

Ephesians 6:2—Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),

Children are to “*honor*” their “*father and mother*” by treating them with the respect, courtesy, and obedience that their God-given position demands. God ordained the home as the proving ground for proper social behavior. Thus, children who “*honor*” their parents normally honor authority in general. They also learn (in most cases) to respect, reverence, and honor God—which by definition is the “*beginning of wisdom*” (Proverbs 9:10). They, in the process, discover that in losing their lives for others they find life (Matthew 16:25).

How encouraging to see young men and women develop friendships for the purpose of serving others! However, when proper instruction is lacking within the home, the child many times views relationships as a means of self-gratification, only interacting with others for what he or she might gain in the end. The result is devastating, as is evidenced by the masses who refuse to grow past their self-centeredness to pursue the principle of selfless living.

Paul states in Ephesians 6:2 that the commandment, “*honor your father and mother,*” is unique in that it “*is the first commandment with a promise.*” The promise is listed in verse 3.

Ephesians 6:3—That it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

Paul references God’s original promise of Exodus 20:12, a promise assuring Israel that physical blessings would follow obedience. Paul confirms that blessings continue to follow obedience even in the church age—the age of grace. No doubt, obedient children are greatly benefited, for in lovingly submitting to the parents’ authority they learn to submit to God. Even Jesus reaped the benefits and blessings associated with submission to His earthly father and mother (Luke 2:51-52), for He “*kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men*” (Luke 2:52). His horizontal submission to Joseph and Mary enhanced His vertical submission to the Father, resulting “*in favor with God and men*” (Luke 2:52):

And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.
(Luke 2:51-52)

The Proverbs are inundated with truth regarding the parent-child relationship and the need for a child’s submission to parental guidance. For instance, in Proverbs 1:8 we find:

Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and do not forsake your mother’s teaching; (Proverbs 1:8)

Again in Proverbs 4:1 we read:

Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding, (Proverbs 4:1)

Proverbs 3:1-4 states:

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life, and peace they will add to you. Do not let

kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man. (Proverbs 3:1-4)

Clearly, a child who listens to godly parental instruction finds favor with God and man (as was the case with Jesus).

God promises two things to a child who honors his parents (Ephesians 6:3). First, it will be “well” with him (Ephesians 6:3), meaning that his quality of life will be greatly enhanced. Instead of rebelling and reaping its consequence, an obedient child dwells in an atmosphere of peace within the home—bringing encouragement to the entire household (Proverbs 23:24-25; 15:20). After experiencing such an uplifting environment, the child desires to duplicate it with his own spouse and offspring. Thus, the cycle continues to the glory of the Creator. Second, a child who honors his father and mother will “live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:2-3). Of course, not all children who honor their parents are guaranteed longevity of life. They are more apt to live longer, however, due to the exalted place submission holds in their hearts:

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life, and peace they will add to you. (Proverbs 3:1-2)

Obedient children, who learn to respect and honor God, normally refrain from losing their lives due to the consequence of sin.

Be it friendships among believers (Ephesians 5:19-21), husband-wife relationships (Ephesians 5:22-33), or parent-child relationships (Ephesians 6:1-3), all parties must be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) for these relationships to function according to design. Therefore, to desire that children be filled with the Spirit and walk in submission to the God-ordained authority surrounding them is normal for parents who walk in submission to Christ. Scripture is filled with young men who submitted to God at an early age (Samuel—1Samuel 2:26; David—1Samuel 17:33, 42; Josiah—2Kings 22:1-2; John the Baptist—Luke 1:15; and of course, Jesus—Luke 2:42-47; etc.) and reaped astonishing benefits from their humble, wholesome, righteous, and powerful lifestyles.