

## PARENTING OUR CHILDREN AS GOD “PARENTS” US: TEN PRINCIPLES OF PARENTING

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1. **God.** We are to “father” our children the way God “fathers” us. This is the umbrella principle under which all of the other principles flow. Consider the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment – between the vertical and horizontal tablets of the law, showing that respect for parents connects honor for God and love for others.
2. **Honor.** God our Father deserves our honor, our worship, our reverence, our loyalty, our following, our obedience (Matt 6:9-10; Malachi 1:6; 1 Pet 1:14-17; Hebrews 12:7-11). So, fathers should engender in their children a deep respect for both dad and the mom at home.
3. **Discipline.** Good fathers show their love for their children by disciplining them (e.g., Heb 12:7-9). Discipline must be appropriate, but it must also be serious and adequately felt by the child. Consistency is crucial, helping them learn that their rebel’s hearts must bow to God’s authority.
4. **Others.** As father, I must set the tone for how my children may talk to their mother and to others as well. I cannot allow them to indulge in back-talking or sassing. Toward their mother in particular, they simply must be respectful and polite. But the principle applies elsewhere.
5. **Training.** I must take responsibility for the spiritual upbringing of my children (Eph 6:4). I as a father will give an account before God here in a way that my wife will not. I am the one primarily responsible, and I must own this truth. My wife may (and does!) assist, but the buck stops here!
6. **Well-Being.** God our Father desires our growth, our well-being, our renewal, our loveliness, our wholeness, our holiness, our joy (Matt 6:11-12; Ps 89:20-29; 2 Cor 1:2-4; James 1:16-18). So, human fathers should seek to bring joy and happiness to their children; we should seek for our homes to be both holy and happy. I must help my children know my heart of love for them, my deep desire that they grow into mature, confident, godly, and satisfied young men and women.
7. **Provision.** As father, I am the primary provider and protector of my family (1 Tim 5:8). I must take seriously providing for my own, seeking to meet their real needs and to provide a place of security, love, care, warmth, and godliness—this involves hard work while being an involved dad.
8. **Love.** I want my children to know, even when I discipline them, how much I deeply and genuinely love them. I must tell them this often, but I must also show them my true and constant love by my care for them, my time with them, the sacrifices I make for them, and my commitment to them.
9. **Participation.** I must realize that I am not able to be a father the way I should, and that I must rely on God’s strength to do through me what I cannot do myself (1 Cor 15:10; Col 1:29). I am weak, but God is strong; I am foolish, but God is wise; I am prone to fail, but God will never fail. So, my trust must be in the Lord. I must pray to him daily, for his work in my life, and in theirs. He will never fail me, and he will not fail the children whom I commit, prayerfully and earnestly, to him.
10. **Stewardship.** I must realize that I do not own my children; I have no absolute rights over them. They are a stewardship from the Lord who does own them, who does have absolute rights over them. I must yield them fully to God and to his service and not clutch onto them. I must raise them to the glory of God, and I must release them, in time, to the service and will of God.