

CHILDREN AND PARENTS LIVING FOR THE LORD

Ephesians 6:1-4

“The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize their teachers.” – Socrates, 470-399 B.C. How do children honor the Lord? What is a parent’s goal in raising children?

1.CHILDREN ARE TO OBEY AND HONOR PARENTS – Ephesians 6:1-3

- Children are to obey their parents – verse 1. Children are to obey “in the Lord”, for His glory and by His power. This excludes obeying sinful commands from parents. But children please God by obeying parents – Colossians 3:20. Obey means to “hear under” – listening and then doing it. This is also “right” by nature and by God’s Law. Depravity includes disobedience to parents – Romans 1:28-30; 2 Timothy 3:1,2. Verbally or physically abusing parents was a capital offense in Israel – Exodus 21:15,17. This obedience is for the children while they are growing up in their parents’ household.
- Children are to honor their parents. Honor means to count as valuable or revere. This is a life-long command – Matthew 15:4-6; 1 Timothy 5:4,8. Paul quotes from the Law – Deuteronomy 5:16. This command had a special promise – Proverbs 3:1,2; 4:10. God promises both blessing and safekeeping. This is a general promise. “Going well” and to be “long-lived” is the result of honoring our parents. It means the blessing of *“stability and discipline necessary to function well in family and society.”* You are endangering yourself by not obeying your parents. You are also dishonoring God by not honoring your parents.
- Jesus Christ is the Ultimate Example of obedience to His earthly parents – Luke 2:51,52. Jesus Christ is the Ultimate Example of obedience to His Heavenly Father – Isaiah 50:5-6; Matthew 26:39; John 8:29.

2.FATHERS ARE TO DISCIPLINE YOUR CHILDREN – Ephesians 6:4

- This teaching applies to both parents, but especially to fathers who are the head of the wife and household, responsible for training the children. In the Roman world, fathers had absolute control over the children and could even have them put to death or sold into slavery. The Bible teaches a new way, beginning with what we are not to do.
- Because we desire to honor the Lord, we are not to provoke our children to anger – Colossians 3:21. This anger *“suggests a repeated ongoing pattern of treatment that gradually builds up a deep-seated anger and resentment that boils over in outward hostility.”* – John MacArthur. How can we exasperate our kids or embitter them? Fathers can exasperate kids through cold, excessive severe discipline with unreasonable demands, or humiliation of the child. Other ways include: *“failing to take into account the fact that they are kids; Comparing them to others; Disciplining them inconsistently; Failing to express approval, even at small accomplishments; Failing to express our love to them; Disciplining them for reasons other than willful disobedience and defiance; Pressuring them to pursue our goals, not their own; Withdrawing love from them or overprotecting them.”* – Tony Merida, Ephesians.

- Because we desire to honor the Lord, we are to bring our children up with care or nourish them – Ephesians 5:29. *“Let them be kindly cherished.”* – John Calvin, 1500’s.
- Because we desire to honor the Lord, we are to train and instruct our children. Training involves discipline, correction, and guidance for responsible living. It also includes correcting discipline – Proverbs 13:24; 29:15. *“Spare the rod and spoil the child – that is true. But beside the rod keep an apple to give him when he has done well.”* – Martin Luther, 1500’s. God disciplines His children and He is our example – Hebrews 12:5-11.
- Because we want to honor the Lord, we also instruct them in the Lord Jesus. Instruction has to do with teaching, counsel, and includes verbal warning – Proverbs 6:20-23. Our instruction proceeds from and is prescribed by the Lord in the Bible, *“The Lord is seen as the Ultimate Instructor who works through the father.”* Above all, Give them Jesus! The Bible is not just a bunch of rules and principles, or a book of hero stories or morality, but it is focused on One Person, God’s King and Messiah Jesus Christ. We want to bring them to Jesus – Mark 10:14. Set a Christ-centered example for your children. But salvation is not automatic and God has no grandchildren. Only the Holy Spirit can transform our children.
- Because we want to honor the Lord, let us admit our own weaknesses and desperate need of grace. *“The obvious difference between Paul and us is that Paul bragged about his weaknesses, and we try to hide it.”* – Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Give Them Grace*. Weak parents have a mighty Savior – Jesus!
- Because we want to honor the Lord, we need the Holy Spirit to be godly fathers and parents – Ephesians 5:18. The fruit of the Spirit flows from the control of the Spirit. God’s love is the model for every parent and His gift to every child of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Point our children to the Father. God is the Ultimate Father we need – *“Jesus knows that a father’s love is what we always longed for. He invites us to become God’s beloved child. He teaches us to speak to Him as our dear Father...”* – Phil Ryken.
- Seek to live now so you will not have regrets later. *“My family’s all grown up and the kids are gone. But if I had to do it all over again, this is what I would do. I would love my wife more in front of my children. I would laugh with my children more – at our mistakes and our joys...I would pray more diligently for my family...I would do more things together with my children. I would encourage them more and bestow more praise. I would pay more attention to little things, like deeds and words of thoughtfulness. And then finally, if I had to do it all over again, I would share God more intimately with my family; every ordinary thing that happened in every ordinary day I would use to direct them to God.”* – quoted by John MacArthur, *Ephesians*. Time flies. Use the short opportunity you have to impact kids for Christ now - Deuteronomy 6:5-9.

Concluding Applications:

- Are you in right relationship with the Heavenly Father? Do you desire to obey Him?
- How are you honoring the Lord as a child or a parent?
- Are you responding to God’s discipline with fresh obedience, knowing it is for God’s glory and your own good?
- Are you speaking the gospel to the hearts of your children?
- DON’T GIVE UP. CRY OUT FOR THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT TO LIVE GOD’S WAY.