



## Children and Fathers

Turning the page to the last chapter of Ephesians, we find ourselves in the middle of the Apostle Paul's instructions to believers on how to act among each other. Starting with the husband and wife in Eph [5:22-33](#), he now looks deeper into the inner family unit.

***Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. [Eph 6:1-4](#)***

On the surface, the instruction in [verses 1-3](#) almost seem too obvious. *Of course* children should obey their parents! Yet all of us who have children or even know someone who does can attest to the fact that even the best kids are disobedient. No one has to train a child to disobey their parents – it comes standard in each one! Sin is so ingrained in our human nature that disobedience occurs as naturally as breathing. This same sin-nature is something we have to fight the rest of our lives.

In many bibles, like the NASB, anytime you see something in all-caps it indicates a quote from another place in Scripture. Here in [verse 2](#), Paul quotes direct from the Ten Commandments (specifically [Exodus 20:12](#)). It's why Paul says this ***"is the first commandment with a promise."*** He quite literally means that under God's original law written on stone tablets, the commandment for children to obey their parents is the first and only one that comes with a promise. That promise is ***"so that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth."***

We all know from experience that sometimes when we've disobeyed our parents it led to rather painful consequences. That could've been a broken arm from jumping on the couch, a burned hand from touching a hot stove, or much worse, like severe injuries in a car crash because we dismissed our parent's warning about speeding. God's promise here really falls along the lines of common sense. Good, God-fearing parents love their children and want only the best for them. So the natural outcome of obedience to parents, who are themselves obedient to the Lord, is far fewer bad decisions, mistakes, injuries, and hard life-lessons.

Paul then gives instructions to dads: ***"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*** The Greek word used in verse 4, [parorgizō](#), implies the act of *pushing or leading someone to be angry*. I envision this as *teaching* a child to be angry, even by example, over worldly things. Politics, the economy, wokeness, the annoying neighbors, and even sports come to mind here. It seems there is always something to be angry about, and justified or not, a father should not be teaching his children to be angry or



hate others. Rather, God created fathers to lead, guide, and instill in their children in the ways **of the Lord** and to help them grow up as good citizens of heaven and earth.

[Proverbs 3:12](#) tells us ***“for whom the LORD loves He reproveth, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”*** The writer of Hebrews amplified this proverb when he wrote, ***“FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES,”*** ([Heb 12:6](#)). Scripture tells us that discipline is good, healthy, and necessary. If God disciplines - even ***scourges*** - us when we go astray, so too should a good father discipline his children, but never unjustly. It is easy for us dads to be hard on our kids. Good fathers want their kids to learn and grow, but that can sometimes manifest itself with harsh commands, impatience, criticism, or unwarranted physical punishment. We must avoid this and ensure our words are seasoned with grace and our discipline is appropriate and fair.

Fathers are to ***bring [our children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*** This is a difficult task and one that requires great patience, understanding, a good listening ear, and much prayer. We should be the example of what a godly man looks like; one for our sons to aspire to be like, and one for our daughters to use as a model of their future husband. Our spiritual health and deepening relationship with the Lord are crucial here.

Being a Christ-like husband and father is a very high calling, and one that requires a lot of strength and discipline of our own. Leaning on God our heavenly Father and spending that quality time with Him in prayer and His Word is the only way we can do it.

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