

Ephesians 6:1-9

Verse 1:

--Paul moves fittingly from marriage to the family and addresses children. We should not ignore the fact that by doing so, the inspired apostles inform us, in God's eyes, children are a part of the church (**1:1**)—those old enough to understand this command.

--They become recipients of the Father's heavenly blessings just as adults. They also are recipients of heavenly commands—though notice how short, concise, and fitting the commands are to the audience.

--***Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*** Obedience is the repeated command to children throughout the Bible (**Ex. 20:12; 21:15-17; Lev. 20:9; Deut. 5:16; 21:8**).

Colossians 3:20: *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.*

--This obedience is ***in the Lord*** because it is Jesus' will for His young followers, was His example (**Luke 2:51**), and is given in respect to Him. Children obey parents in obedience to Christ.

--This obedience is ***right*** because God commands it, and the parents are to be teaching God's commands.

--In contrast, disobedience is an evidence of an evil heart and our fallen nature (**Rom. 1:30**), as well as a sign of the evil last days (**2 Tim. 3:1-2**). *Just look at the disobedient children in our current society with violence in the city, south street mobs, curfews down the shore, security at carnivals, etc.*

--If you have a parent who has taught you God's commands it is a great blessing. If you reject their teaching, they will be a stern witness against you when you stand before God on judgment day. All your blessings then will turn to weights of condemnation. Today is the acceptable day of salvation!

Verses 2-3:

--Paul quotes **Exodus 20:12** (the Ten Commandments) in reference to this obedience. I believe he does so for two reasons:

--First, because Christ Himself taught this command and extended it beyond childhood.

Matthew 15:4-6: *For God commanded, saying, "Honor your father and your mother"; and, "He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death." But you say, "Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"—then he need not honor his father or mother. Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.*

--The apostolic teaching of the New Testament builds on this truth.

1 Timothy 5:3-4: *Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.*

--So honor—as the attitude behind obedience—is the constant responsibility of children to parents, as long as the parents are in this world.

--Secondly, Paul quotes from Exodus because he wants all children to see that God promises to bless such a life. Obviously, the Jew of old had different applications of this by the fact that they could be put to death for dishonoring parents, as well as the blessings of the promise land (**Deut. 11:18-21**).

--Still, this is an evidence the command to obey and honor parents in the Lord, is meant to bless children and not harm them. That is what is in God's heart—the promise of life.

--Now, unfortunately, we know there are abusive parents who care nothing for God or their own children. How does one honor a dishonorable parent? God does not honor sin and He is not asking His children to do so either. We honor what God honors—just as a wife is only called to submit to what God calls her to submit to.

--Parents ought to *be* honorable. That is how this command becomes a blessing to both.

--When children are young, parents must be honorable in their *intentions*. The actual aim of their demands for obedience is to raise a godly seed in the Lord. Young children therefore must learn to *listen*.

--When children are youths, parents must be honorable in their *reasonings/priorities*. They should have godly purposes behind the call to obedience. Children therefore must learn to *submit/surrender*. *Harsh commands without reasons we will raise functional kids that cannot wait to get away from us. Many parents treat children with an attitude they would never give their friends and then wonder why their children don't like them—maybe because they act like ogres in the home!*

--When children become adults, parents must be honorable in their *lives*. They are to see and know a godly life well-lived. This teaches them *honor, appreciation, gratitude, etc.* This is when a parents finds fellowship in Christ—mutual brotherly love.

--Otherwise, the question simply becomes: *How does one honor a sinful, immature, mean, selfish, or ungodly parent?* It isn't acting like sinful actions or attitudes don't exist. It is responding to sin in an honorable way. *Noah's sons—praying, not gossiping, not slandering, exhorting or reproofing graciously, and drawing lines where we must like Gideon, Asa, or Jesus, etc.*

--Children are called to honor their parents in the Lord. Parents are called to be honorable and live the Lord's commands. When those things happen together—the home is a blessing.

Verse 4:

--First, we see that ***fathers*** are to take the lead as the head of the household. Christ commands should come through the father to the home (**Deut. 4:9-10; 6:6-9; Ps. 78:2-4**).

Isaiah 38:19: *The father shall make known Your truth to the children.*

--Fathers, simply do the best as you can! *Lead your family to church, learn the Word yourself, read the Bible, point to other resources that are helpful, etc.*

--Second, fathers are not to set about this task of leading their families like tyrants. **Do not provoke your children to wrath.**

Colossians 3:21: Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

--Obedience should be taught early in the home as it becomes harder and harder the longer you wait. That said, there is a fine line between bending a will and breaking a spirit.

--A frustrated, angry, discouraged child is an indictment on his father—whether it is actively the father’s work or the mother allowed to do so under the father’s watch. Parents are responsible for not provoking because they are older, wiser, more godly, and can actually control their emotions without a nap!

--Claiming to be provoked by our children is an ungodly excuse—understandable—but not excusable. *Respond, don’t React + You can say the same thing a different way.*

--**but** . . . brings us into contrast with a father who provokes. . . **bring them up** . . . again the Greek word here for **bring them up** is the same as was translated **nourishes** earlier (5:29). As a husband and father—the man of God is called to run his marriage and home in a way that builds up those under his care. The general tone should be that of edification.

--Prodigals may refuse that encouragement but that is different than a marriage or home that tears down and discourages.

--An important reminder: We are not called to *make* our children anything. Christ has already done so. We are called to encourage them in what Jesus has already made them in Himself.

Don’t try to shape your children into your image or likeness or dream

--That home is to be one where the children are brought up **in the training and admonition of the Lord**. Both of those words are good translations and give us good direction.

--What are we **training** our children for? Your home is a form of basic training—boot camp—and training begins the day they are born. What is your aim? Good family memories? College? Professional sports athlete? Entertainment? Worldliness? Tend bodies—what of their souls?

