

# DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

## DISCIPLINE OF FATHERHOOD

### FATHERHOOD'S "DO'S"

The comprehensive “**do not**” of fatherhood is followed by the explicit “**do's**” — “instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” — which, when fully understood, **requires three “do's”**: *tenderness, discipline, and instruction*.

#### *Tenderness*

The words “**bring them up**” mean “**to nourish or feed,**” as in [Ephesian 5:29](#) which has the same Greek words describing how a man “**feeds and cares**” for his own body. Calvin translates “**bring them up**” as “**let them be kindly cherished,**” and goes on to emphasize that the overall idea is to speak to one's children with gentleness and friendliness.

When I was a teenager, my best friend's father was a man's man. He had spent thirty-two years in the Coast Guard as a noncommissioned officer, a chief boson's mate. He was a big man, and in his prime he had put on the gloves with Joe Louis. Officers greeted him first when he walked down the street. He could be rough and tumble. But do you know what he called his 265-pound son? “David dear.” I was “Junior dear,” and I did not mind at all. In fact, it made me feel great. He was not hung up on “Real men do not show affection.” In fact, he still kisses his grown son — a man's man himself.

We are to be tender. Men are never manlier than when they are tender with their children — whether holding a baby in their arms, loving their grade-schooler, or hugging their teenager or adult children.

Here, a statement from the wise Christian philosopher **Elton Trueblood** is to the point, extending the principle further. A child, he says,  
... needs also to know that his father and his mother are lovers, quite and apart from their relationship to him. It is the father's responsibility to make the child know that he is deeply in love with the child's mother. There is no good reason why all evidence of affection should be hidden or carried on in secret. A child who grows up with the realization that his parents are lovers has a wonderful basis of stability.

Tenderness — verbal and physical — comes naturally to a father living under God's Word. Men, how do we measure up?

## ***Discipline***

Next, there is “**training.**” This is a strong word which means “**discipline, even by punishment.**” Pilate used the same word when he said of Jesus, “**I will punish him and then release him**” ([Luke 23:16](#)). Discipline certainly includes corporal discipline as needed. But it encompasses *everything* necessary to help “**Train a child in the way he should go**” ([Proverbs 22:6](#)).

The tragedy is that so many men have left this to their children’s mothers. Not only is this unfair to the mother, but it robs the child of the security and self-esteem which come from being disciplined by the father. Men, do you leave the discipline of your sons and daughters to your wives? If so, that is a sad breach of domestic responsibility. You are not living under God’s Word!