**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**Children, Obey your Parents**

**Ephesians 6:1-3**

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David Taylor

We are starting Ephesians chapter six today as we move from looking at what Paul said about the marriage relationship to what he says about family relationships. Today’s text is 6:1-3 and my message is entitled, Children Obey your Parents or Raising Obedient Children. The structure of the passage is simple, Paul instructs children to obey their parents (1). Then he gives four reasons as motivation for obedience. Children should obey because it is the right thing to do (1); because it fulfills the Old Testament command, children honor your parents (2); then he offers two promises, that life will go well for them and that they will live long (3).

Big Idea: God expects children to gladly submit to their parents.

**God Expects Children to be Obedient (1)**

Let me start by laying a foundational truth. Parents are the primary influence on their children, not the church nor school. So, your primary focus and best energies should be given toward their spiritual and moral development. If you have come to faith in Christ for salvation and are seeking to follow his teachings, then God calls you to be God centered, to have him central in your life and family, like the sun in which your family life orbits. When your life, your parenting, and your family is God centered, all of you will thrive spiritually and in life.

Paul addresses this command to children who were part of the church gathering when this letter was read. He expects them to be obedience. The bible recognizes God given hierarchical authority structures where one person has authority over another and the other is is expected to submit to them. Western culture thought the same until academic professionals in our system of higher education began undermining hierarchical order fifty years ago. Now we have adults who do think it is bad to be an authority in the home so they treat children as equals and friends, letting them make decisions that parents should be making for them.

Children are born rebellious, morally corrupt at the core of their being (Rom 1:28-31; Mk 7:21)[[1]](#footnote-1) and are naturally resistant to authority but can be taught and trained to gladly obey parental authority. Your children need loving parental authorities who shape their children’s intellectual and moral lives rather than let someone else shape it or let them do it. The majority of obedience problems with children lie more in their moral compass being skewed by sin than in a diagnosis by a mental health professional.

Because of this moral corruption, parenting must be gospel driven. We see this in Paul calling children to obey their parents in the Lord. A child’s obedience reflects their obedience to the Lord Jesus. Being Gospel driven means that your children’s obedience is ultimately the fruit of faith or as Paul says in Colossians, children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord (Col 3:20). In the Lord means that we point our children to obey by grace through faith, in the power of the Spirit. Children, you need Jesus and the power he promises in the gospel to give you life giving strength to gladly obey your parents. Parents, help your children recognize their disobedience comes from a sinful heart that is rebelling against God and the gospel is the only lifesaving and life giving answer. Gospel driven parenting points your kids to Christ in the gospel.

Parents, raise obedient kids so that their wills are shaped without being crushed so that as they get older, they are inclined to be submissive toward God and God given authorities. The biggest challenge for most parents is consistency in expecting obedience and disciplining children for disobedience. We breed disrespect for authority and rebellion in our children when we don’t expect or enforce obedience. So be God centered in your home and be gospel driven in your parenting, teaching and training your children to be obedient.

**God Gives Four Reasons for Obedience (1, 2-3)**

Then Paul gives four reasons to motivate children to obey their parents. First, because it is the right thing to do (1). It is right to obey your parents and it is wrong to disobey them. Secondly, because it fulfills the fifth of the ten commandments, honor your father and your mother (2). Honor means to respect or value highly. In the Old Testament, to honor your parents was to obey them, to dishonor them was to disobey them. Children are to obey their parents because obedience is honoring them as God calls children to do. The command to honor parents comes with two promises which are our third and fourth reasons for obedience, the promise of a good life and a long life (3).[[2]](#footnote-2)

Here, he simply means that obedient children generally grow up to live well and long lives because their lifestyle is conducive to a good and long life. They respect authority, they are disciplined, they are law abiding, etc. But this promise points toward the future too. Living in the land of Canaan was the hope of Old Testament saints now fulfilled in Christ with the promise of the fullness of life and joy in the new creation, the new earth (Mat 5:13).[[3]](#footnote-3) You see a theme in Scripture that the land promises in the Old Testament are expanded in the New Testament to include the whole earth. So instead of Christians inheriting just a specific piece of land, we inherit the whole renewed earth.

Response:

* Parents, is your home God Centered and your parenting gospel driven?
* Children, do you have a submissive and obedient heart?
* How is God speaking to you?

**Life Group Questions:**

1. What motivation, goals, and hope do you have when for your children?
2. How are these different from those of non-Christians?
3. What does it mean to be God centered and gospel driven in the home?
4. Why is it important to set a Christlike example for your children? Take a moment and pray for God’s help to live faith filled and godly life before them.
5. Why is parenting so hard? How can we help one another in our parenting?
6. What does this passage teach about honoring parents? Consider the personalities of your children, what would be the best way to teach this principle to them?
7. How do the promises “it may go well with you” and “you may have a long life in the land” pertain to your children today?
8. How is God speaking to you in this message?
9. How does this passage relate to you own discipleship?
10. How does this message help you in making disciples of your children?

1. This is traditionally called total depravity or total inability and says that all human beings, as a consequence of the Fall, are born morally corrupt, enslaved to sin, at odds with God, and unable to please Him or even of themselves come to faith in Christ for salvation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. There are exceptions to these promises such as persecution, martyrdom, and tragedoes. Some examples are Job and faithful saints throughout church history who died from early and unexpected deaths, martyrdom, and disease. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Greek word here is earth, not land. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)