



## Silverdale Baptist

VICTORY IN RELATIONSHIPS ~ VICTORY IN THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP  
EPHESIANS 6:1-4 ~ 05/13-14/2023

### Big Idea

Although the parent-child relationship can be complicated, the Bible clearly explains how both can walk in victory.

### Getting Started

**As a parent, what was the most challenging part of your relationship with your child?**

**What was the most challenging part of your relationship with your parents as a child?**

Both parents and children play a part in making their relationship with each other work well. The Bible tells what role we each play and how to honor God in our relationships.

### Learn

## How can children help the relationship?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPH 6:1-4.

**What are the two important principles in verses 1-3 that will help the child in relation to their parents?**

**What is the difference between *obedience* and *honor*?**

## 1. Display obedience to your parents.

*Obedience teaches you to submit to authority.*

**As children, what life principle did we learn by obeying our parents?**

**How does the principle of *submission to authority* help us adults?**

One of the questions that sometimes is asked is, "How long should a child obey his or her parents?" As Pastor Tony pointed out, the Bible doesn't say we should obey our parents until they die. Ephesians 5:21, just before the passage we are studying, says

*"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."*

How long should a child obey their parents? The principle is we should obey until we get married or leave home.

## 2. Demonstrate honor to your parents.

**What does it mean to honor your parents?**

**If your parents still live, what can you do to show them respect, honor, and love this week?**

How can parents help the relationship?

## 1. Don't exasperate your children.

**What does it mean to *exasperate* your children?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 3:21

**How does Col. 3:21 compare to Eph. 6:4?**

## 2. Lovingly nurture your children.

**In verse 4, what is the opposite of exasperating your children?**

Pastor Tony gave us three factors contributing to exasperation and three application points to help us understand how to parent in a way that honors God. If you still have children living at

home, this message may have arrived on time and saved you from some real grief. However, if you have already made a mess of things, don't worry. It is never too late to ask for forgiveness and start encouraging your children and grandchildren. How? The following application points put into practice will make a difference whether your children are 4 or 44.

## Apply

3 factors that contribute to exasperation.

- Perceived inaccessibility
- A critical spirit.
- Hypocritical inconsistency.

**How are you helping your children see you as accessible?**

**Does your behavior match what you say you believe?**

- Build them up with your words.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PROVERBS 12:25

**Would your children say you are critical or encouraging?**

- Build them up with your discipline.

**Do you use discipline to train or to show your anger? Why?**

- Build them up with the Lord.

**What steps will you take this week to build up your children, regardless of their age?**

## Pray

Father, thank You for the reminder that our children and grandchildren are gifts from You. Show us how to be kind, gracious, and loving. Teach us to lead in love. Amen.

## Dig Deeper

### LIVING THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

*Ephesians 6:1–9*

After watching a television presentation about rebellious youth, a husband said to his wife, “What a mess! Where did our generation go wrong?” The wife calmly answered, “We had children.”

It seems no matter where we look in modern society, we see antagonism, division, and rebellion. Husbands and wives are divorcing each other; children are rebelling against their parents; and employers and employees are seeking for new ways to avoid strikes and keep the machinery of industry running productively. We have tried education, legislation, and every other approach, but nothing seems to work. Paul's solution to the antagonisms in the home and in society was *regeneration*—a new heart from God and a new submission to Christ and to one another. God's great program is to "gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). Paul indicated that this spiritual harmony begins in the lives of Christians who are submitted to the lordship of Christ.

In this section Paul admonished four groups of Christians about how they could have harmony in Christ.

### **Christian Children (Eph. 6:1–3)**

Paul did not tell the parents to admonish the children; he did it himself. Children were present in the assembly when this letter was read. Did they understand all that Paul wrote? Do we understand it all? Christian families attended the public worship together, and no doubt the parents explained the Word to the children when they were at home. He gave them four reasons why they should obey their parents.

