

1. The Children's Responsibility to Their Parents (1-3)

a. Obedience (2)

- i. Paul begins this section by addressing the children, the subordinate members in the relationship.
- ii. "Children" are those who are still in the home.
  1. They are old enough to understand instructions from their parents and decide whether to obey or go their own way.
  2. They are still brought up, receiving instruction and correction from their fathers and have not yet gotten married and left home.
  3. Paul addresses them directly which implies that the children are a present when the community assembles to worship, to hear the reading of the Word, and receive teaching.
- iii. "Obey" expresses the unquestioning compliance expected from children toward their parents.
  1. It is the responsibility of parents to set boundaries for their children and expect them to obey (Deuteronomy 21:18).
  2. God judged Eli's family because Eli failed to restrain his sons (1 Samuel 3:13).
- iv. "In the Lord" indicates the ultimate objective of this obedience is out of respect and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.
  1. Just as God enabled Joshua to "be strong in the LORD", the Holy Spirit is present to enable Christian children to obey their parents "in the Lord".
  2. Children obey God in part by obeying their parents.
- v. "For this is right" – Children should obey their parents because God expects it.
  1. Colossians 3:20 "Children, obey your parents **in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.**"
  2. Children are to obey their parents in everything.
  3. Obedience pleases God.

b. Honor (2-3)

- i. The fifth commandment is the first law that has a promise connected with it.
  1. Exodus 20:12 "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."
  2. Honoring goes beyond obedience since honoring extends to adult children who have left the home.
  3. Jesus Himself reiterated the importance of this commandment when he criticized the Pharisees for effectively overturning it (Matthew 15:4-6).
  4. Younger children still in the home honor their parents by obeying their rules and instructions.
  5. Adult children who have left the home honor their parents by showing respect and taking care of their parents in their old age.
- ii. There are two promises associated with this commandment.
  1. "That it may be well with thee" – Prosperity is the first promise for those who honor their parents.
    - a. Deuteronomy 5:16 "Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath command thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and **that it may go well with thee**, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."
    - b. Paul omits the last phrase of this verse, because the promise of land is for Israel.
    - c. The prosperity here refers to the spiritual prosperity of the New Covenant available to believers which the book of Ephesians has so beautifully unfolded.
    - d. Children who honor their parents will enjoy the blessings that come with honoring God; children who dishonor their parents will not enjoy those blessings.
  2. "That you might live long upon the earth" – Long life is the second promise for those who honor their parents.

- a. Living a life of sin has a tendency to shorten our lives.
  - b. Living a righteous life has a tendency to lengthen our lives.
2. The Father's Responsibility to His Children (4)
- a. Do not provoke your children to wrath (4a).
    - i. Paul addresses father's because they have they bear the primary responsibility for the education and discipline of their children.
    - ii. Fathers should carefully weigh the potential impact of their words and actions before responding to their children.
    - iii. This passage rules out reactionary flare-ups, overly harsh words, insults, demeaning comments, inappropriate teasing, unreasonable demands, and anything else that can be perceived as provocative.
    - iv. Colossians 3:21 "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."
  - b. Disciple your children for the Lord (4b).
    - i. "Nurture" – Fathers have the ultimate responsibility to raise their children to maturity.
      - 1. "Nurture" refers to the entire training process of child rearing to adulthood.
      - 2. Father's are ultimately responsible for their children's spiritual maturity.
    - ii. "Admonition of the Lord" refers to verbal counsel, including exhortations, warnings, and even rebukes that lead to spiritual maturity.
      - 1. Father's are responsible to disciple their children (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Matthew 28:19-20).

Conclusion:

- 1. Children, is God pleased with the way you obey and honor your parents?
- 2. Fathers, are you training your children to Christian maturity?