



God's Design for the Family

Lesson 4: The Duty of Children

Key Verse: Ephesians 6:1

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Overview

In our last few lessons, we saw the roles and relationship of both the husband and the wife within the marriage union as they relate to one another. In Ephesians 5:22–33 Paul spoke directly to husbands and wives. In chapter 6, Paul turns his attention to children. Paul systematically works his way through the family as he shows what each person's duty is within the family unit.

In life, the first relationship that is formed is the relationship between a child and his or her parents. This relationship is the starting place and foundation of all other earthly relationships. As the starting place, it is where morality begins. It is where a child will either learn obedience or be left to follow their heart in disobedience. The home is the place where children will either learn to honor and respect others, or they will be left to their own ways where they will inevitably live for themselves.

Psalm 127:3–5 says, “Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.” Some Bible translations translate “heritage” as “gift.” While children are a gift from the Lord, the word “heritage” is a better translation. This means that children are an inheritance given to parents by God as a possession and trust. As with any inheritance, there is great responsibility. The parents have a responsibility and duty to develop and cultivate their children so that they will grow up to be righteous and wise.

Children are also a blessing from the Lord. While many use Psalm 127 to show the blessing of babies (which they are), the “blessing” in verse 5 does not come until the children are grown. In verse 5, the children are grown sons who are with their father at the city gates defending the family against the enemies. These grown sons are a blessing to their father because they were brought up to be obedient in the Lord. However, some children grow up and turn out to be a curse to their parents. Proverbs 17:25 says, “A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.” A foolish child who has not been brought up with proper training toward obedience and godliness brings grief and bitterness to his parents.

The Old Testament shows us how God views a rebellious child. Leviticus 20:9 says, “For anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him.” In Deuteronomy 21:18–21, God again tells Israel that a stubborn or rebellious son who does not listen to the discipline of his parents is to be stoned to death. While this was rarely, if ever,

practiced in Israel's history (possibly because the threat was an effective deterrent), nonetheless it shows how serious God is about the duty of children to obey and honor their parents.

Today we have rebellious children in our society who have upset many communities. Over the past six years, we have seen riots and looting from rebellious children who did not learn obedience and honor. How do children learn obedience and honor and become a blessing to their parents and society? They must be taught it. In this lesson we will learn the duty that God has given to children.

The Command for Obedience

1. Ephesians 5:21. What are all people commanded to do? _____
 2. Ephesians 6:1. How do children show submission? _____
 3. Colossians 3:20. What is the child to be obedient in? _____
 4. How can a child be pleasing to God? _____
 5. Ephesians 6:2–3. What does God command children to do? _____
 6. Proverbs 1:8. What does Solomon teach his son to do? _____
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The Struggle against Obedience

1. Romans 5:12. What happened when Adam fell? _____
2. Psalm 51:5. What is the nature of every child? _____
3. Romans 8:6–8. What are all people born with? _____
4. James 4:4. What do parents have to battle against when teaching obedience? _____
5. Romans 7:14–15. What do parents have to battle against when teaching obedience? _____

The Teaching toward Obedience

1. Proverbs 22:6. How can a parent teach a child obedience? _____
2. Proverbs 29:15. What will happen to a child left to himself? _____
3. Hebrews 5:8. What did Jesus learn? _____

4. Luke 2:51. What did Jesus do in relation to His parents? _____
5. Luke 2:52. In what four ways did Jesus grow?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
6. Deuteronomy 6:4–7. What are parents commanded to do? _____
- _____
7. Proverbs 22:15. How does discipline help teach obedience? _____

The Attitude in Obedience

1. Ephesians 6:1. How are children to obey their parents? _____
2. What is the attitude to be in obedience? _____
- _____

“The children’s obedience is the fuel for all their learning and growth, and the better they learn to obey, the more proficiently they will grow in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and men.”

—John MacArthur

Application

- 1. Children, are you obeying your parents?
- 2. Parents, are you teaching your children obedience and the gospel?
- 3. Grandparents, are you teaching your grandchildren obedience?