

Learning to release . . .

“Kids are much like kites—struggling to become airborne, yet needing the stability of the string. A kite is not designed to be possessively protected inside the home. Though separation is painful, God designed your role as a parent to prepare ‘your kite’ for flight. As the fragile frame dives again and again, don’t be emotionally torn by the changing winds. Keep running with your child, releasing more and more string into the Lord’s sovereign hands.”¹

—June Hunt

Q: “My son is rebellious and is getting into trouble. Since he won’t listen to me, should I give up trying to tell him what is right?”

No. Even if your son continues to make choices that are wrong, as a parent, you are responsible for communicating what is right. You are not accountable for your son’s wrong decision, but you are accountable for your own right parenting. If you won’t try to teach your son what is right, who will?

“The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.”
(Proverbs 13:14)

Q: “My nineteen-year-old son is a college sophomore and wants to do things that I feel are wrong for him. Do I have the right to say no?”

If your son is earning his own living, buying his own food, paying his own rent, fueling his own car, and providing his own schooling, then he has earned the right to make his own decisions. However, if your son is not living autonomously, then he has not earned the “right” to make autonomous decisions. In that case, he needs to respect your right to make decisions on his behalf.

If he says, “That’s not fair,” simply explain that whoever assumes the responsibility has the authority. At any time should he want to shift all the responsibility to his shoulders, he will then have the right to make his own decisions.

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”
(Romans 13:1)

Surface Causes of Poor Parenting

Parents do not set out to be failures at child rearing. Although you may take your parenting role very seriously, beware of hidden traps that cause even the most dedicated parents to miss their goals.

Treasure seeking

- Prioritizing money and possessions.
- Pushing for prominence and success.
- Preferring pleasure and travel.

Rejection messages

- Lack of eye contact.
- Lack of physical contact.
- Lack of discipline.

Absentee parenting

- Two-career parents.
- Lack of quality time.

Power struggles

- Mother/father role reversals (passive father, controlling mother).
- A parent's unwillingness to admit mistakes.
- Parents competing with other parents through their children.

Spiritual roadblocks

- Serving God to the detriment of your family.
- Misunderstanding the character of God.

*"You take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge."
(Psalm 31:4)*

Letting Go

Your child is a temporary gift from God.² The more you pray and trust in God's personal involvement in your child's life, the less possessive and reluctant you will be to release your child into His hands.

- Let go of seeing your child as an extension of yourself.
- Let go of your desire to possess your child.
- Let go of the inclination to control your child.
- Let go of your expectations for your child.
- Let go of jumping in to save your child from failure.
- Let go of seeking harmony at all times.
- Let go of your need to be appreciated.
- Let go of parenthood as your primary identity.

Key Verse to Memorize

*"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
(Ephesians 6:4)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

1 Thessalonians 2:7–12

How to Help and Heal Angry Children³

When parents structure their home according to God's Word, children learn to turn their destructive anger into constructive problems solving—they learn to be loving instead of angry.

- Listen with your ears and your heart. (James 1:19)
- Model repentance and forgiveness. (Matthew 5:23–24)
- Establish reasonable, age-appropriate "boundaries" with rewards and repercussions.⁴ (1 Thessalonians 4:1)
- Enforce boundaries consistently. (Proverbs 19:18)
- Let your discipline be based on love, never on anger. (Revelation 3:19)
- Love your spouse openly and unconditionally. (Ephesians 5:33)
- Validate each child by refusing to show favoritism. (James 2:1)
- Encourage and affirm each child daily. (Psalm 127:3)

*"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses."
(Proverbs 10:12)*

Parents of Prodigals

The parable of the prodigal son describes the response of a parent suffering the pain of raising a child who rejects his early training and goes his own way. Only when you become desperate enough to *release* your children into the Lord's loving hands, will He have the full freedom to work in their lives.

Receive the compassion of God.
(Lamentations 3:22)

Examine your emotions. (Psalm 139:23–24)

Lease the past in the past. (Isaiah 43:18–19)

Entrust the future to God. (2 Timothy 1:12)

Acknowledge your need for the Lord.
(Galatians 2:20)

Seek to build a new relationship with your child.
(Colossians 3:13)

Exchange your pain for God's peace. (Isaiah 26:3–4)

Related Topics . . .

- Adoption:
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1. The illustration is an adaptation from Erma Bombeck, "Kids Are Like Kites," publication information unknown.
2. See Marilyn McGinnis, *Parenting without Guilt* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life, 1987), 101–13.
3. For this section see Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger* (Amityville, NY: Calvary, 1997), 30–51; Wayne A. Mack, "Developing Marital Unity Through a Common Philosophy of Raising Children," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 3, no. 4 (1979): 37–56.
4. See June Hunt, *Bonding with Your Teen Through Boundaries* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001).



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