

THE DISCIPLINE AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery word, 22 August 2021

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Introduction

This is the final session that we will take specifically looking at 'The fear of the Lord'. In this session we will consider how parents teach their children the fear of the Lord. This instruction is necessary so that our children do not forsake their birthright as a son of God, and fail to enter the rest that belongs to their sonship.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath

In this regard, we note Paul's exhortation to Christian fathers. 'And you fathers do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.' Eph 6:4.

In this passage, Paul drew our attention to two forms of parenting.

One approach is 'of the flesh', and provokes a child to wrath.

The other is 'of the Lord' by the Spirit, and it leads to life. 'Don't provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.'

What does 'wrath' mean? Wrath is not just an outburst. In the Scriptures, there is an emotional expression called 'wrath'; but wrath is also described in the Scriptures as 'a way', or as a nature. Wrath refers to the way of life that belongs to fallen mankind. It can be an emotion, but it actually is a whole way of life that belongs to fallen mankind.

It is the nature of those who conduct themselves according to the desires of the flesh and the perceptions of their own mind. Because of this, they are subject to the oppression of unclean spirits.

There is a way in which we can train up our children so that they conduct themselves according to the desires of the flesh and the perceptions of their own mind, and are subject to unclean spirits.

'And you, he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according

to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath.' Eph 2:3.

Relational disconnection and outbursts of wrath are characteristic of those whose nature is wrath. We do not want to provoke our children to wrath so that it becomes their *nature*.

The question is, 'What does this wrathful nature look like?' It is manifest in *relational disconnection*, and it will, probably, have outbursts of wrath as well.

For some, the relational disconnection associated with wrath will be their overt *withdrawal from relationship*. They will cut off relationship in their family, and in the church with particular people. It is an intent to intervene in a relationship.

For those who live according to the flesh, and are by nature wrathful, relational disconnection is their inability to meet another in Spirit and truth.

Relational disconnection and outbursts of anger, for some, will be evident in a desire to no longer relate. They may be very social, but the basis of their connection is not *true*. It is on the basis of projection.

They fashion this projection for themselves to cover the shame that is associated with the fear of death. That fear of death is the evidence that a person is in bondage to the evil one; to the spirit of Satan, which is the law of sin.

It is certainly confronting that we can, as Christian parents, train our children and provoke them to wrath; provoke them to this way of living.

But bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord

In contrast, though, the Scriptures teach and urge us that, through discipline and the instruction of the Lord, we are able to teach our children the fear of the Lord. And, as they learn this fear of the Lord each day, they are understanding and

accepting their unique participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

The fear of the Lord

By way of reminder, as I come into the end of this particular content initiative, 'the fear of the Lord' does not mean being afraid of God or of what He can do to us. That would be *the fear of death* that I could possibly lose my life.

The fear of the Lord is the fear that *we receive from the Lord*. Remember, we are *taught* the fear of the Lord by those who are overseers in His house. That is what King David taught, as the shepherd of Israel.

The fear of the Lord is what we *receive* from the Lord. Importantly, it is called 'the fear of the Lord' *because it belongs to Him*.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit *live* by the fear of the Lord Themselves.

This fear is the expression of our deep appreciation, respect for, and recognition of, the identity and name of another - particularly the name of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is the reason why we are able to *worship* together, because this is our mode of engagement with one another. This fear is the expression of our deep appreciation and respect of who Yahweh is, and our commitment to walking in the truth of who we are.

We have made the point that wrath is evident through someone living according to a projection. They want another to receive and engage with them as they wish to be seen, which is covering the shame associated with their fear of death.

Those who fear the Lord are not driven by that motivation. They do not try to project something.

They want to receive who they are from the Father through the word of the Son by the Holy Spirit so that they can participate in the *fellowship* of Yahweh *according to their name*.

This is the true nature of the fear of the Lord. It is our commitment to *walking in the truth of who we are*.

Useful imagery to demonstrate this is where the Lord said to Moses, 'Take your sandals off because you're standing on holy ground.' Exo 3:5. A person who fears the Lord recognises that the fellowship of Yahweh, which is the fellowship of the body of Christ, which is established through

the word of the presbytery, is *the holy ground upon which we are to stand*.

We cannot bring the filth of the flesh onto that holy ground. A person who fears the Lord understands that. They want their feet washed so that they do not bring that filth onto that ground.

Finally, the fear of the Lord is the *spiritual grace* that motivates us.

