

As Christians, we are complete in Christ. Through Christ, we have received eternal life, and we've received all that we need to live the Christian life. In the last message of this series, we learned how Christians are to apply their completeness in Christ in their marriage. We learned that when husbands and wives choose to minister to their spouse in the way Paul prescribes through love and respect, they can enjoy a wholeness in their marriage that would not otherwise be possible. In this next message we will learn that in Christ, we have all that is necessary to honor God in the parent-child relationship.

1. Christian Children Are to Minister to Their Parents Through Obedience – “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord” (20; cf. Ephesians 6:1-3).

1.A. Children are to obey in all things (20a).

The child's primary ministry to the parents is obedience in all things. Love is a commitment that drives our actions and deepens our affections. A disobedient child has not learned how to love. An obedient child is learning to love.

1.B. Children's obedience is well-pleasing to the Lord (20b).

This phrase qualifies “in all things.” A child's obedience to their parents is to reflect their submission to Christ.

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

Obedience to parents honors the Lord, unless that obedience dishonors God's Word.

Children must be taught that their love for Christ is to be the primary motivation in their submission to their parents.

1.C. Children's obedience is not conditioned on the parents' spiritual condition.

Just as husbands are to love their wives unconditionally, and wives are to respect their husbands unconditionally, children are to obey and honor their parents unconditionally.

Christ, the Son of God, obeyed His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, even though they were sinful, and He was perfect!

Luke 2:51-52 “And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”

Hebrews 5:2 “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.”

Children are to obey respectfully, showing honor to their parents.

Ephesians 6:2 “Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” (cf. Exodus 20:12).

This is the only one of the 10 commandments that includes a reward for obeying it. God honors those who honor their parents, because in doing so, they honor God.

Applications:

1. The child's obedience to parents directly affects his submission to God.
2. The child's obedience to parents is not contingent up the spirituality of the parents.
3. The child's obedience to parents will be blessed of God.

Illustration: Tale of Two Teens

2. Christian Parents Are to Minister to Their Children Through Christlike Love – “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” (21; cf. Ephesians 6:4).

2.A. Fathers are given the primary responsibility of training their children.

Ephesians 6:4 “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Fathers are the head of their home, and therefore the one primarily responsible before God to oversee the raising of his children.

Mothers have a powerful responsibility as well, but they will not give account to the degree that the father will.

Fathers are to nurture their children through the process of training, instruction, correction, and self-discipline.

Fathers are to admonish, which means warn, their children.

2.B. Fathers are commanded not to provoke their children to wrath in both the Colossians and Ephesians passages.

2.B.1 Fathers provoke their children to wrath and discouragement when they ignore their responsibility to nurture and admonish their children (passivity).

We are facing an epidemic in this country of anger and depression. The Millennial generation is crying out for mentorship, but they don’t know how to receive it when it’s extended.

Technology addiction is creating massive barriers to healthy social interaction at home.

Fathers have allowed secular culture to isolate them from their own children, and the result is an angry, rebellious, depressed, and suicidal generation.

Illustration: Fred Barber’s father abandoned him and his siblings when he was just a young boy. When Fred got saved, he had a wife and 3 boys with no example to fall back on. He chose to teach them about sexual purity, even though it was incredibly difficult for him to talk about. He was also a firm disciplinarian. He was far from perfect, but his leadership, transparency and humble walk with God made all the difference. All 3 of his sons are in full time ministry today.

2B.2. Fathers provoke their children to wrath and discouragement when they abuse their place of delegated authority (control).

Fathers provoke their children when they try to manipulate their children with anger.

Fathers provoke their children when they try to control rather influence.

Application:

1. Children, learn to love your parents and the Lord by learning to obey them. Your obedience could be the very thing that keeps your parents from giving up on following the Lord themselves. Remember, you show your love in this way, because Christ has made you complete in Him. Through Christ, you can obey and honor your parents for God’s glory, and your good.

2. Fathers, learn to love your children by choosing to take responsibility for training and admonishing your children. Remember that your authority is not your own. It has been delegated from God. So, use it! Step up and fill the void. Don’t abuse your authority. Seek influence rather than mere manipulation of behavior.

3. Mothers, support your husband in every way that you can. Model the respect that you want your children to emulate. Don’t despair if your husband is lost, or away from God. Timothy was raised by his mother and grandmother, and God used him powerfully. Do the best you can to do what God has called you to do, and leave the rest with God.

We are complete in Christ. We have all we need to shine a little bit of heaven into our home by the way we submit to God’s plan for our part in our parent-child relationships.