

**06/02/24      The Spirit-Filled Family: Children Obey Your Parents  
Ephesians 6:1-3**

Welcome...

We come in our journey in Ephesians to the final chapter. Ephesians chapter six begins by transition from the Spirit filled marriage to the Spirit filled family.

**Let's read Ephesians 6:1-3...**

The birth of a baby is a wonderful thing, and we celebrate with the Macfarlane family the arrival of baby Charlotte.

Children are a blessing and it is a joy and privilege to see them grow. As a child matures, we capture precious moments that you treasure forever.

I remember when our children were young and I was showing them how to do a plank. They asked, "why do we do planks?" I answered, "so we can have six pack abs." One of our sons pulled up his shirt and said, "look I have a 12 pack." I explained that those were his ribs that he was pointing to.

Children are precious, but they are also sinners.

"The wicked are estranged from the womb, these who speak lies go astray from birth." Psalm 58:3

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." Psalm 51:5

We often hear that man becomes a sinner when he sins. The Bible teaches that man sins because he is a sinner.

Romans 5:12 says, "sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all men, because all sinned."

Sin makes it difficult to live out God's design and commands for both the parents and the child.

J.C. Ryle wrote, "A mother cannot tell what her tender infant may grow up to be, tall, short, weak, or strong, wise or foolish: he may be any of these or not, it is all uncertain. But the one thing a mother can say with certainty is my child will have a corrupt and sinful heart."

Jesus said, in Matthew 7:19-20 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person."

Jesus teaches us that there is something far more fundamental to our sinfulness than the actual sins we commit. Our sins do not make us sinful. Rather, we commit sins because, at the very center of our lives, we are sinful.

Tedd Tripp in his book Shepherding a Child's Heart refers to engaging in "hand-to-hand combat on the world's smallest battlefield, the child's heart."

So, children need the gospel, and they need salvation in Christ. A changed life flows from salvation through faith in Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

The book of Ephesians has taught us that we have been chosen from before the foundation of the world by grace... Christ atoned for our sins by his blood... we heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation... having believed, we were marked in Christ with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit; we were saved by grace through faith completely apart from works ... but now, we have a life to live for his glory... a life filled with good works. Ephesians 2:10 says “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Children obeying parents is a good work that God has prepared in advance.

**Main point: Ephesians 6:1-3 describes three elements of a child's obedience to parents.**

**The Requirement in verse 1a...**

**The Reason in verse 1b...**

**The Reward in verses 2-3...**

My prayer is for the children here will obey a perfect heavenly Father and honor obey imperfect parents, and that parents understand that there is an instruction manual in how to parent your child – it is called the Bible and it is filled with very wise and practical instruction and we must be faith also obey what our heaven Father commands of us as parents – for His glory and the good of our family.

## **I. The Requirement**

Paul begins by addressing children who are responsible for obeying their parents “in the Lord” (6:1). On the surface, it may appear that Paul is limiting the scope of children's obedience to parents who are Christians (that is, “in the Lord.”

However, the parallel passage in Colossians 3:20, helps us better understand Paul's thought here in Ephesians 6:1. Colossians 3:20 says, “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.” So in Ephesians 6:1 the phrase “in the Lord” qualifies the verb “obey,” explaining that children must be subject to their parents as their way of being subject to the Lord.

When a child or teen 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.

I did not grow up in a Christian home. My parents had a Bible that rested under a coffee table. That Bible was big enough to choke a mule, but it was never opened and read. But when I was invited to a youth group retreat and heard the gospel and came to faith in Christ at the age of 16 my life changed because God changed my heart. When I read Ephesians 6:1-3, my earnest desire was to obey God by obeying and honoring my parents.

The command here in verse 1 is a present imperative which stresses that the obedience of children is an ongoing action. The verb “to obey” is in the active voice, demonstrating a child's responsibility to carry out this instruction before God. The only exception is if your parents ask you disobey God.

Otherwise, however, a child is to obey his or her parents “in all things.”

A definition would help here: Obedience is the willing submission of one person to the authority of another. It means more than a child doing what he is told. It means doing what he is told—Without Challenge, Without Excuse, Without Delay

Often, submission and obedience mean the child does what he doesn't feel like doing, at least what he doesn't feel like doing it at that moment.

Children, if your parent wakes you up and announces that they are taking you to Disneyland I would guess that your response and cooperation would be one of unhindered submission and obedience. You gladly participate without challenge, without excuse, without delay because you get to do what you want to do.