This is an element of the seven Spirits of God that belong to Yahweh. Spiritual grace motivates us to press in to the Lord; to press into His word; and to press in for fellowship with His messengers when He comes to us to meet us eye to eye.

He comes continually in His priestly initiative toward us to meet us eye to eye and heart to heart, to deliver us from the impurities that are associated with the flesh.

But He comes primarily for the sake of *connecting us to the truth*, which is our priestly work as sons of God in His house. This is the fear of the Lord.

Training children in the fear of the Lrd

Only those who themselves are learning the fear of the Lord are able to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. If you are not learning the fear of the Lord, how can you teach that to your children?

Do you see that it will be 'a form of godliness', and you will constrain them to your view of what the fear of the Lord is, which becomes a law imposed on them. That is exactly what it means to 'provoke them to wrath'.

It becomes *compliance* for the sake of the production of the projection of holiness, but to cover the shame of their fear of death.

The fear of the Lord is the *confidence* that a parent has to train their child this way. Their confidence is not in themselves. Their confidence is in the fear of the Lord that they receive. The fear of the Lord is their confidence for their work. It is not in themselves or in their own understanding of how to raise their children in the way of sonship.

Raising their children according to their own understanding is driven by the fear of death, and is in bondage to the evil one. In fact, it invites oppression into the house.

The fear of the Lord leads to life

We will consider some passages that highlight this point that the fear of the Lord *leads to life*, and also it is the confidence that a person has to train up his children in this way.

It says, 'The fear of the Lord leads to life and he who has it will abide in satisfaction.' Pro 19:23.

That sounds like entering Christ's rest.

Their satisfaction is not in the pursuit of the passing pleasures of this world. Their satisfaction is actually being established, rooted and grounded in the context of fellowship where they participate according to their name in that household, which is the household that belongs to the Father.

'The fear of the Lord leads to life and he who has it will abide in satisfaction. He will not be visited with evil.'

We learned last week that those who are learning the fear of the Lord are praying, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' The fear of the Lord teaches us this.

'In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge.' Pro 14:26-27.

'His children' can refer to both all the children of God - you and me - and also to the children of parents who are learning the fear of God. Their confidence is in the fear of the Lord and, as they teach that to their children, their children have *refuge*. That is where they are secure.

'The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to turn one away from the snares of death.' Our children have a place of refuge in Christ because they are taught by their parents to desire and receive the fatherhood of God in Christ, and this profits them with true riches. 'True riches' is *the divine nature* that belongs to their sonship.

Teaching the true riches by the discipline and instruction of the Lord

Paul made this point in the book of Hebrews. 'Furthermore, we had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the father of spirits and live.' Heb 12:9-11.

This sounds as though we paid them respect because we were corrected, but then he

contrasted that by saying that there is another way in which we are to be trained, which leads to life. This mode of human fathers who corrected us, leading to this kind of respect does not lead to the life that belongs to the Father.

'Furthermore, we had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect, shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live. For they [human fathers or parents], indeed for a few days chastened us as seen best to them, but He, for our profit.'

This refers to the treasure of the divine nature - true riches.

'But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present but painful, nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.'

The translation of this passage gives the sense that discipline and instruction according to a parent's own perspective teaches a child to respect their parents.

However, the Greek word that is translated as 'respect' in this passage, is equally translated as 'shame'.

In fact, when Paul used this particular Greek word throughout his letters, every other time it was referring to 'being ashamed' or 'shame'.

So, the translation of this word as 'respect' here is an anomaly. If it is translated in the way that is most common, the passage would read, 'We had earthly fathers to discipline us, as seen best to them, who made us *ashamed*.'

That is exactly what Paul was saying when he said, 'Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath.' The provoking of a child to wrath is training them as seems best to us', which leads them to living according to shame.

Such discipline may yield a child's compliance with the standards of behaviour that seem best to their parents; however, it does not promote the child's *sonship*.

Do you see the point that Paul made in Hebrews? He did not say that whatever human fathers do in terms of correction is the best thing to do.

Rather, he said that there is a different fatherhood and there is a different ministry of grace that all Christian fathers and mothers should be availing themselves of that leads to the fear of the Lord.

It is the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This teaches the child to receive and desire the fatherhood of God in their life.

The way that Christ has pioneered for your child - the way of the cross

King Solomon picked up this point of fathers teaching children, or training them, in the way that seems best to them.

‘Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.’ Pro 22:6.

That way is not the way that ‘seems best’ to human fathers.

That way is the way that Christ has *pioneered* for their child so that they may attain their sonship as children of the heavenly Father. That is the way that they should go.