--We should be training our children to be prepared to *leave* our home and serve God wherever He sends them on their Great Commission.

--Is there **admonition** in our homes? What are we warning our kids about? What are we trying to prepare them for? The Greek word for **admonition** here is the same Paul uses in 1

Corinthians 10:11: Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

--Are we warning our kids about living their life for eternity? About the judgment seat of Christ? Or do we only warn them about their homework, baseball swing, not to bother us while we are on the phone, or college entrance exams?

--If there is no training or admonition in the Lord—fathers are honoring their children instead of the Lord. ***This was the sad example of Eli the priest and may we heed this admonition!***

1 Samuel 2:29-30: Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people? Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.'

--Every father must choose to honor God or their children. *You cannot be afraid of the reaction of your children. You are God's parent in the home.*

--Every father also has the incredible opportunity to be the most honorable man your child will ever know. *I will never know another man better than my father because I will never see of another man what I have seen of him—inside and outside the home.*

--The final responsibility of their lives and souls is not ours. Our training and admonition cannot guarantee our children walk with God, but it can make their choice a lot harder or easier. We honor God in the process or dishonor Him.

--Don't give yourself too much credit or too much blame. Instead, realize the responsibility and privilege it is to be a parent.

1 Kings 22:43+52: And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the LORD. . . He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel to sin.

--Even our secular society realizes the plight of fatherless homes. May we be fathers who can say like Joshua: **But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (24:15).**

Verses 5-8:

--(5) Now Paul moves on to address **bondservants** and **masters**. It seems he has every level of service in mind from verse 8 where he says **whether he is a slave or free**.

--There were different categories of servants in those days, from the slaves that were property and despised, to slaves that were schooled and honored, to slaves working for their own freedom, to those who hired themselves out as servants for a time, to servants working for wages in what we would consider our modern idea of jobs. Paul seems to be addressing all of them.

--In so doing, Paul is not condoning slavery. Paul is giving slaves in every situation hope and instruction. Just like with the topic of divorce (**Mt. 19:8**) God speaks to certain subjects because of the hardness of men's hearts—not because He endorses the state.

--To those who are under the authority of a master or boss, Paul says **be obedient. . . as to Christ**. Our obedience to Christ is measured by our obedience to our boss. It is rendered *through* the boss to Christ. Again, there is an acknowledgement they are only our **masters according to the flesh**. . . because we have a Father of our spirits. *Which was no doubt so important for those that were the most abused slaves to know!*

Hebrews 12:9: Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

--Our obedience should have the character of **fear and trembling**. The words have the idea of honor, due respect, and humility. Paul notes that this is how the Corinthians received Titus.

2 Corinthians 7:15: And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.

--We don't render our services as the "unrecognized-boss" that knows better and should actually be in charge if people knew what was best for them.

--Our obedience should also be **in sincerity of heart**. Sincerity is singleness of heart and mind. Hypocrisy is a double heart and mind.

--(6) Here Paul says what our obedience should not include—**eye-service, as men-pleasers**. Eye-service is obedience only when being watched. We should be in God's eye-service all the time!

Matthew 6:3-4: But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

--Also, **men-pleasers** obey only when it will please men. They lower the bar, follow the crowd, serve themselves, and work half-heartedly.

Galatians 1:10: For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

--The opposite of this is serving **as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart**. . . Notice that Paul mentions the Lord in every verse in this section. He truly walked before God. Ultimately, God is our Master and we are His servants. People either surrender to that fact or try to forget it—but forgetting doesn't change anything. Will we surrender—from our very hearts—to the will of God in our lives?

--(7) When that happens, when we finally stop blaming secondary causes, we will truly begin to serve God and not men.

--(8) Utter surrender to God as Master may feel unfair at times. And it would be, if this was all there is to life, but it's not, God promises something more. This is only the beginning of life, preparation for truly eternal living.

--There will also be a day of judgment, when all men—**slave or free**—stand before the only true Master that ever was and ever will be. There, before the Bema Seat of Jesus Christ, all servants of the Lord will discover who they truly are. *Remember, Paul is primarily addressing believers in this epistle— and Christianity answers earthly sufferings by putting heavenly reward on the other side of the scale.*

Romans 8:18: For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

--Any answer for a slaves suffering in the will of God on earth, that doesn't include that slave's reward as a prince in heaven, isn't a Christian answer.

--No doubt, in this day, many masters failed to pay adequate wages, and many ripped their servants off or even withheld wages. Not our Lord! He will repay all service rendered to Him!

Hebrews 6:10: For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

--Why would God be unjust in forgetting our work if we deserve nothing? Because He promised He would repay! He would be unjust to His own character and Word.

Tozer (Man: The Dwelling Place of God): "The whole shortsighted philosophy that ignores eternal qualities and majors on trivialities is a form of unbelief. These Christians who embody such a philosophy are clamoring after present reward; they are too impatient to await the Lord's time. They will not abide the day when Christ shall make known the secret of every man's heart and reward each one according to his deeds. The true saint sees farther than this; he cares little for passing values; he looks forward eagerly to the day when eternal things shall come into their own and godliness will be found to be all that matters."

--We should be heading toward our treasure—not away from it. Where is the treasure of your heart? **Ash head lives?**

Verse 9:

--Here Paul commands all earthly masters to emulate the Heavenly Master who rewards the work of faithful servants.

--He commands them to give up **threatening** because they too have a Master in heaven and He is not like that. And the day will come when all will stand before Him on equal ground and **there is no partiality with Him**. God will never favor a person more or less because of their status on earth. **Only Christianity puts people on even ground—the rich/poor; master/slave; Jew/Gentile; etc.**