravated.

1 A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Col 3:21.

2 Curtis Vaughan, “Colossians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 219.

3 *Weymouth’s New Testament in Modern Speech*

4 J. B. Phillips *The New Testament in Modern English*

5 R.G. Knox, *The Holy Bible: A Translation from the Latin Vulgate in the Light of the Hebrew and Greek Original*

**Exasperate suggests galling annoyance and the arousing of extreme impatience.**

Exasperate is used as an adjective in botany to describe something having a rough prickly surface because of the presence of hard projecting points. <sup>6</sup>

## WHY?

- **That they be not discouraged**

- Be discouraged (ἀθυμῶσιν). Only here in the New Testament. Lose heart, or become dispirited. <sup>7</sup>

- **Provoke means to irritate or discourage children by harsh yelling, nagging, or deriding their efforts.**

Such provocations wound their spirits (see note on Prov. 18:14) and make them timid (they become discouraged). <sup>8</sup>

- **Lose heart** (120) (**athumeo** from **a** = without + **thumos** = passions, desire, spirit) means to become disheartened to the point of losing motivation, to be dispirited or to be broken in spirit. To feel like giving up. To become discouraged or despondent (this latter word means to feel or show extreme discouragement or dejection, because of loss of nearly all hope!

- **Webster** “Despondent implies a deep dejection arising from a conviction of the uselessness of further effort”.

- **To dishearten means to weaken or destroy one's hope, courage, enthusiasm, determination, confidence, etc.**

- **25.292 ἀθυμέω**: to be or to become disheartened and hence lack motivation—‘to become discouraged, to be disheartened.’ οἱ πατέρες, μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν, ἵνα μὴ ἀθυμῶσιν ‘parents, do not irritate your children, or they will become disheartened’ Col 3:21. <sup>9</sup>

## What do Parents do to discourage their children?

1. Focus on success rather than the process of growing up, allowing for failure

a. **There's no such thing as failure** – only education.

b. Take the long view

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.preceptaustin.org/colossians\\_320-25](https://www.preceptaustin.org/colossians_320-25)

<sup>7</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 508.

<sup>8</sup> Jack W. Hayford, ed., *Spirit Filled Life Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), Col 3:20.

<sup>9</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 319.

- i. As a young man, **Abraham Lincoln** went to war a captain and returned a private. Afterwards, he was a failure as a businessman. As a lawyer in Springfield, he was too impractical and temperamental to be a success. He turned to politics and was defeated in his first try for the legislature, again defeated in his first attempt to be nominated for congress, defeated in his application to be commissioner of the General Land Office, defeated in the senatorial election of 1854, defeated in his efforts for the vice-presidency in 1856, and defeated in the senatorial election of 1858. At about that time, he wrote in a letter to a friend, "I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth."
- ii. **Stravinsky** was run out of town by an enraged audience and critics after the first performance of the *Rite of Spring*. Later in life, he observed that "I have learned throughout my life as a composer chiefly through my mistakes and pursuits of false assumptions, not by my exposure to founts of wisdom and knowledge."
- iii. **Albert Einstein** did not speak until he was 4-years-old and did not read until he was 7. His parents thought he was "sub-normal," and one of his teachers described him as "mentally slow, unsociable, and adrift forever in foolish dreams." He was expelled from school and was refused admittance to the Zurich Polytechnic School. He did eventually learn to speak and read. Even to do a little math.
- iv. **Henry Ford** failed and went broke five times before he succeeded.
- v. **Babe Ruth** is famous for his home run record, but for decades he also held the record for strikeouts. He hit 714 home runs and struck out 1,330 times in his career (about which he said, "Every strike brings me closer to the next home run.").
- vi. **Walt Disney** was fired by a newspaper editor because "he lacked imagination and had no good ideas." He went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland. In fact, the proposed park was rejected by the city of Anaheim on the grounds that it would only attract riffraff.

## 2. Compare their children to other children

- a. 100% way to discourage your children is to compare them to other kids.

3. Unrealistic goals in sports
  - a. 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% will ever get to a pro status.
  - b. Brutal work up to Pro status
  - c. Most “pros” are a TOTAL SPIRITUAL MESS.
4. Unrealistic goals in education
  - a. Trade schools
  - b. Jr. College – A.A. degree
5. Changing rules too often.
  - a. Finish line is moving
  - b. Can't please their Parents

**Father's – are you the one holding your child back?**

**Have you taught the meaning of Forgiveness?**

**Taught them the hope they can give others through grace?**

***Malachi 4:5-6***

**5** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet  
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

**6 And he will turn**

**The hearts of the fathers to the children,  
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,  
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.**