This way is *the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings*, and there is no greater way that we can teach our children than that way.

There is absolutely no more important lesson that we can teach our child than to walk the way of the cross. There is no greater heritage that we can leave with them.

The way of the cross cuts off flesh

We walk in this way by receiving and obeying the word of the cross. The word of the cross is our fellowship, calling us, equipping us, and enabling us to walk in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings.

We walk in this way by receiving and obeying the word of the cross, which is a two-edged sword that declares the ‘yes and the no’ of God.

The cross brings separation. It is a two-edged sword that says ‘no’ to some – ‘no’ to the flesh.

The ‘no’ of the cross does not actually only say, ‘Stop doing the flesh’.

It actually *cuts the flesh off*. And it is cutting off everything, including those who hold to the flesh, *from Christ*.

The way of the cross cuts us into His covenant; ‘the yes and no’ of God

The ‘yes’ of the sword of the word of the cross is cutting us *into the covenant of sonship*.

It is *connecting us to the will of the Father* for our life in Christ Jesus.

We walk in this way by receiving and obeying the word of the cross, which is a two-edged sword that declares ‘the yes and no’ of God.

If a parent is training up a child in the way they should go, they will be teaching ‘the yes and the no’ of the cross.

They are not the *source* of ‘the yes and no’ of the cross. I hope that is obvious to you.

The source of ‘the yes and no’ of the cross is Christ; and *we receive Christ* when we receive those whom He sends to us.

The word of the cross which is proclaimed by the messengers *ministers* ‘the yes and no’ of the cross.

If we offer a word other than that and claim it to be ‘the yes and no’ of the cross, we are actually promoting wrath as the way to life.

Teaching our children ‘no’ in relation to their own way so that they can receive His ‘yes’

We will pick up this point on ‘the yes and no’ of the cross. Jesus said, ‘But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’, ‘No’, for whatever is more than these is from the evil one.’ Mat 5:37.

We have already read that those who are by nature children of wrath are subject to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.

If ‘the yes and the no’ of the cross does not define the way that we walk, we will be subject to the evil one. We will be under the authority of the prince of the power of the air; that is, bondage to sin.

In terms of how we are teaching our children, the first thing we must teach them is ‘no’ in relation to their own way. This is ‘foolishness bound up in the heart of the child’. This is ‘the other law’ that they have received from us.

As those who are receiving the circumcision of Christ, ourselves, and so are being delivered from our other law, we are to bring the ‘no’ of the cross

to our children to say, 'You are not to go your own way,' or 'Your own way is not the truth.' That would be establishing, or teaching, 'no' first, but not because 'no' is the great lesson to learn. Importantly, we have to learn 'no' so that we can learn the 'yes' that belongs to our sonship.

We need to teach 'no' so that they can receive and walk in the 'yes' of God's will for their life. That is what we desire for them. That is where life is, and is where the capacity to multiply life is - it is in the 'yes' of the cross.

Teaching 'the yes and no' of the cross through our conversation and conduct

Unless our children see that this 'yes and no' of the cross, which is proclaimed by Christ through His messengers, defines the culture of their household, 'yes and no' will become a standard against which they must *measure* themselves.

The instruction, the word, that comes from your mouth is teaching them 'the yes and no' of the cross through your conversation and your conduct.

If 'the yes and no' of the cross does *not* define the culture of your household, whatever you try to teach your children, they will learn that they must be loyal, or attempt to be loyal, to you.

The cross makes a separation on that, and we teach 'the yes and no' of the cross by establishing that word as the culture of our households.

Unless the children see that this 'yes and no' of the cross defines the culture of their household, it becomes a new law against which they find acceptance if they comply, or rejection if they do not comply. Their compliance becomes the crafting of a projection to try to be acceptable, whereas 'yes and no' should be a whole culture of life.

It becomes a way in which we are to walk and to not depart from.

If this does not occur, they will be provoked to wrath, and will only find deliverance apart from the fortress of their family.

This is an amazing point. If the culture of our house is not defined by the word; or 'the yes and no' of the cross is not impacting on the culture of our house, that household becomes a 'fortress'.

The only way that a child can find deliverance from that is *apart* from that household. They have to meet Christ themselves. Now, children have to meet Christ themselves anyway, but it is best if there is no discrepancy between the word that we are hearing from Christ through His messengers, and the word that we are living in our households.

Children are provoked to wrath when the *cross* is not established as the *culture* of their household.

In these settings, children may become increasingly angry and agitated with their life, and that is a marker of those who are being provoked to wrath.

