

Lesson Seven – Peace within Families

Text: Ephesians 6:1-4

Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Families were a part of God’s plan from the beginning, and He instructed parents to ensure that children follow in His way.

- To teach them about Him and His ways. **Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:4-9**
- To honor their parents. **Exodus 20:12**
- To imitate God as children and parents interact. Psalm **103:13**
- To train children up in the instruction and discipline of the Lord. **Ephesian 6:4; Proverbs 13:24; 29:15, 17**

The Christian family should mirror the gospel of peace.

- In the Ephesians epistle, the pervasive transformation of the gospel is highlighted.
- The first four verses of the sixth chapter focus on how Christ transforms the child-parent relationship.
- **Ephesians 5:18** commands that we are to be filled with the Spirit—we LIVE as Christians and our Christianity has a powerful impact on our relationships. God shows us what it looks like to live out the gospel of peace in our families. **Romans 5:1-21**
- Do we believe that Jesus’s redemption can change the world AND change our families? The mission of the gospel is to be preached to the world, but a huge part of that mission is staying at home and showing how Jesus lives through our entire family, bringing an underlying peace to everyday relationships and challenges.

Children love God by obeying their parents.

- The key word is “obey,” which means to both hear and respond.
- Paul is speaking primarily to children living in the home under their parents’ care.
- *...in the Lord* reflects a child’s obedience to God is lived out by obeying their parents. A child doesn’t have to “grow up” first to serve God—obeying and trusting godly parents is the first step on that journey of service. **Colossians 3:20**
- *...for this is right* refers to God’s commandment to honor your father and mother. Obeying parents IS honoring them and God.

Question: Does this command include obeying ungodly parents?

Children love God by honoring their parents.

- **Verse 2** quotes **Exodus 20:12** and **Deuteronomy 5:16**, the fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments, which laid down God’s basic structure for a good life.
- **Verse 3** implies that rejecting parental discipline and instruction will prevent children from learning to live well. Children’s obedience to their parents trains them for obeying Jesus...not obeying Jesus will *not* lead to a good and peaceful life.
- What if your parents are hard to love and honor? If God commanded that we honor them, HE will provide a way to obey that commandment. Honoring first can bring feelings of love, admiration, and acceptance when we allow Christ to control.
- Honor is respecting another because of who *they* are—they are your parents--not because of what *you* can get.

Question: How do you explain verse 3: “...it may go well with you” and “enjoy a long life...”?

- The gospel of peace equips us to find redemption in our families if that has not been a priority in the past.
- Honoring our parents as adults looks different than when we were children at home:
 - Recognize that parents are significant in your life and the lives of your own children. Tell your parents that they matter.
 - Forgive your parents if the home you grew up in was not subject to God.
 - Forgive your parents (and yourself) if relationships have fractured...and work to mend those relationships through the peace of Christ.
 - Remember that your approval comes from God and not humans, including your parents.
- The commandment to honor parents lasts until their death. Christ can redeem everything—even broken relationships in the family.

Parents are responsible for transforming their children.

- “Fathers” in **Verse 4** refers to both parents. In first-century culture, fathers had complete control leading to unjust and harsh punishment, leading to anger in the child. Christ brings justice, setting the family dynamic right...and peace will be the result.
- Examples of extreme parental discipline from the Old Testament show the peace-shattering behaviors of two fathers:
 - King Saul’s harsh treatment of his son Jonathan in **I Samuel 20**.
 - Jacob’s favoritism toward Joseph in **Genesis 37**.
- Christian parents should understand that their children are gifts from God (**Proverbs 127:3**) and parents are responsible for their entire well-being.
 - Administer discipline. **Proverbs 22:16**
 - Discipline will bring peace. **Proverbs 29:17**
 - Instruct in the Word. **Proverbs 1:8; 13:1**
 - Teach the Word continuously. **Deuteronomy 6:7**
- Do we value our family members—seeing them in the light of Jesus?

Practicing the Peace of Christ

- Parents can't **make** their children become Christians but **can** make it easy for them to love Jesus.
- Parents can create a peaceful atmosphere to help their children see and feel the love of Jesus.

Question: What are ways to create a peaceful atmosphere in the home?

The Trinity is the perfect example of how a family should function.

- The three Persons are at work in our families to bring redemption and peace.
- God the Father never provokes to anger and knows how to discipline and instruct.
- Jesus the Son loves and honors the Father perfectly.
- The Spirit sustains it all.

Prayer