

“EPHESIANS: WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE LIVE – IN CHRIST”

“Christ-Centered Families”

Part Fourteen: Ephesians 6:1-4 September 20, 2020

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INTRODUCTION: When a society begins to undermine its bedrock institutions, it means that civilization is in the death rattles. So, this is a very serious and a very grave time in American society. As goes the marriage, so will go the family. As goes the family, so will go the children. My heart is concerned and burdened for children. I want to talk to you about the importance of children. Many of you have children, all of you are children, and many of you have grandchildren.

What a wonderful blessing it is to have children. Psalm 127, verse 3, says, "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord." On down in that Psalm it says, "Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them." The great blessing, the great wonder, the great thrill of having children! Some say the children are the future church, but we say the children are the church of today.

Ephesians 6:1-4 (NIV)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

We can make four amazing statements:

I. We _____ and _____ for all children.

- The Church has always had high regard for children, especially PFN.
- We celebrate the birth and the joy of children, and our opportunity to raise them and disciple them.
- Value and welcome children as Jesus did. (Mark 10:13-16)

“People were bringing their children to Jesus so that he would bless them. But the disciples scolded them. When Jesus saw this, he grew angry and said to them, “Allow the children to come to me. Don’t forbid them, because God’s kingdom belongs to people like these children. I assure you that whoever doesn’t welcome God’s kingdom like a child will never enter it.” Then he hugged the children and blessed them.

II. We set a _____ for our Children.

- **Our children are watching to see what we value. They notice what we really value, how we view God, Christ, Church, salvation and more.**
- **YOUR EXAMPLE IS _____.**

III. Children, _____ and _____ your parents.

- **Honor your parents -t is part of the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16) and is quoted six times in the New Testament (Matthew 15:4; 19:19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; Luke 18:20; Ephesians 6:2).**
- **God calls us to honor and obey our parents. Why?**
 - **It's right.**
 - **It comes with a promise.**
 - **Things will go well with you.**
 - **Long life on the earth.**

IV. We _____ of our children.

- What is my chosen mindset toward my children?

Proverbs 6:20-22 *“My son, obey your father’s commands, and don’t neglect your mother’s instruction. Keep their words always in your heart. Tie them around your neck. When you walk, their counsel will lead you. When you sleep, they will protect you. When you wake up, they will advise you.”*

- Negative Command: *“Do not exasperate you children”* verse 4
 - As parents, what could we change to follow this command?
- Positive Command:
 - *“Bring them up”*
 - *“Training and Instruction”*

“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

Parents: LET’S GIVE THEM JESUS!

LET’S NEVER GIVE UP!

LET’S ALWAYS PRAY FOR OUR CHILDREN!

Who are you praying for? What is the burden of you heart for your kids and grandkids?

Next Week: Ephesians 6:5-9 “Transferring Masters”

REMIX STUDY GUIDE:

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions in the message notes, or simply dive deeper into just one.

Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions at the end of the document.

REMIX: Questions for today's study on Ephesians 6:1-4

Notice the links on our website for helpful information about hosting or guiding a REMIX discussion. You will find "Tips for hosting a REMIX group or class", suggested schedule for the class, and directions for the class. These notes will be helpful in setting up your REMIX. Here are some questions beyond the notes:

- 1. What motivation, goals and hope do believers have when we value and care for children? How are they different from those of non-believers?**
- 2. Why is it so important to set a Christ-like example for your children? Pause and pray for God's help to live an exemplary life before them.**
- 3. What does this passage help you understand about honoring your parents? How will you better honor your parents?**
- 4. What are some ways a parent might provoke his or her children to anger or exasperate them? How could those same situations be handled better?**
- 5. How can you teach our children / grandchildren the gospel of Jesus Christ and help them apply it to their hearts? How might we do this more regularly? Talk about the importance of the Church's role in discipling our kids and supporting our parents.**
- 6. Describe how important it is to pray daily for your children (when they are young or as adults). What habits do you use daily to be the prayer warrior for you kid or grandkids?**

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message!

- 1. What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
- 2. What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
- 3. What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you have learned today?*

I. Mark 10:13-16

13 People were bringing children to Jesus so that he would bless them. But the disciples scolded them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he grew angry and said to them, “Allow the children to come to me. Don’t forbid them, because God’s kingdom belongs to people like these children. 15 I assure you that whoever doesn’t welcome God’s kingdom like a child will never enter it.” 16 Then he hugged the children and blessed them.

Clearly, Jesus loved children, and children loved him. That was unusual in his time—most rabbis had no interest in speaking to children. Jesus’ disciples were more typical, saying, in effect, take these children away; the Master has important things to do. “The disciples rebuked the parents. Jesus rebuked the disciples.”* Mark added the lovely eyewitness detail that Jesus “hugged the children and blessed them.”