This happens because they are not taught to accept what are common, or normal, difficulties, distresses, frustrations associated simply with mortality or normal life. These are the effects of time and chance that happen to everyone.

The fact that we try to intervene in this, and not teach our children to accept these aspects of life, not only as being normal but also as being their unique participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ, teaches them something other than the fear of the Lord.

If the cross is not being established as the foundation of the household, the children will not be taught to receive these difficulties as their unique share in the sufferings of Christ.

The discipline and instruction of the Lord is a ministry of grace

The discipline and instruction of the Lord by which our children are learning the fear of the Lord is a ministry of grace to children, by parents who are themselves God-fearers and are connected to the headship of Christ.

If we are not *connected* to or are not being *restored* to the order of headship in Christ, we are not God-fearers.

As God-fearers, parents do not teach their children to walk according to the parent's own sight or to the sight of the child's own eyes.

Rather, they teach their children to *pray* in the same way that they, as parents, are learning to pray.

This is why we took a month to look at the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. 'Our Father in

heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,' etc.

I encourage you, as those who are committed to the discipline and instruction of the Lord, to relook at what those statements mean, because we are all to be learning the wisdom of those statements as those who are learning the fear of the Lord to enter Christ's rest every day.

We are to teach our children those statements.

Children growing in confidence because they receive the word of the messenger

And, specifically, we are teaching our children to *receive the word of the messenger* themselves so that there is no discrepancy between the word of the Lord to their life and the word that we are encouraging them to.

In fact, we encourage them to hear that word and to testify and to walk in the light of that word.

The evidence of this instruction will be that children are learning to give their ear to the word of present truth, and are growing in their relational confidence in the family because wrath, by nature, leads to relational disconnection.

If we are being delivered from that way of teaching and training our children and establishing them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, they will 'give their ear to the Lord'.

They will grow in relational confidence because they are receiving faith by hearing that word, and that faith is motivating them to *speak*. 'Having received the same spirit of faith I believed and therefore I spoke.'

That is as true for you and me as it is for our children. We would expect that if they are learning the fear of the Lord, they will begin to and desire to speak, or grow, in relational confidence in our families and house to house, and with the Lord's messengers as they come and teach publicly and house to house.

This culture, of course, was exemplified by Jesus. We know this passage well, but it is great to remind ourselves of it. Children, I'm sure you know this passage well.

'Now, so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple sitting in the midst of the

teachers both listening to them and asking them questions.'

That sounds like a teenager who loves the word, wants to be where it is being proclaimed, has an ear to hear, and has a mouth to connect. They are both listening to them and asking them questions.

'And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.'

The Lord calls each child - they are to meet Him because they belong to God the Father

When they saw Him they were amazed, and His mother said to Him, 'Son, why have You done this to us. Look, Your Father and I have sought You anxiously.' Luk 2:46-52.

There was already a breach in the family because of Jesus' obedience to the Father.

That will happen in our families and, parents, we need to accept that the Lord calls each of our children; and they are to meet Him because they belong to God the Father.

If we love them, we will actually encourage the relationship that our children have with their heavenly Father. There should be no loyalty bind, or loyalty discrepancy that our children are subjected to because of our own sight or because we think we have understanding for their lives.

Mary said, 'Son, why have You done this to us?' It is amazing that she took this personally!

'Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your Father and I have sought You anxiously.'

'And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke with them.'

I don't know about you, but if and when my children are motivated to be where the heavenly Father has them, and their desire is to be found among those who teach both listening and testifying, I will not be more proud of anything than that. To me, that is the treasure; that is for their profit. That is the profit that we want for our children.

'Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business? But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them, came to Nazareth and was subject to them.'

There should not be a discrepancy between obedience to the will of God the Father, and honour and obedience and submission to parents in the house. Jesus went down to Nazareth and He was subject to them.

‘But His mother kept all these things in her heart, and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and with men.’

Parents who teach their children to fear the Lord are not driven to intervene in their difficulties

Parents who teach their children to fear the Lord are not driven by fear to intervene in the difficulties and distresses that their children experience.

Rather, as a family, they set their mind on the Spirit to understand how to proceed in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings.

Inevitably, our children *will* interface with these distresses, tribulations, persecutions etc, in the world. That is simply the filth of the world itself. If we fear the Lord, we are not driven to intervene or to preserve our children from that.

Proceeding in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings through obedience as a son of God

Our first focus is to *seek the Lord*. We set our mind on the Spirit to understand how to proceed in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings. That is, we ask for ‘daily bread’.

