WAYS[[1]](#footnote-1) PARENTS CAN PROVOKE THEIR CHILDREN TO DISCOURAGEMENT [[2]](#footnote-2)

**1**. You can provoke your children to discouragement when you fail to demonstrate biblical love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a) through:

A. Impatience- by not waiting for them to finish a task or hurrying them to do something that is beyond their capabilities (violating 1 Cor

13:4; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:1-2; Col 1:9-12, 3:12)

B. Unkindness- by not providing for their physical needs because you are too busy with your own interests (violating 1 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:22, Eph 4:32; Phil 2:3-4; 2 Tim 2:24; Titus 2:4-5)

C. Jealousy – by trying to prove to them that you can do something better than they can (violating 1 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:19-20; James 3:13-18)

D. Bragging- by saying things such as “I had it a lot harder when I was your age” (violating Prov 27:2; Rom 1:30; 1 Cor 13:4; 2 Cor 10:18)

E. Arrogance – by saying such things as “We’ll do it my way because I’m a lot smarter and a lot better than you” (violating Rom 1:3-; 1 Cor 13:4)

**F. Betraying confidence** – by unhelpfully embarrassing and demeaning them by sharing their failures, shortcomings and fears in front of others – (violating 1 Cor 13:5; Eph 4:29)

G. Seeking to have it your own way- by insisting that they or family do only what you want to do (violating 1 Cor 13:5; Phil 2:3-4)

H. Taking into account wrongs suffered by reminding them, in an accusing manner, of their past failures by saying things such as “I’ve told you this a thousand times” (violating 1 Cor 13:5; Eph 4:32; Col 3:12-13)

I. Rejoicing in unrighteousness- by encouraging them to retaliate for wrongs they have suffered from others (violating 1 Cor 13:6; 2 Thess 2:12)

J. Not rejoicing in truth- by failing to commend them for being truthful in a difficult situation (violating 1 Cor 13:6; 1 Thess 5:16; 1 Peter 4:13; 2 John 1:4; 3 John 1:3)

K. Not bearing all things- by avoiding, criticizing, or neglecting them because they fell short in meeting your expectations (violating 1 Cor 13:7; Gal 6:2)

L. Not believing or hoping all things - by consistently doubting what they say before you know all the facts (violating 1 Cor 13:7; Prov 18:17)

M. Not enduring all things by responding in anger to them because you are focused on your own difficulties (violating 1 Cor 13:7; James 1:2-4)

**2.** You can provoke your children to discouragement when you make them feel unwanted by:

**A. Failing to tune into them** when they speak to you because you’re “too busy” with your own immediate interests (violating 1 Cor 13:4-5; Phil 2:3-4; James 1:19)

B. Failing to instruct, disciple, train and teach them diligently God’s word, character and commandments (Eph 6:1-4, Col 3:20, Prov 22:6, Deut 6:6-10)

C. Failing to spend time and be attentive with them in order to help them apply God’s word to everyday life (violating Duet 6:6-7)

D. Failing to help them see the biblical principle of reaping what they sow and as needed, applying appropriate consequences with Godly sympathy and unconditional love for unwise choices (violating Prov 13:24, 19:18; Ecc 8:11)

E. Failing to highlight and encourage their efforts by **trivializing their achievements** that are important to them.

F. Failing to draw attention to the evidences of grace in their lives (i.e. fruits of the Spirit, spiritual gifts, growing in certain areas, growing in discernment; (1 Cor 1:4-9)

G. Failing to invest building a relationship with them over time in order to nurture trust so as to bear godly and wise influence with them as they get older (Prov 23:26)

H. Failing to help them connect privileges, rights, consequences and wise choices (Prov 1:1-10)

**3.** You can provoke your children to discouragement when you act in an inconsistent manner in front of or toward them by:

A. **Failing to keep your word with an encouragement** - by promising to do something with them and then arbitrarily changing your plans in order to please yourself (violating Matt 5:37; Eph 4:15, 25; Col 3:9)

B. **Failing to follow thru with discipline biblically when necessary** (violating Prov 13:24, 23:13; Heb 12:7-8) or, disciplining when provoked and angry (violating 1 Cor 13:5; Ep 4:31)

C. Being erratic and inconsistent in your speech or actions- by showing little or no response to their disobedience on one day but at another time becoming visibly upset, using unkind words, and punishing angrily rather than restoring (violating Prov 15:1; Gal 6:1; Eph 4:15, 29; Col 4:6)

D. Failing to confess sins that you have committed against them or seeking to give excuse for your sinful behavior in an effort to justify yourself (violating Mat 5:23-24; Rom 12:18; James 5:16)

E. Refusing to forgive them – by making statements such as “I’ll never be able to forgive you for what you’ve done to me” while demanding that they forgive others for wrongs done against them (violating Mat 5:23-24; 18:21-22; Mark 11:25-26; Eph 4:32; Col 3:12-13)

**4.** You can provoke your children to discouragement when you fail to live as an authentic (not perfect) example of a believer (1 Tim 4:12) by:

A. Acting hypocritically & judging their behavior when you do not continually examine your own life by God’s Word (violating Matt 7:1-5)

B. Lying to them or requesting them to live for you (violating Rom14:13; Eph 4:15, 25)

C. Arguing with them or arguing with your spouse in the presence of them (violating Prov 20:3; Phil 2:14-16; Col 4:6; 2 Tim 2:24-25)

D. **Showing favoritism** to one child over another (violating Prov 24:23; see also Gen 25:24-34; 27:1-28:9 for illustrations of the evils precipitated by parents favoring one teen over another).

E. Teasing them- by making fun of them when they have been embarrassed or have failed in an endeavor (violating Eph 6:4; Col 3:12)

F. Speaking to them in a unwholesome manner- by calling them names or yelling at them in anger (violating Eph 4:29; Col 4:6)

G. Coming to them with judgements instead of asking questions first (violating Prov 18:13,15; 20:5)

**5**. You can provoke your children to discouragement when you seek to become the ultimate authority in their life instead of showing then the importance of following the Lord -

(based on Ezekiel 18:4-20, esp v4, 20; 2 Cor 3:5-6; 2 Tim 3:16-17; James 1:22-25)

A. Practicing a double standard and demanding that they serve you continually, while you fail to serve them and serve others (violating Matt 20:25-28; Mark 9:35; 20:42-45)

B. Treating them as a possession or imposing your own aspirations on them – by insisting that they meet the goals that you have set for their life (violating Deut 6:6-7; Psalm 24:1, 127:3; Eph 6:4)

C. Swearing at them or using harsh, contentious language when they do not meet certain standards or your preferences (violating Prov 12:18, 20:3; Eph 4:15, 29, 31; Col 4:6; James 3:2-12)

D. **Restricting their freedom in a way that communicates you don’t trust them.** (Prov 23:24)

1. *By Pastor Steve Shank, CLC Parenting Conference, 2005; Adapted & Supplemented by T. Neumann 2006-2014 as Family Life Pastor.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Col 3:21* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)