

Discovering our purpose

The children's response to parents
(Eph. 6:1-4)

Intro: Paul's letter to Ephesians is wonderfully practical. It begins in the mind of God in eternity and ends up in every-day life! And there is a clear connection. Paul shows us what God planned for his people before the beginning of all things. The people that He has saved exist to glorify Him, just as Christ has glorified Him; and we do that by the lifestyle that we lead. That lifestyle includes how we conduct ourselves in the home. Last week we talked about the relationship of the husband and the wife in marriage. Now in chapter six Paul turns his attention to the relationship of the parent and the child.

Paul does not give us an extensive lists of "do's" and "don'ts" for parents or kids, though such may be helpful as guidelines to good parenting. Instead, he gets right to the heart of the issue. He gives us role-specific commands that essentially will guide both parents and children in a way that is best for us and that gives Him glory.

Obey your parents

The exhortation is addressed to children. As the letter was read, they would hear Paul's words in the assembly. All would learn what they needed to do. But perhaps Paul particularly had in mind children who were Christians.

"In the Lord" seems to modify "obey" meaning under the Lord's control as a member of his body. It would suggest that of all children, Christian children should be the best children.

"Obey" means just what it implies. Do what they say. Respect their authority. The Greek term is from the word for "hear" and a preposition that suggests order or rank. So it would be like "listen to with the view toward doing what they say".

Principles of Biblical "obedience":

Prompt--not after you've been reminded a dozen times but when asked.

Precise--not the way you want to do it but the way Mom and Dad say.

Complete--not quitting before the job is done but finishing it.

Cheerful--not with an attitude but glad to help out.

Disobedience to parents is a serious offense against God!

Rom. 1:30

2 Tim. 3:2

Deut. 21:18-21

"For this is right" or "righteous". It is just as important for children who are Christians to understand that their faith produces righteousness in them by their compliance with their parent's wishes just as it produces love and submission on the part of their parents. For those who want to

please God and go to heaven, the right thing is all-important to them! Though it may be culturally assumed that children will disobey their parents, the Christian young person shows his faith by being obedient to his parents. In doing so, even as a teenager, he proves himself to be like the Lord (Lk. 2:51); and isn't that what God's purpose is? This first test of submission will likely determine a child's attitude toward all authority. Children who are unyielding to parents are usually disobedient to all other forms of authority as well: school, government, spiritual. When this order breaks down the whole spiritual climate of a society is impaired. This is why John the Baptist was said to have this mission in preparing Israel for the Messiah: "to restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers".

Honor your father and mother

Paul borrows language from Moses's farewell address to the Jews before they entered Canaan. As Moses reviews the Ten Commandments he urges the children, "Deut. 5:16".

"First" command with a promise may mean it is the first of the Ten Commandments that has a promise of encouragement connected with it. The Greek term "prote" may mean "foremost" or "preeminent", having primacy. For the child, obedience to parents is of prime importance in preparing him for a life of obedience to God. God has chosen to give children motivation in that direction by accompanying this primary command with a promise.

The promise is a general principle of life: "that it may be well with you and that you will live long". A parent knows the dangers and pitfalls of life and the right way to live to avoid unhappiness and death.

What does it mean to "honor" father and mother?

To "honor" parents is first to treat them with respect, to exalt them in our hearts in gratitude for the love they have given and the sacrifices they have made in our behalf.

How do you speak to your parents? Do you address them politely? Do you make them feel that you appreciate what they have done for you? How do you speak about your parents to others? Do you use your conversations with friends as a forum to complain and criticize them?

30:11 There is a kind of *man* who curses his father, And does not bless his mother.

20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.

30:17 The eye that mocks a father, And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

Do you have respect for the possessions of your parents?

28:24 He who robs his father or his mother, And says, "It is not a transgression," Is the companion of a man who destroys.

Do you have regard for your parent's life experiences and journey of faith?

23:22 Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old. 23 Buy truth, and do not sell it, *Get* wisdom and instruction and understanding. 24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, And he who begets a wise son will be glad in him. 25 Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.

To provide for their needs in old age.

The Lord gave particular emphasis to the idea of honoring parents in old age, of providing their needs. He rebuked the Jews for setting aside the word of God for a tradition in which they devoted what they had to God and would not care for their parents (Mt. 15:1).

19:26 He who assaults *his* father *and* drives *his* mother away Is a shameful and disgraceful son.

Paul urges believers to show their faith by providing for their aged parents: 1 Tim. 5:4,16

Conclusion: When children obey and honor their parents the way is prepared for a happy and peaceful home. Where they are resistant there is pain and anxiety constantly. 17:25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, And bitterness to her who bore him. 17:21 He who begets a fool *does so* to his sorrow, And the father of a fool has no joy. Instead, give your parents reasons to be proud of you! 27:11 Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, That I may reply to him who reproaches me.