

“The Christian Family”

Ephesians 6:1-4

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Teaching Aim: To look at the relationship between parents and children from a Biblical perspective. To realize the reasoning behind Solomons statement, *“He who spares his rod hates his son.”* (See **Prov. 13:24**) To understand the importance of godly parenting and loving discipline as taught in the Word of God. To examine some of the unusual challenges 21st Century families face in raising their children today.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: What is happening to the Christian family in America today?

1. Why should the following statistics in Ron Luce’s book, *“Battle Cry For A Generation”* alarm every Christian?
 - Builders (born 1927-1945): 65% of children were raised as Bible-based believers
 - Boomers (born 1946-1964): 35% of children were raised as Bible-based believers
 - Busters (born 1965-1983): 16% of children were raised as Bible-based believers
 - Bridgers (or Millennials, born 1984 or later): 4% of children are being raised as Bible- based believers

2. What do you see as the major causes behind our nation abandoning the Christian faith? How has this shift in morality affected American society? Who is ultimately responsible for the Christian upbringing of our children and grandchildren? Why do you think recent generations have failed to pass the Christian faith on to the next generation? How can we correct this problem before it is too late?

3. According to John MacArthur, Marxist socialism has been working its way into our society for some time. According to MacArthur, humanistic groups have been working with the goal of liberating children from: *“traditional morals and values, parental authority, physical punishment, religion, nationalism, patriotism, and capitalism.”* They want children to have complete *“sexual freedom, homosexual ‘marriage’, abortions, free information and devices for contraception, children to have the right to sue their parents and to choose their own family.”* (Ephesians Commentary – published 1986) Take a few moments and examine each goal from their evil agenda. How many of these goals have the Marxist socialist/humanistic groups already reached in 2020? Why has the church, for the most part, remained silent while the enemy has worked unceasingly to destroy our children and families?

Part II: Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right (Eph. 6:1-4)

1. Why is it important for every Christian to raise their children with a Biblical worldview? Should young children be allowed to decide for themselves if they want to go to church or not? Why or why not? How should having a Christian worldview affect the parent/child relationship?
2. According to **verse 1**, what is God's will for the relationship between a child and his or her parent? Does this hold true for adult children? What truth can children learn from **Col. 3:20**? Should children obey their parents if the parent commands them to do something God forbids or forbids them from doing something that God commands? Why or why not?
3. What did Paul mean when he commanded children to obey their parents "*in the Lord*?" Which of "*the ten commandments*" does Paul quote in **verse 2**? (See **Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16**) What are some practical ways that young children can honor their father and mother in today's world (**vs. 2**)?
4. What did God promise children who obey their parents in **verse 3**? Is a long life literally promised to every obedient child or is Paul presenting a Biblical principle? Under the Old Covenant, severe punishment could be rendered if a child was disobedient. How severe could this punishment be under Old Covenant law? (See **Exod. 21:15; Lev. 20:9**) Is the same true under the New Covenant?
5. More than likely the promise "*that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth*" is a warning to listen to the instruction of your parents and not to live carelessly. How might such wise and careful living lead to a longer life? Can you think of any Scriptural examples of children who live unwisely and died an early death as a result? (See **Lev. 10:1-3; 1 Sam. 2:34,35; 2 Sam. 13:1-29**)
6. In light of **Genesis 2:24**, list several ways that adult children can honor their parents?

Part III: Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger (Eph. 6:4)

1. What was Paul referring to when he said, “*fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath*” (vs. 4)? What reason is given in **Col. 3:21**? What would be the opposite of discouraging your children? Why was this teaching considered radical by many in Paul’s day?
2. What are some practical ways that Christian parents and grandparents can more effectively bring up their families “*in the training and admonition [instruction] of the Lord*” (vs. 4)? What does **Deut. 6:1-9** teach us about our responsibility to nurture our children and grandchildren spiritually? What are some ways that you’ve helped to train your children or grandchildren spiritually?
3. Parents are the primary religious instructors of their children; it is the church’s role to assist them in that endeavor. What are some tools that parents can use to better instruct their children spiritually? What can the church do to assist parents and grandparents in the spiritual instruction of these children? Who has God called to be the spiritual leader of the Christian family? Why do you think women are more likely to pick up this role than men?
4. “*Discipline*” comes from the root word for “*disciple*,” which means “*to teach or train*.” According to Scripture, is it God’s will for Christian parents to discipline their children? Why or why not? (See **Prov. 12:1; 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17; 22:6**) Is there ever a time when parents should spank their children? If so, when? Should a parent ever spank their child in anger? Why or why not? How should Christian parents handle society’s position that corporal punishment is forbidden under any and all circumstances? Have you ever spanked your child?
5. How does the discipline of a child change during the various stages of the child’s life? How can parents turn times of discipline into teaching moments for their children? Why is it always important to let your child know that you love them?
6. How did God the Father set the example for properly disciplining His children? (See **Heb. 12:1-11**) What truths can we learn about discipline from this passage?

7. Parents should love their children under any and all circumstances (See **Luke 15:11-32**) Name some examples of children who were terrors in their youth but turned out to be dynamic Christian leaders in adulthood. I've often said, "*God gave us children to teach us to pray.*" Have you found this true in your own life? What are some practical steps you can take to better your Christian parenting and grandparenting? Will you do it?

MINER'S CORNER -*Manna to live by!*

- Children are a gift from God.
- Children are commanded to obey their parents in the Lord, for it is right.
- Christian parents are commanded by God to raise their children in the training and instruction of the Lord.
- Parents are to build their children up in the Lord and not tear them down.
- Parents should discipline their children out of love and not in anger.
- Parents should continue loving their children no matter what, remembering, so long as there is breath, there is hope in Christ.