But if your parent wakes you up and says, "Good morning! It is Saturday morning and after breakfast you are going to help clean the house, starting with your bedroom." Will you honor and obey?

Now this is a good time to remember the context, Ephesians 5:18...

A child's obedience to Ephesians 6:1 is dependent upon his obedience to Ephesians 5:18: "be filled with the Spirit."

You see, parent and child are in the same boat. You are both under God's authority. You have differing roles, but the same Master. As a parent, you have authority because God calls you to be an authority in your child's life. You have the authority to act on behalf of God and you must do this by faith. Your right to parent your children is tied to what God has called you to do, not to your own agenda.

Children, you must live under God's ordained authority. When you disobey your parents, you are disobeying God. It is God who is not being honored when you dishonor your parents.

This is God's requirement: Children Obey Your Parents

## **II. The Reason**

Verse 1b...for this is right." This is the motivation for children to obey their parents. It is the right thing to do before the Lord. Colossians 3:20 states it a little more explicitly: "for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."

The basic reason for children to obey and honor their parents is simply that it is right. The rightness is not based on psychological case studies or other human evidence or theory, but on God's standard of right. It is God's declaration that makes it right.

The Greek word for "right" refers to that which is correct, just, righteous—to that which is exactly as it should be. For children to obey and honor their parents exactly as it should be because God commands are always right.

But Romans 1:28-30 describes the depravity of man and says, "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents."

2 Timothy 3:1-2 says, "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy."

So, we are called to swim upstream and go against the pattern of this world. Let's look at a couple illustrations that will help us see how wise and practical God's instructions are.

First, consider this funnel that shows the objectives of a parent to help their child to develop in a Christian home....

This second illustration from Ephesians 6:4 helps us to see that when our children are very young parents are to be actively engaged in instructing, training, and discipline them ... teaching them to obey without question, without delay, without excuse.

We have seen the requirement and the reason, now we are shown the reward.

### **III. The Reward**

The word obey in this verse is linked to the idea of “honor” in verses 2-3...

In verses 2-3 Paul quotes from the Ten Commandments given in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. The commandment we have today in Ephesians 6:1 for children to obey their parents will be the basis for your child beginning to see their need for a Savior.

Romans 3:19-20 says, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

God gives us His law as a tutor to lead us to the cross of Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:24 says, “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.”

As parents, a goal of simply having well behaved children totally misses the mark. The gospel of Jesus Christ does not simply provide information it promises internal transformation. When we fail to hold our kids to God’s standard, when we don’t require them to obey their parents, we rob them of the mercy of the gospel. They will not see their need for the Savior.

Verse 2 says...

Honor = to reverence, to esteem, hold in high regard, respect. Honor is a heart attitude of reverence and respect that parents must teach their children to have for their parents. Notice the honor is equally for both father and mother.

So in verses 2-3 Paul reiterates the fifth commandment God gave Moses in the Law (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) the first of the Ten Commandments with a specific promise (Eph. 6:2). In his quotation, though, Paul makes a minor change to apply the text more generally to his readers’ new situation. The original commandment in Deuteronomy 5:16 offered blessing in the Promised Land (Israel) for children who honored their parents: “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you.”

But Ephesians 6:2-3 is written to mostly Gentile believers in Ephesus. They were not the recipients of the Law of Moses, were not obligated to its numerous mandates, and were not the intended beneficiaries of its promises.

So Paul leaves out the final clause of the commandment, generalizing the theological principle that applies even to Christians today: Obedience to parents brings with it a blessing in this world, just as it brought with it a blessing to the Israelite children. Paul says that submission to parents will lead to wellness and long life (Eph. 6:3).

Of course, this isn’t a guarantee that those who honor their fathers and mothers will never get sick and will live to be a hundred! Rather, Paul is presenting proverbial wisdom: Children who learn from the wisdom of their parents will avoid all sorts of destructive hardships and even deadly consequences. There will be a quality of life and quantity of life.

In God's ordering of the family, He has placed parents in authority over children to teach them to obey because a child needs the wisdom, guidance, and protection only loving fathers and mothers can provide. The Christian home is meant to be a school for life lessons. Parents are meant to be teachers of truth and trainers in righteousness. They are to live the gospel of Christ and share the good news of the gospel with their children. We will see this more next week in Ephesians 6:4

Children who still live at home, do you honor your father and mother? Parent, do you teach your children to honor you? Fathers, do you make certain that your children are respecting their mother and speaking words of honor toward her? Mothers, do you teach your children how important it is for them to honor their Father?

Let's pray...