

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue in our worship tonight, let me invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to Ephesians chapter 6.
2. We are looking tonight at verses 1-3.
3. We are still continuing with the theme of submission which began in chapter 5, verse 21.
4. Submission is the result of being filled with the Spirit.
5. When you're controlled by the Spirit, He puts a song in your heart that you sing with one another. He causes you to be thankful to God, and to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
6. We have already seen the first two examples of submission: wives to husbands and husbands to wives.
7. Now we're considering children to parents.
8. Paul says in **Ephesians 6:1-3 (NASB77)** ¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

9. We come now to one of the clearest, yet shortest, commands in all of Scripture regarding the child's relationship to his parents.
10. Paul says, "Children obey your parents."
11. He doesn't say to do this because this is what society teaches, which it doesn't.
12. He says to do this because it is "right."
13. We are breeding a generation of children who do not obey or honor their parents.
14. In fact, "Between 1977 and 1986, more than 300 parents were killed each year by their own children" (Article, "Why Kids Kill Parents," by Kathleen M. Heide. Psychology Today. <http://psychologytoday.com/articles/pto-19920901-000027.html>).
15. Why such a display of rebellion and lack of honor for parents?
16. Because of the curse of sin.
17. The curse of sin is built into the family.

18. The curse causes men to be oppressive, despotic, and chauvinistic; it causes women to want to rule over men and usurp their position of authority; and it causes children to rebel. It is only in a family where its members are Spirit-filled and obedient to the Word of God that God's standards for the family can be fulfilled.¹
19. As we come to this next group in the book of Ephesians, we are going to see *the action, the reason, the attitude, and the promise* given to children who obey and honor their parents.
20. Let's begin with *the action*.
21. The action can be summed up in one word in verse 1, "obey."

¹ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985, 1981). 75.

I. The Action (v.1a)

“Children, *obey* your parents in the Lord.”

A. The Meaning of Children

The word Paul uses for “children” (teknon) is used in the plural to refer to “children” and refers to “one’s immediate offspring, without specific reference to sex or age” (Lou-Nida).

Τέκνον occurs 99 times in the NT. It is esp. common in Matthew (14 times) and Luke (14 times) but appears not at all in Hebrews, James, or Jude. Τέκνον is etymologically related to → τίκτω (“bear / beget”) and refers to the *child* in relationship to its parents.²

We are all children in the strictest sense of this word. But the idea here is that anyone who is still under the roof of, under the domination of, under the control of, or under the responsibility of his parents is to obey them.³

B. The Command to Obey Your Parents

Children are commanded to “obey [their] parents.”

²Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993). 3:341.

³John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985, 1981). 86.

The word Paul uses for “Obey” (hupakouo) speaks about the action of children to their parents.

Hupakouo comes from from akouo, meaning, “to hear,” and the preposition hup, meaning “under.”

It speaks of the one hearing as being under the authority of someone else.⁴

Paul uses this same word in **Colossians 3:20 (NASB77)** ²⁰ Children, be *obedient* to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

Hupakouo occurs in both the present tense and the imperative mood to indicate that children are commanded to always obey their parents.

So the Holy Spirit is saying, “Children, get under the authority of your parents and listen.”

The society we live in is saying that we need to liberate children from parental authority. They are saying that a child must have the right to his own destiny, his own religion, his own thoughts, and his own perspective on economics and morality. But the Bible says the contrary. Children have no business being liberated; they are to get under the authority of their parents and

⁴Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:1.

listen to what parents say. That is God's basic design and always has been.⁵

1. Scripture is clear when it speaks about children obeying their parents:
 - a) **Proverbs 1:8-9 (NASB77)** ⁸ Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake your mother's teaching; ⁹ Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, And ornaments about your neck.
 - b) **Proverbs 3:1 (NASB77)** ¹ My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments.
 - c) **Proverbs 3:21-22 (NASB77)** ²¹ My son, let them not depart from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion, ²² So they will be life to your soul, And adornment to your neck.
 - d) **Proverbs 4:1 (NASB77)** ¹ Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding.
 - e) **Proverbs 4:10 (NASB77)** ¹⁰ Hear, my son, and accept my sayings, And the years of your life will be many.
 - f) **Proverbs 5:1-2 (NASB77)** ¹ My son, give attention to my wisdom, Incline your ear to

⁵ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985, 1981). 86.

my understanding; ² That you may observe discretion, And your lips may reserve knowledge.

- g) **Proverbs 6:20-22 (NASB77)** ²⁰ My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother; ²¹ Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. ²² When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you.
- h) **Proverbs 7:1-3 (NASB77)** ¹ My son, keep my words, And treasure my commandments within you. ² Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye. ³ Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart.
- i) **Proverbs 7:24 (NASB77)** ²⁴ Now therefore, *my sons*, listen to me, And pay attention to the words of my mouth.
- j) **Proverbs 23:22 (NASB77)** ²² Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

God's Word has established the standard. When God first introduced His law in Exodus 20, He stated in **Exodus 20:12 (NASB77)** in the 5th commandment, Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

This is the only commandment God gives that refers to how the family is to function.