- Jesus’ words and actions said children were more likely to find favor with God than self-satisfied Pharisees or materialistic rulers. *The Message* rendered his forceful words in Mark 10:14-15 as: “Don’t push these children away. Don’t ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God’s kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you’ll never get in.”** What can you learn from the simplicity of children that will deepen and enrich your relationship with God?
- “People were bringing children to Jesus so that he would bless them.” When you were a child, did your parents or other adults bring you to Jesus for his blessing and guidance for life? If you are a parent, grandparent or have another connection with one or more children, how can you bring them to Jesus so that he can bless them?

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you” ([Exodus 20:12](#)).

Halfway through the Ten Commandments, God instructs His people to honor their fathers and mothers. Peter repeats in [Ephesians 6:1](#), “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” God knows we are incapable of following His commands, and thus made a way for us to be forever forgiven by Jesus’ death on the cross. Belief in Him saves us, not following rules.

So, what then, is the purpose of commands such as “honor your father and mother,” in our New Testament lives? It’s out of God’s protective and provisional love for us that commands like this continue to act as guardrails to the full life Jesus died to give us.

A. What does honor mean in the [Bible](#)?

The contextual definition of Old Testament honor (the Hebrew word [kabod](#)) means heavy or weighty. [To honor someone](#), then, is to give weight or grant a person of position respect and even authority in one’s life. In the context of [Exodus 20:12](#), it means to prize highly, care for, show respect for, and obey.

B. The difference between honor, obedience, and respect

Respect and obedience are actions and inflections that reflect honor. While honor is an internal attitude of respect, courtesy, and reverence, it should be accompanied by appropriate attention or even obedience. God created us and intended for us to honor Him in and through all we do. We obey out of reverence, love and trust in our

sovereign Father, deflecting the admonishment of respect in deference to honoring Him. Honor trusts God's sovereign hand, believes He is Who He says He is, and humbly and hopefully reflects a Christ-led life. Integrity, consistent behavior of the heart regardless of situation or audience, is a continual choice to live in honor of the One from whom all life originates.

C. Where does the Bible talk about honoring your mother and father?

"Honor your father and mother" is mentioned twice in the Old Testament ([Exodus 20:12](#); [Deuteronomy 5:16](#)) and six times in the New Testament ([Matthew 15:4](#); [19:19](#); [Mark 7:10](#); [10:19](#); [Luke 18:20](#); [Ephesians 6:2](#)). Originally appearing in Exodus as Moses introduced the Ten Commandments to God's people, the command is again repeated in [Deuteronomy 5:16](#).

In ancient times, and even in some cultures today, deceased ancestors were honored. "In Israel, the honor due to parents has a definitely covenant context and pertains to accepting and passing on the Torah," according to the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible. It was a passing down of their [faith](#) from generation to generation.

Jesus spoke of this commandment to the Pharisees in [Matthew 15:4](#); [Mark 7:10](#), and again when He spoke of commandments that prohibit wrong actions and attitudes against others. He also mentioned it when speaking about those who will inherit the kingdom of God in [Matthew 19:19](#), [Mark 10:19](#) and [Luke 18:10](#).

In [Ephesians 6:2](#), Paul emphasizes "honor your father and your mother" as the first commandment with a promise: "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth." When Paul wrote these words, the covenantal promise of occupying the land God had prepared for them had already come to pass. So, why would Paul repeat it? Why is it important for us, New Testament believers, to remember?

The entire Old Testament is the story of Jesus. The entire Bible points to Him, and we as His chosen and adopted people look forward to the promise of His return.

[Ephesians 6:4](#) says, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." We are to bypass our craving for respect and authority to give all honor to God. Our children are first and foremost His, a stark reminder *we* are first and foremost His, as well.

D. What does Scripture mean by mother and father?

"When God issued this commandment to Moses on Mount Sinai, He demonstrated His sovereign plan for real relationships," [writes Don Wilton](#), "And just as we are to honor the One who created us, so we are to honor those who were chosen to carry out God's plan for our creation- our fathers and mothers!" In a world riddled with broken marriages and pieced together families, it is more important than ever to stop pointing fingers and start embracing God's command to honor each other. Many of us are fathers and mothers, either by blood or adoption. If we are caring for someone, or they us, we are to honor them.

God said, above all else, to love Him and each other, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We all know what it's like to be a child. Many of us know what it's like to be a parent or caregiver. I believe this commandment was so important to God because we are so important to Him. Family is important to God. We are His family. When we honor our families, it's a direct reflection of how He loves us. Often dysfunctional and broken, He loves us.

E. Should the verse be taken literally?

Jesus' obedience to his parents challenges the insecurities in us that often make us averse to submit and obey, according to [this article](#) from Desiring God. When Jesus came to earth, He lived the example we are to follow. Jesus obeyed His parents ([Luke 2:51](#)). If God-made-man obeyed Joseph and Mary, we too should strive to honor our parents.

