

God's Design for the Parent Child Relationship:

Love, Respect, and Legacy

Good morning, everyone! Today's message is about the importance of family and parenting. Let's dive into Ephesians chapter 6:1-4.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise – that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. And fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

The Blessing of Children

The Bible emphasizes the blessing of children in Psalm 127:3-5:

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.

So, if you've got a houseful or had a houseful of kids, rejoice in that!

Proverbs 23:24-25 says:

The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her who bore you rejoice.

Divine Guidance for Parents

As parents, God has blessed us with the wisdom and guidance from His Word on how to raise our children righteously and godly. Our children, too, can find valuable advice on how to relate to us, their parents. It's amazing how just four verses can provide such a strong foundation for a healthy parent-child relationship.

God's Word is straightforward, leaving no room for confusion. "Children, obey your parents. Honor your father and mother." Obeying involves taking positive actions based on attentive listening to their instructions, while honoring them deals with maintaining a respectful attitude.

Many books and articles have been written on marriage and family, and preachers can expound on a single verse for days. However, the essence of God's guidance for parenting is beautifully summarized in these few verses. And let me tell you, God means every word He says. It's clear and straightforward.

In Ephesians 5 and 6, God provides the key to godly and harmonious family living. Let's revisit the importance of each role within a Christian home:

1. The wife submits to her husband, not in a dictatorial way but in acknowledging his role as the head of the family.
2. The husband loves his wife sacrificially, just as Christ loved the church.

Now, we focus on the children obeying their parents in the Lord.

Obedience and Honor

Christian children, you may wonder why you should obey your parents. Firstly, obeying them pleases God, and living a life that pleases God brings blessings. Colossians 3:20 emphasizes:

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

When you obey and honor your parents, you also obey and honor the Lord. Obedience is the pathway to receiving blessings from God.

Secondly, obedience is right. Ephesians 6:1b states that it is right to obey. God has established an order that makes certain actions right and proper.

Remember, in a Christian home, obedience to parents is not just a duty but a way of life that brings joy and fulfillment.

Parents are the ones who bring their children into the world, and their knowledge and wisdom surpass that of the child. It is natural and God-ordained that obeying parents is the right thing. This notion of rightness doesn't come from humanistic philosophy, psychological case studies, or man-made theories. Unfortunately, humanistic groups today advocate for children to be liberated from traditional morals, parental authority, physical discipline, religion, and even patriotism. These ideas are prevalent in our culture, and some have proposed children's rights that go as far as allowing children to sue their parents for making them attend church, getting paid for doing household chores, or even divorcing their parents to choose another family.

In the past, the Duke of Windsor pointed out that everything in the American home is controlled by switches except the children. Today, some may advocate for a reversed

version of Ephesians 6:1, suggesting that parents should obey their children to keep them happy and have peace at home. However, such thinking is completely contrary to God's order in nature.

As children of God, we need to seek and follow God's guidance, which emphasizes the importance of obedience and honor toward our parents. This obedience is not just about rules; it is about respecting the roles and authority God has established within the family. God's wisdom and guidance are essential for our lives as His children.

We need God's instruction, wisdom, and correction in our lives and families. Our children also look up to us for guidance, understanding, and support. The fundamental reason for children to obey and honor their parents comes from God's standard of what is right. In a world where right and wrong seem to shift, God's Word clearly defines what is correct, just, and righteous.

God's Clear Guidance

When God says something is right, it is precisely as it should be. His commands are trustworthy, and He will never mislead or misguide us. Everything He tells us is true, and His wisdom surpasses our understanding. We can rely on God's perfect judgment and guidance without second-guessing because He doesn't make mistakes.

God knows better, and His ways are always perfect. Embracing and living by His instructions bring harmony, peace, and blessings to our families and lives.

We must trust God as our Heavenly Father, and we are His children. Just as our Heavenly Father guides us, we are also responsible for teaching our children. In Psalm 19:7-8, David beautifully describes the perfection and wisdom of God's law, testimony, statutes, and commandments.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;

When it comes to obedience and honor, the right attitude is crucial. Combining the right attitude with the proper act of obedience results in honor. So, as children, we are called to obey and honor our parents. Honor goes beyond mere obedience; it involves valuing, respecting, and expressing gratitude to our parents throughout their entire lives. Whether our parents are still with us on this earth or have passed on, we should continue honoring and respecting them unconditionally.

Honoring our parents reflects our obedience to God's commandments and is an act of love and respect toward those who have significantly shaped us.

Proverbs 23:22 advises us:

Listen to your father who begot you,

And do not despise your mother when she is old.