The reason is because it is sufficient to produce right relationships both in the home and society. You don't need any other command.

This is the key to all relationships throughout society. When a person grows up with a sense of obedience, discipline, reverence, awe, and respect for his parents, he "will be someone who can make any other kind of human relationship work."⁶

2. God was very serious about a child's respect and obedience to his parents.
 - a) **Exodus 21:15 (NASB77)** ¹⁵ And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
 - b) **Exodus 21:17 (NASB77)** ¹⁷ And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
 - c) **Proverbs 30:17 (NASB77)** 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.

⁶ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985, 1981). 87.

All human relationships are based on what is learned in childhood. If you learn reverence, awe, respect, and obedience as a child, then the basis for having proper relationships will be present throughout your life. Undisciplined children who did not know how to respect authority or to honor their parents would have created a chaotic world, so God said to the Jews that the life of a rebellious child was to be taken away.⁷

3. Parents must teach their children to obey

This is one of the most basic and obvious responsibilities of parenthood. If we are going to raise a generation of faithful children to live righteous lives, they must begin by learning to obey their parents.⁸

This involves discipline and, when necessary, chastening and correction.

- a) Parents who truly love their children will reprove them when they disobey.

Proverbs 3:11-12 (NASB77) ¹¹ My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD, Or loathe His reproof, ¹² For whom the LORD

⁷ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985, 1981). 87.

⁸ John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting : Raising Your Child With Care, Compassion, and Common Sense* (Bedford, Tex.: Word Pub., 1998). 84.

loves He reproveth, Even as a father, the son in whom he delights.

- b) Parents who fail to correct their disobedient children are displaying a shameful lack of love.

Proverbs 13:24 (NASB77) ²⁴ He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

Both of these verses make corporal punishment—the rod—an essential part of parental discipline.

When Solomon spoke of the rod, he employed a Hebrew term for a branch or a stick. Rods were used by shepherds as walking sticks, as instruments of defense, as standards of measurement, as tools to guide the sheep, and as implements of reproof to control wayward lambs.⁹

When Solomon said in **Proverbs 23:13-14 (NASB77)** ¹³ Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. ¹⁴ You shall beat him with the rod, And deliver his soul from Sheol, he was referring to corporal punishment.

⁹John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting : Raising Your Child With Care, Compassion, and Common Sense* (Bedford, Tex.: Word Pub., 1998). 85.

The language of “beating” the child evokes images of child abuse for some. But Solomon is not sanctioning physical abuse or brutality. He is not giving parents encouragement to batter their children. The word translated “beat” both times it appears in Proverbs 23:13–14 simply means “to smite,” with no necessary connotations about the lightness or the severity of the blow being administered. The context makes clear, however, that the purpose of striking the child is to inflict pain, not injury. The pain inflicted is designed not to injure the child, but to make the consequence of disobedience unforgettable. If your spanking leaves bruises or welts that are still visible the following day, you are striking the child too hard. Short, stinging strokes to the backside (where the natural padding is most plentiful), will not injure the child, but should be painful enough to make the consequences of disobedience sufficiently distasteful and unforgettable.¹⁰

Proverbs 13:24 makes very clear that discipline is always to be administered with, and tempered by love.

- c) Chastening should also be firm and consistent.

¹⁰John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting : Raising Your Child With Care, Compassion, and Common Sense* (Bedford, Tex.: Word Pub., 1998). 86.

Proverbs 19:18 (NASB77) ¹⁸ Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.

- d) A disobedient child makes not only a spiritual disaster but an anti-social personality and, very often, a criminal adult.

Proverbs 29:15 (NASB77) ¹⁵ The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

C. The Meaning of “In the Lord”

When Paul says for “Children [to] obey [their] parents *in the Lord*,” he is saying that this pleases and honors the Lord.

Colossians 3:20 (NASB77) ²⁰ Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, *for this is well-pleasing to the Lord*.

Are children to obey their parents if their parents tell them to do evil? No. **Acts 5:29 (NASB77)** ²⁹ We must obey God rather than men.

When God’s commands intersect with men’s commands, you must obey God.

Daniel was told not to pray, but he prayed anyway (Dan.6:10). The apostles were told to stop preaching in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18), but they kept preaching (Acts 5:42).

Some parents have told their children not to worship Christ, or read the Bible, or pray, or fellowship with other believers, or share their testimony, or go to church. But the Bible says you're to do those things.

You're to obey your parents in everything, except when something is against God's stated revelation. When you obey God first, you must then be willing to suffer the consequences of violating your parents' desires.

Matthew 10:37-39 (NASB77) ³⁷ "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ "He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.

Luke 14:25-27 (NASB77) ²⁵ Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

II. The Reason (v.1b)

Paul gives the reason for this command at the end of verse 1. He says, "for this is right."

The word translated "right" (dikaios) means, "righteous, just, or right." It is used in the Scriptures to speak of God,

Christ, the Word, holy living, and obeying one's parents.
All of these are right and righteous.

God has established what is right:

A. God's Ordinances and Laws Are Right

Nehemiah 9:13 (NASB77) ¹³ "Then Thou didst come down on Mount Sinai, And didst speak with them from heaven; Thou didst give to them just ordinances and true laws, Good statutes and commandments.

B. God's Word is Right

Psalms 19:8 (NASB77) ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Psalms 119:128 (NASB77) ¹²⁸ Therefore I esteem right all *Thy* precepts concerning everything, I hate every false way.

C. God's Ways Are Right

Revelation 15:3 (NASB77) ³ And they * sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations.

D. God's Nature is Right

Revelation 16:5 (NASB77) ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous art Thou, who art and

who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things.

When children are submitting to their parents, they are doing what is right. They are lining themselves under the Law of God which says His commands are right.

III. The Attitude (v.2)

Paul now quotes the command that God gives the children of Israel in Exodus 20:12. He says, “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise). This “calls for children to respect, love, and obey their parents.”¹¹

Honor expresses the frame of mind from which obedience proceeds.¹² It is the attitude behind the act. The act is obedience, and honor is the attitude.

Remember that an act without the proper attitude is hypocrisy. If you do what your parents tell you to do but you hate it, gripe and bellyache, and you’re unwilling and nasty about it, then you’re a hypocrite!

¹¹William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Eph 6:2.

¹²Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002). 3:403.

If you do what your parents tell you to do but you're bitter, fearful, reluctant, and selfish, that's not the right spirit.

God is after the attitude much more than He's after the act, because if the attitude is right, the act will follow. But a right act with a wrong attitude is nothing but hypocrisy.¹³

A. Honor Refers to Reverence and Respect

The word Paul uses for "honor" (timao) means "to count as valuable, to value, to honor, to revere."¹⁴ It's used in John 5:23 to speak of Jesus and God the Father.

To honor someone therefore, is to evaluate that person accurately and honestly, and treat him with the deference, respect, reverence, kindness, courtesy, and obedience which his station in life or his character demands.¹⁵

We are to have this attitude of honor, respect, and reverence toward our parents all our lives.

¹³ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985, 1981). 91.

¹⁴ Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek NT* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, 1980). 540.

¹⁵ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:1.

B. Honor Includes Financial Support

Honoring our parents is not just an attitude. Jesus uses the phrase “Honor your father and mother” in Matthew 15:1-6 to refer to financial support.

He says in **Matthew 15:1-6 (NASB77)** ¹ Then some Pharisees and scribes * came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, ² "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." ³ And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴ "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, LET HIM BE PUT TO DEATH.' ⁵ "But you say, 'Whoever shall say to *his* father or mother, "Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given *to God*," ⁶ he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And *thus* you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

Jesus uses the word “honor” the same way it is used in 1 Timothy 5:17, where it speaks about money. Timao can be translated, “to give money to,” or “to pay.”

So, the Old Testament law of honoring one’s parents meant that as long as a person lived, he was to respect and support his parents.¹⁶

¹⁶ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985, 1981). 92.

IV. The Promise (v.3)

Paul continues in verse 3 by saying, “THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.”

There are two promises given in verse 3 to those who obey and honor their parents:

A. They Are Promised a Full, Rich Life

Paul says, “that it may be well with you.”

Warren Wiersbe says, “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.”¹⁷

Psalms 128:1-2 (NASB77) ¹ How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways. ² When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, You will be happy and it will be well with you.

B. They Are Promised a Long Life

¹⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989). Eph 6:1.

Paul continues, “and that you may live long on the earth.”

This refers to a long life—living out the fullness of time God has allotted to you.

The believer who honors his parents can know that his lifetime will be the full measure God intends, rather than cut short like those of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:5–10) and certain members of the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:30).¹⁸

CONCLUSION

1. So Paul says that Spirit-filled children will obey and honor their parents just as Spirit-filled husbands will love their wives and Spirit-filled wives will submit to their husbands.
2. Are you submitting to your parents or do you think you're at a place in your life where you don't have to submit any longer?
3. When we are obedient children, when we honor our parents, and when our relationships in the home are right, we'll have a full and rich lifetime here, we'll live with Him in the Kingdom for 1,000 years, and we'll live with Him in the new heavens and the new earth for eternity.¹⁹

¹⁸John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 315.

¹⁹John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family* (Panorama City: Word of Grace Communications, 1985, 1981). 93.

4. The first response we need to have tonight is not questioning whether we are obeying and honoring our parents, but whether we know Jesus as our Lord and Savior.
5. Before we can obey what we have been learning in Ephesians 6 tonight, we must make sure we're in the Lord and obeying the first basic command and that is to repent and believe in Jesus Christ.
6. If you're here tonight and not been delivered from your sin, I would like to encourage you to call on the One who can take away your sin—Jesus.
7. Let's pray.