

## **Godly Family Life Ephesians 6:1-4**

### **Introduction**

Our text tonight shows that children were with their parents in the meeting of the church. The apostle speaks directly to the children, not just the parents.

Jesus told His disciples to let the little children come to Him. Of such is the kingdom of heaven. Jesus values children, and so do His followers. A radical change from the culture of the Roman empire, where unwanted babies were abandoned and destroyed.

Grateful for the children who are with us in this evening. Let me encourage both parents and children to talk with one another later this evening or this week about the Scriptural commands Paul gives here.

<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

1. God's Directives to Children (1-3)

## 2. God's Directives to Parents (4)

### **1. God's Directives to Children (1-2)**

<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

Obey—to hear under; you don't have to be forced to comply; you respond to the voice of your mom or dad and submit to it

In the Lord—this command links to the command to be filled with the Spirit (5:18), who produces our glad willingness to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (5:21)

A child who has reverent awe for the Lord desires to do His will. Here is His will for you.

For this is right—it is righteous; it conforms to God's perfect standard of right and wrong, His created order dating all the way back to the creation mandate and blessing in Genesis 1.

Obey in absolutely everything? Unsaved parent?

Should be the norm, as in your submission to all other authorities, unless you are commanded to do what God forbids or are forbidden to do what God commands.

Very few tests of your obedience fall into that category.

Does this command to obey parents hold sway after you are on your own?

That does not appear to be the intent. You have started your own family, which involves leaving father and mother.

So realize you have only a window of time to display reverence for God in this area. See to it that you live righteously. Stop listening to a lying world and listen to God instead.

Honor—to treat as valuable; more than servile obedience; love, respect, affection  
Your father and mother—both!

Even after you are on your own, you can show honor to your parents as those God used to bring you into the world and to train you (however well or badly they did that). For instance, Paul teaches that children and grandchildren are responsible to care for their parents and grandparents (discussing caring for widows). And that failure to do so is worse than what unbelievers do (1 Timothy 5:8).

The first commandment with a promise—the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment of the 10 commandments (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16)—bridging our obligations to God (1-4) and to others (6-10); has a promise attached

“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

The land—the promised land of Canaan  
Obedience to godly parents would preserve godliness from one generation to the next. When ungodliness took over because the generations were no longer obedient to God but following after idols and the corrupt practices that went with idolatry, God removed them from the land into captivity.

A pattern of disobedience to one’s parents establishes a lifestyle that is self-destructive and therefore short. If you buck your parents, who love you and are commissioned by God to rear you in the fear and admonition of the Lord, how do you expect to submit to other God-established authorities (Romans 13) who do not know you personally nor care for you with parental love?

Reminds us that we answer not just to human beings in authority over us, but ultimately to God, who is the righteous Judge.

Huge societal effect. Godly parents with obedient children radically transform a civilization.

“Virtually all civilizations have regarded the recognition of parental authority as indispensable to a stable society.” John Stott

It is a decadent society on the brink of collapse that ignores it. Perilous times.

## **2. God's Directives to Parents (4)**

<sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

This portrait of a godly father is in stark contrast to the prevailing practice of the day in which Paul wrote.

William Barclay, quoted by Stott, 245: "A Roman father had absolute power over his family. He could sell them as slaves, he could make them work in his fields even in chains, he could take the law into his own hands, for the law was in his own hands, and punish as he liked, he could even inflict the death penalty on his child."

"Fathers" includes both fathers and mothers, just as the term "brothers" includes both brothers and sisters in the family of God.

A godly father and mother pattern their parenting after our heavenly Father, who has shown us steadfast love and grace, equipping us and teaching us so that we flourish.

Do not provoke your children to anger—to bring them along to deep-seated anger; an ongoing process

Other translations: exasperate them; goad them into resentment

Unreasonable demands that fail to take into account the limitations children have, harshness, cruelty, humiliation, over-indulgence, neglect, sarcasm, ridicule.

Christian brother in adolescent psychiatry—severe mental illness produced by ongoing abusive verbal behavior like this; significantly worse than the effect of even a one-time event of criminal physical abuse.

To abuse authority is every bit as bad as flouting authority, if not worse, because the damage is more far reaching.

You reproduce what you model. To train people you must show them how to live not just tell them.

I have found over the years that fathers that are consistently unreasonable in their demands of their wife and children tend to be unwilling to submit to authority themselves. They want to be a law to themselves. They have little moral ground to stand on when they demand obedience from others.

Bring them up—to nourish, provide for with tender care; the safety and security of gentle love

Discipline—child-training; includes physical punishment (Proverbs 13:24; 22:15—the rod of discipline)

Instruction—admonition; to put in mind, warn

This kind of child-rearing requires actively involved, loving, gentle, caring parenting.

No discipline is neglect that does damage to children. Common today. They are supposed to rear themselves, to find their own way. “Children know best.” Like sending mere children on a crusade to fight terrorists (Medieval)—catastrophic.

Proverbs 29:15

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

You are responsible for training your own kids. Who are you allowing to disciple them?

But parents must show discipline and self-control themselves.

Lloyd-Jones: “What right have you to say to your child that he needs discipline when you obviously need it yourself? Self-control, the

control of temper, is an essential prerequisite in the control of others.” Quoted by Stott, 249

## **Conclusion**

1. God’s Directives to Children (1-2)
2. God’s Directives to Parents (3-4)