

Small Group Discipleship Guide

Ice Breaker

Question: When have you seen someone exercise their authority over another person in a God-honoring way? When have you seen someone abusing their authority over another person? What happened?

Scripture Reading

Have someone read **Ephesians 6:1-4** aloud:

“Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. ² “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: ³ If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. The overarching plan of God involves uniting everything under the authority of Christ and sharing His inheritance with believers who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. Although the Church is imperfect, how does it display the wisdom of God as He fulfills His plan to the praise of His glory? (cf. Eph 1:9-12)
2. Children are instructed to obey and honor their parents. How have you benefited from obeying and honoring your parents?
3. Parents are not to provoke children to anger but to raise them with discipline and instruction from the Lord. What are some practical ways of raising children in this way?
4. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, which is displayed through mutual submission and proper relationships within the Church, involves placing oneself under the authority of others. How do you feel/react when you are required to do so?

Going Deeper

5. Authority in the Church ultimately derives from God the Father, and is given through Christ Jesus as believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit. What are some of the benefits of the proper exercise of God's authority in the Church?
6. What are some good ways, as parents, to avoid provoking your children to anger?
7. What are some ways to raise a child to be disciplined in the instruction of the Lord, rather than to treat discipline as punishment for a child who doesn't obey you?

Personal Reflection (3 minutes, quiet)

Read this slowly and sit with it:

God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. ¹⁰ And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. ¹¹ Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. ~ Ephesians 1:9-11(NLTSE)

Ask yourself: - How is God bringing everything together under the authority of Christ in your life right now? – How is everything working out according to God's plan?