

Parental Strife And Divorce

Proverbs 17:1 says, *"Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."* The most important people in a child's life are his parents. He learns from them, watches them, grows up with them, and imitates them. What the child will be like and who he will become is largely determined by the influence of the parents (Proverbs 22:6). This is why we cannot overstate the fact that parents must be careful in raising their children, especially when it comes to their examples. Children are a blessing from the Lord, put into our hands for a few short years to teach them how to be righteous (Ephesians 6:4). Whenever we fail to teach our children God's ways, we abuse our position as parents.

The home should be a haven, a stronghold of one's life. Children crave peace and happiness in the home, especially between mom and dad. When parents fight, and perhaps ultimately end up in divorce, the child is confused and devastated. Hence, strife and divorce among the parents are terrible forms of mental abuse for the child.

Strife is ungodly. We speak not just of disagreement. We refer, rather, to the contentious and angry spirit so often accompanying disagreement. Angry words, shouting matches, slamming doors, name-calling, hitting walls (or people), and other forms of unrighteous anger are so often a part of household strife. Children should never have to see this take place in their home. There is no excuse for this kind of behavior, no matter how sharp the disagreement or problem may be. Over time, the child may become somewhat callused to it, but he himself begins to act the same way. It is difficult enough to teach children these actions are wrong without encouraging them to do it by our own actions.

Divorce is a tragedy. It has become so common that we hardly think twice about it anymore. The effects of divorce on children are tremendous. He may learn to deal with it; he may learn to "accept" the fact, but he will never get completely out of its shadow. When children see that their parents cannot hold their relationship together, they will doubt their own ability to maintain solid relationships. Statistics show that children of divorce are much more likely to divorce their own spouses than are children of intact families. Contentions and divorce are born out of selfishness and sin. May God help us not to set these examples.

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