***They are Christians ("in the Lord," v. 1a).*** This argument is an application of the theme of the entire section, which is "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21). When a person becomes a Christian, he is not released from normal obligations of life. If anything, his faith in Christ ought to make him a better child in the home. To the Colossians Paul enforced his admonition with "for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. 3:20). Here is harmony in the home: the wife submits to the husband "as unto Christ"; the husband loves his wife "even as Christ also loved the church"; and the children obey "in the Lord."

***Obedience is right (v. 1b).*** There is an order in nature, ordained of God, that argues for the rightness of an action. Since the parents brought the child into the world, and since they have more knowledge and wisdom than the child, it is right that the child obey his parents. Even young animals are taught to obey. The "modern version" of Ephesians 6:1 would be, "Parents, obey your children, for this will keep them happy and bring peace to the home." But this is contrary to God's order in nature.

***Obedience is commanded (v. 2a).*** Here Paul cites the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16) and applies it to the New Testament believer. This does not mean that the Christian is "under the Law," for Christ has set us free from both the curse and the bondage of the Law (Gal. 3:13; 5:1). But the righteousness of the Law is still a revelation of the holiness of God, and the Holy Spirit enables us to practice that righteousness in our daily lives (Rom. 8:1–4). All of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament epistles for the Christian to observe except, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." It is just as wrong for a New Testament Christian to dishonor his parents as it was for an Old Testament Jew.

To "honor" our parents means much more than simply to obey them. It means to show them respect and love, to care for them as long as they need us, and to seek to bring honor to them by the way we live. A young couple came to see me about getting married, and I asked if their parents agreed to the wedding. They looked at each other in embarrassment, then confessed, "We were hoping you wouldn't ask about that." I spent the next hour trying to convince them that their parents had a right to rejoice in this event, and that to exclude them would cause wounds that might never heal. "Even if they are not believers," I said, "they are your parents, and you owe them love and respect." They finally agreed, and the plans we made together made both families happy. Had we followed the couple's original plans, the

two of them would have lost their testimony with their relatives, but, instead, they were able to give a good witness for Jesus Christ.

**Obedience brings blessing (vv. 2b–3).** The fifth commandment has a promise attached to it: “That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Ex. 20:12). This promise originally applied to the Jews as they entered Canaan, but Paul applied it to believers today. He substituted “earth” for “land” and tells us that the Christian child who honors his parents can expect two blessings. It will be well with him, and he will live long on the earth. This does not mean that everyone who died young dishonored his parents. He was stating a principle: when children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives. But life is not measured only by quantity of time. It is also measured by quality of experience. God enriches the life of the obedient child no matter how long he may live on the earth. Sin always robs us; obedience always enriches us.

So, the child must learn early to obey father and mother, not only because they are his parents, but also because God has commanded it to be so. Disobedience to parents is rebellion against God. The sad situation in homes today is the result of rejecting God’s Word (Rom. 1:28–30; 2 Tim. 3:1–5). By nature, a child is selfish, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, a child can learn to obey his parents and glorify God.

### **Christian Fathers (Eph. 6:4)**

If left to themselves, children will be rebels, so it is necessary for the parents to train their children. Years ago, the then Duke of Windsor said, “Everything in the American home is controlled by switches—except the children!” The Bible records the sad results of parents neglecting their children, either by being bad examples to them or failing to discipline them properly. David pampered Absalom and set him a bad example, and the results were tragic. Eli failed to discipline his sons and they brought disgrace to his name and defeat to the nation of Israel. In his latter years, even Isaac pampered Esau, while his wife showed favoritism to Jacob; and the result was a divided home. Jacob was showing favoritism to Joseph when God providentially rescued the lad and made a man out of him in Egypt. Paul tells us that the father has several responsibilities toward his children.