In this fellowship, children are being delivered from the foolishness that is bound up in their heart as a consequence of the fall of mankind.

And they are fulfilling the works of sonship that belong to their name in Christ, as they are trained in this culture of priesthood.

Remember, they are to ‘priest’ themselves, or *present* themselves as a living sacrifice, in that fellowship.

As the discipline and instruction of the Lord teaches our children how to present themselves in this way, and as they are learning this way of priesthood, they will say, ‘Didn’t you know that I would be about my Father’s business?’

They are there in the ‘temple’, presenting themselves in that way.

As they are trained in this culture of priesthood, they will begin to choose it for themselves. As it was for Jesus, that will be around about the age of 12 and beyond.

The connection of a Christian child to the offering and sufferings of Christ, through obedience to their parents, was exemplified by Isaac when he was bound by Abraham on the altar of sacrifice on Mount Mariah.

We think that Isaac was upward of 18 years old. He may even have been 21 or 22, and Abraham was over 120. There was a massive discrepancy there between physical capacity of father and son.

Why, then, was Isaac get bound by Abraham? He was obviously already lying down on the altar that Abraham had called him to be subject to.

Those binds were the mark of Isaac’s *obedience to the word of the Lord* which had come through his father, Abraham.

Those cords bound Isaac to the uncomfortable reality of his fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

On the contrary, if we are driven by fear, we try to loose those binds, and try to deliver our children from their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

But if we are teaching our children the way of the Lord, those binds become their *connection*, holding them to the uncomfortableness of fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, from day to day.

We speak with them and say, ‘No, we are not looking to intervene on your situation.’

Children, if you are facing difficulties at school or in your or wherever you are, you must not ‘bottle it up’.

We actually have to have a conversation, because that relational initiative is the evidence of faith. In the conversation, we understand how to endure or how to proceed in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings that is unique to us.

The cords bound Isaac to the uncomfortable reality of his fellowship in the offering of the Lamb of God. He gave himself to this fellowship because blamelessness had become the *culture* of Abraham’s household.

Intervening in their sonship; provoking children to wrath

As we noted above, parents provoke their children to wrath when they inordinately compensate for their children's ailments, social upsets, difficulty with friends.

Rather, they need to teach them that not only is this the context of their sufferings, but also that they must not draw back from their obedience as a son of God and as a son in His house because of these ailments or relational difficulties.

We 'intervene' in their sonship when we say that these ailments, or difficulties, or problems that they are facing are a reason to not be obedient.

We *provoke them to wrath* when we do that.

Parents provoke their children to wrath when they inordinately compensate for their children's ailments and social upsets rather than teach them to accept their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

This compensation by parents may involve the unbalanced pursuit of health interventions; the relieving of their children from normal responsibilities in life because they are not feeling up to it; excessive intervention in situations in which their child appears to be unjustly treated.

Children of wrath

As young people emerge from this developmental phase of life, if they are not taught to fear the Lord, they will continue in the way in which they in taught.

They will continue to demand compensating treatments, pleasurable experiences, or reprieve from their personal accountabilities to alleviate their physical afflictions and the resulting emotional anguish that they feel when life just doesn't proceed the way they want it to.

That is being a child, by nature, of wrath, when they live this way.

When we live this way, we are, by nature, children of wrath, too. This is a person who conducts themselves in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, who are 'children of wrath by nature'.

Wrath becomes the nature of their conversation and conduct, rather than obedience to the will of God.

With the pursuit of comfort as their motivation, the minor ailments that they experience, for example, become exacerbated in their perceptions. They get 'a bit of a headache' and, all of a sudden, they can't do any work.

I know that's a gross exaggeration, but do you see that when we live that way, minor ailments become bigger things as we draw back from our obedience to our sonship in Christ.

With the pursuit of comfort, the minor ailments that we experience become exacerbated in our perceptions, and we see them as justification for our not taking full responsibility for our own lives and for their impact upon the lives of those around us.

This is how it progresses to *wrath*. These ones control others in their families and in broader social settings, through anger and accusations of mistreatment. They claim to be misunderstood and to be victims of their parents and other significant people in their lives, such as their bosses, teachers, co-workers etc.

Recovery – illumination, accountability, mourning and repentance

The beginning point of recovery is to *receive the illumination that is ministered through the word of the cross* as Christ comes among us with 'eyes like flames of fire'.

Each person is *accountable* for their own response to this word, and must mourn alone if they are to find the repentance that leads to salvation and to the fruit of the Spirit in their life and in their house.