



Poima

“Relational Christianity Part 3”

Ephesians 6:1-4

The family is the strongest institution on the face of the earth. When members of that family are under the submission of God and are submissive to one another, it is loving, caring, patient, kind, encouraging, watchful, intentional, purposeful, pleasing, selfless, sacrificial, fulfilling, and satisfying.

When the family is not submissive to God or to one another, it is unloving, uncaring, impatient, unkind, discouraging, apathetic, clueless, selfish, unpleasant, toxic, and unfulfilling. It can leave in its wake hurt, anger, bitterness, and feelings of abandonment.

Paul continues the theme of submission that he began in 5:1-2. In 6:1-4 he instructs us how to submit to one another at home, in the parent-child relationship.

- ***Children are commanded to obey their parents, for this is pleasing to the Lord.***

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” (Ephesians 6:1)

The word translated **children** in this verse does not necessarily refer to young children but to all sons and daughters still under their parents’ roof. They are to obey them. In the Greek, **obey** literally means, **“to hear under.”** – that is, to listen with attentiveness and to respond positively to what is heard.

The phrase, **“...in the Lord...”** refers to the sphere of pleasing the Lord, to obeying parents for the Lord’s sake. Obeying their parents is reflective of their obedience to the Lord, and this is **right**. **Right** refers to what is correct, just, righteous. In other words, to do exactly as it should be. The right attitude will reflect the right action.

- ***Children are commanded to honor their parents in all things.***

“Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that is may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” (Ephesians 6:2-3)

Paul then turns the maturity page, so to speak. The command becomes deeper spiritually and emotionally for children in terms of respect and responsibility.

The first law of the Ten Commandments relating to human relationships was the law to **“Honor your father and mother...”** This command means children (regardless of age, but especially for older children) are to hold their parents in the highest possible respect. Much of the Mosaic Law forbids children to show disrespect and disobedience to their parents.

Honoring your father and mother comes with a reward: a quality of life for the children who obey it. The original promise was to Israel and involved many tangible, physical, earthly blessings. Paul's reference to it here shows that this promise extends to believers today.

Although it may not always be tangible, children (no matter the age and no matter how old they become) who honor their father and mother with love and deep respect do receive reward. They will experience a rich, God-given harmony and satisfaction in their family. Other children who do not obey this command will never know this pleasure.

➤ ***Fathers have a Biblical responsibility to the overall spiritual well being of their children.***

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

A father can be the most dominate figure in the home, and he is usually the parent who might most often “**...provoke...**” his children to anger. A mother is obviously capable of doing the same thing and is no more justified by doing it than the father. The word **provoke** suggests a repeated, ongoing pattern of treatment that gradually build up a deep-seated anger and resentment. This emotion often boils over in outward hostility.

Such treatment is often unintentional and thought to be for the child's benefit. However, it can have adverse consequences. Well meaning overprotection can also cause resentment in children. Parents who smother their children overly restrict where they can go and what they can do. They never trust them to do things on their own, and continually question their judgment. This builds a barrier between their children and themselves – usually under the delusion that they are building a closer relationship.

The most positive command for fathers (of course this is inclusive of mothers) is to “**...bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**” This is the systematic training of children and carries the idea of correction in wrongdoing (**discipline**).

Instruction means, “**putting in mind.**” This refers to the type of instruction found in the book of Proverbs. There, the primary focus is on teaching children godly principles and truths. It does not simply have to do with factual information, but instead, its focus is on right attitudes and principles of behavior. Everything parents do for their children should be for Him – for the Lord. According to the teaching of His Word, by the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, it is to be about Him, to His honor and glory.

We should always remember, our children belong to the Lord. They are His. He has given us the responsibility to teach them about Him so that they will seek Him and know Him in the intimate relationship He desires to have with them.

cd.TCT.22617