"His ultimate submission was to God; his second submission, to Joseph and Mary," [Mathis writes](#), "Because his Father said, 'Honor you father and your mother.'" We honor our parents through our trust in God, whose authority trumps all, and protection and compassionate care uphold us when those we honor threaten to get it wrong.

F. Who is supposed to do the honoring?

It's impossible for any of us to be exempt from this command. Even those of us who have not known our maternal mothers and fathers have caregivers who have adopted us into their lives. We honor them. We all look to those who have gone before us and done the best they knew to do. Believers or not, our obedience to honor our parents is part of God's eternal plan.

Whether we are children or adults, we are to honor our parents. Children are taught to honor their parents by the basic lesson of discipline and obedience, which in time blossoms into respect as we are able to see and experience the wisdom. Eventually, we honor them out of love and trust, remembering how they have provided for us throughout our lives to the best of their human abilities in a very fallen world. Choosing to see the best in them, even after their time ends in this life, honors them.

G. Why should we honor our parents?

God repeats truths He wants us to pay specific attention to. The command to honor our father and mother is important to God, and so it must hold a high countenance in our hearts. The [relationship with our parents](#) is so significant that it is the first earthly relationship addressed in the commandments, and it's the only one to come with a blessing from God. We often question "why?" God is not afraid of our questions, and I believe when we struggle to understand why we must honor our parents, whether we are young or old, we can take the burden to God in confidence that He understands the difficulty we face in living out this command. When we ask Him for help, He is faithful.

H. How are Christians supposed to carry out this command?

More than a list of “dos” and “don’ts,” the commandments tell us how to honor and worship God, which teaches us how to love and respect others, like our parents. A Christ-led life is led by God’s Word. It’s by His truth, and through a prayerful relationship with Him, that we navigate the waters of this world and are able to uphold His commands. They are guardrails and life preservers, not standards we must achieve and reach. They exist out of love, to help us live life to the full. The commandments show us the way to live, the way to love our neighbor, and the way to love God with all our heart and soul, according to [this article](#) from the Gospel Coalition. Through daily prayer and time in God’s word, and by following Jesus’ example, we can honor our parents.

I. Examples of honoring your parents

One of the most powerful and ageless ways we can honor our parents, besides giving them our respect and obedience, is to choose to forgive forward. A valuable lesson to adhere to, as we will all watch ourselves make mistakes we swore we would never make. We all fall short ([Romans 3:23](#)). [This article](#) from the Gospel Coalition explores how it can be healthy to uncover the roots of our specific pains or weaknesses – biological, historical, or otherwise – but true healing will not finally come from identifying or assigning guilt, but from trusting God.

Choose to include parents and caregivers in everyday life. Take time to reconnect and keep in touch. Care for them as they grow old. Speak highly of them, forgoing any focus on negative aspects of their character. Few of us come from a perfectly happy family, but facing tough circumstances and not giving up on the people He has placed in our lives honors God.

J. Should you honor your mother and father when they are abusive?

“Most of us have a complaint or two about our parents,” [Dr. David Hawkins](#) writes, “None were perfect and many carry scars from their childhood.” God’s command to honor our father and mother teaches us to trust Him to ultimately defend and protect us. Parents aren’t perfect, yet we can choose to honor them anyway, trusting we have been placed in their care by our Almighty God for a purpose. He doesn’t make mistakes.

In our fallen world, many of us will endure heartaches and injustice at the hands of the very people that we are supposed to honor and trust. God certainly doesn’t want us to remain in abusive situations. His compassionate heart for us aches when we suffer at the hands of injustice. We should do all we can to remove ourselves from life-threatening situations, and reach out to others caught in such a crossfire as well.

Humanity is fallen. The world is at a war between good and evil that we cannot see with the visible eye, but know exists according to God’s Word. We honor our parents by releasing judgement for their behavior to our just God who defends and protects us with mercy and compassion. “God tells us that He will bless us as we honor our parents,” [Dr. Hawkins](#) wrote, “Consider how you might honor your parents, no matter

how you have been raised. This may seem like a huge challenge; yet it is one I believe God will bless."

K. A prayer to honor our parents
Father,

Parenting is humbling. At times, we as parents feel helpless to our own faults. We know we won't get it right every time. There will be many times when our patience expires and our choices will not align with Your will. We ask for Your forgiveness, Father, for when we fall short as parents. Bless the generations that have gone before us, and the legacies and lessons they left for us to learn from. Help us to honor our parents and caregivers. Work a miracle in our hearts to forgive those who have mistreated, oppressed and abused us. We can't do that in our own power, God. Nor can we see each other as You see us. Adjust our perspective daily, to see and honor the people You have placed in our lives. Especially, our fathers and mothers. Forgive us for criticizing them, battling them, and dishonoring them with our words and behaviors. Help us to honor You, God, by how we honor them ...and each other. Praise You for making a way for us regardless of how far we fall short. Your love is leveling and there is power in Your name. May we call on You, always.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen