

Ephesians 6

Ephesians 6:1—Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

In verses 1-4, Paul continues the theme of submission by addressing the parent-child relationship. Considering society's redefinition of right and wrong, children and parents need God's perspective concerning the matter. Pain and heartache result otherwise, validated by the turmoil overwhelming the American home today.

Scripture has much to say concerning the benefits of godly parenting. For instance, Proverbs 10:1 states:

...A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.
(Proverbs 10:1)

Children nurtured in the things of the Lord, who respond positively to the teaching and training, bring much joy to both mother and father. Psalm 127:3-5 states:

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they shall not be ashamed, when they speak with their enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127:3-5)

Parents who view their offspring as God's precious "gift," as priceless "arrows" that can deter a ruthless foe (warriors only get one shot per arrow while in battle, confirming that parents have one shot per child to "get it right"), these same parents will "not be ashamed" as those "arrows" are unleashed on a society opposed to truth (Psalm 127:3-5). The bold and righteous conduct of their children will validate the impact of godly instruction in the home.

Don't misunderstand. Godly parenting can't guarantee a compliant child. Trained children occasionally fail early in life yet find their way during adulthood (Proverbs 22:6). Hence, the parent is to nurture the child, trusting God that the child will be an asset in the kingdom.

"Children" (Ephesians 6:1) makes reference to offspring living under the parents' roof—not just young children. Paul states that they are to "obey" their "parents in the Lord." "Obey" means "to listen, attend, and submit." The phrase, "in the Lord," is significant, for children of godly parents are to obey their parents' wishes. Conversely, instruction from ungodly parents is not to be heeded should it lead to sin. Children are not required to comply in such cases, but should show respect to their parents while refusing the evil they have been encouraged to entertain.

"Children" should "obey" their "parents in the Lord" because it "is right" (Ephesians 6:1), "right" confirming that a child's obedience agrees with the God-ordained blueprint designed for healthy parent-child relationships. Since God designed the family structure for the good of parents and children alike, He knows best how it is to function. He states that children must submit to their parents' authority to reap the benefits of the family unit. These benefits will be discussed in more detail while studying Ephesians 6:3.

Power struggles between child and parent are rectified when the child understands that parents serve only as stewards of what God has entrusted to their care. The Father actually loans children

to parents so parents might raise and nurture them in the things of Himself (Colossians 3:20).