**He must not provoke them.** In Paul’s day, the father had supreme authority over the family. When a baby was born into a Roman family, for example, it was brought out and laid before the father. If he picked it up, it meant he was accepting it into the home. But if he did not pick it up, it meant the child was rejected. It could be sold, given away, or even killed by exposure. No doubt a father’s love would overcome such monstrous acts, but these practices were legal in that day. Paul told the parents, “Don’t use your authority to abuse the child, but to encourage and build the child.” To the Colossians he wrote, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Col. 3:21). So, the opposite of “provoke” is “encourage.”

I was addressing a group of Christian students on the subject of prayer, and was pointing out that our Father in heaven is always available when we call. To illustrate it, I told them that the receptionist at our church office has a list of names prepared by me, and these people could get to me at any time, no matter what I was doing. Even if I was in a staff meeting, or in a counseling session, if any of these people phoned, she was to call me immediately. At the top of this list was my family. Even if the matter seems to me inconsequential, I want my family to know that I am available. After the service, one of the students said to me, “Would you adopt me? I can never get through to my father, and I need his encouragement so much!”

Fathers provoke their children and discourage them by saying one thing and doing another—by always blaming and never praising, by being inconsistent and unfair in discipline, and by showing

favoritism in the home, by making promises and not keeping them, and by making light of problems that, to the children, are very important. Christian parents need the fullness of the Spirit so they can be sensitive to the needs and problems of their children.

**He must nurture them.** The text reads, “But nurture them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.” The verb translated “bring them up” is the same word that is translated “nourisheth” in Ephesians 5:29. The Christian husband is to nourish his wife and his children by sharing love and encouragement in the Lord. It is not enough to nurture the children physically by providing food, shelter, and clothing. He must also nurture them emotionally and spiritually. The development of the Boy Jesus is our example: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Here is balanced growth: intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social. Nowhere in the Bible is the training of children assigned to agencies outside the home, no matter how they might assist. God looks to the parents for the kind of training that the children need.

**He must discipline them.** The word “nurture” carries with it the idea of learning through discipline. It is translated “chastening” in Hebrews 12. Some modern psychologists oppose the old-fashioned idea of discipline, and many educators follow their philosophy. “Let the children express themselves!” they tell us. “If you discipline them, you may warp their characters.” Yet discipline is a basic principle of life and an evidence of love. “Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth” (Heb. 12:6). “He that spareth him chasteneth him diligently” (Prov. 13:24, literal translation).

We must be sure, however, that we discipline our children in the right manner. To begin with, we must discipline in love and not in anger, lest we injure either the body or the spirit of the child, or possibly both. If we are not disciplined, we surely cannot discipline others, and “flying off the handle” never made either a better child or a better parent.

Also, our discipline must be fair and consistent. “My father would use a cannon to kill a mosquito!” a teenager once told me. “I either get away with murder, or get blamed for everything!” Consistent, loving discipline gives assurance to the child. He may not agree with us, but at least he knows that we care enough to build some protective walls around him until he can take care of himself.

“I never knew how far I could go,” a wayward girl told me, “because my parents never cared enough to discipline me. I figured that if it wasn’t important to them, why should it be important to me?”

**He must instruct and encourage them.** This is the meaning of the word “admonition.” The father and mother not only use actions to raise the child, but also words. In the Book of Proverbs, for example, we have an inspired record of a father sharing wise counsel with his son. Our children do not always appreciate our counsel, but that does not eliminate the obligation we have to instruct and encourage them. Of course, our instruction must always be tied to the Word of God (see 2 Tim. 3:13–17).

When the Supreme Court handed down its ruling against required prayer in the public schools, the famous editorial cartoonist Herblock published a cartoon in the *Washington Post* showing an angry father waving a newspaper at his family and shouting, “What do they expect us to do—listen to the kids pray at home?” The answer is: Yes! Home is the place where the children ought to learn about the Lord and the Christian life. It is time that Christian parents stop “passing the buck” to Sunday School teachers and Christian day-school teachers, and start nurturing their children.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 52–55.