No matter how far we may move away or how old we grow, we will always be our parents' children, and they will always be our mom and dad. It is a comforting and endearing thought to call them "mom" and "dad" rather than impersonal terms like "birthing person."

Let's abandon the idea of divorcing our parents from our lives because, in God's eyes, they will always be our parents. Instead of walking away, we should pray through any difficulties and strive to honor and respect our parents.

Why Obey Your Parents

God's first law relating to human relationships, found in the Ten Commandments, is "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving." Honoring our parents impacts the length of our lives and the quality of that life. It is a foundational principle that leads to blessings and well-being.

When we honor and obey our parents, God promises to bless and prosper us. He wants us not just to survive but also to thrive and have an abundant life. When we follow God's commandments and submit to His leadership, He showers us with His favor and blessings.

Another powerful reason to obey our parents is that obedience is not an option; God commands it. His commandments are not up for debate or personal preference. When God gives a command, it is for our benefit and the fulfillment of His divine plan.

Respecting Authority

When children grow up with respect and obedience to their parents, it forms the foundation for respecting authority figures in other areas of life, such as teachers, police officers, and employers. Unfortunately, our culture often lacks a healthy respect for authority, leading to various societal challenges. Some may advocate liberating children from traditional morals, values, and parental authority, but chaos can ensue without proper boundaries and guidance. Creating rules as we go and discarding God's

law will not result in a functional society. Promoting children's rights without teaching them responsibility can create an upside-down world with confusion and disorder.

Power of Gratitude

In King Lear, Shakespeare "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." This powerful quote reminds us of the pain and disappointment that can come from ingratitude in our children. Sons and daughters must hear and take to heart the value of showing gratitude.

First Timothy 5:4 is a verse that holds great significance for both parents and children:

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.

It encourages children, including grandchildren, to learn to show piety and to repay their parents. Repaying their parents is not just a nice gesture; it is deemed good and acceptable before God Almighty, the Creator of the universe.

Parents invest around 20 years or more in raising and providing for their children. In turn, children should be willing to spend whatever time and resources are necessary to care for and provide for their parents when needed. This reciprocal love and care between parents and children reflect the beauty of family relationships and demonstrate God's design for honoring our parents.

So, let us all remember the importance of gratitude and the call to repay our parents' love and care as a reflection of the love and care God has shown us.

Repaying our parents goes beyond mere financial support. While providing for their needs is essential, it should be accompanied by loving personal involvement. Money can express love, but it can never replace genuine affection and care.

So let us remember the importance of heartfelt actions, genuine affection, and the right attitude in our relationships with our parents. Doing so can truly honor our parents and deepen our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Legacy of Love

As our parents get older and may need more support, we must step up and care for them. It's a beautiful expression of love and gratitude for all they have done for us. While we may not expect our children to repay us similarly, witnessing their efforts to care for us or show appreciation would be heartwarming.

Imagine going out to dinner with your children, and they insist on paying the bill, expressing their desire to treat you. It's a heartwarming and touching moment reflecting children's love and respect for their parents.

Kids can be funny during Christmas time, presenting their wish lists while not necessarily asking about what their parents want. Nevertheless, these moments are filled with love and joy as we celebrate the bonds of family and the precious relationships we share.

Ultimately, it's not about financial payback but the love, care, and appreciation we express to one another, creating lasting memories and strengthening the family bond.

Proverbs 1:8 says:

My son, hear the instruction of your father,

And do not forsake the law of your mother;

This verse highlights the different roles parents may play in guiding their children. Fathers may provide instruction and advice, while mothers often lay down the law and establish boundaries.

A parent's goal is to teach and guide children in the right direction, fostering a loving and respectful relationship between parents and their offspring.

The passage in Proverbs 4:1-4 beautifully illustrates the passing down of knowledge from one generation to another.

Hear, *my children*, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law.

When I was my father's son, Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, He also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live."

The father teaches his son what he learned from his father. This generational transmission of wisdom is a precious tradition that can shape and guide children.

As fathers, there are many things we can teach our children, from practical skills like riding a bike or changing the oil to imparting life principles and values that will shape their character and guide their decisions. The love and care we invest in teaching and training our children lay the foundation for their future, equipping them to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives.

Just as one generation plants a tree and the next enjoys its shade, parents and grandparents who instill godly teaching and spiritual examples in their children bless them with a lasting inheritance.

Material wealth and possessions are not the ultimate measure of a valuable inheritance. The most incredible legacy we can leave for our children is the love for God, the desire to serve Him, and the commitment to follow His ways. When we pass on these spiritual values, we set our children on a path of blessings, and God becomes their source, promoter, and guide.

As parents, let us strive to pass down the priceless gift of faith and devotion to God, knowing that this is the most significant inheritance we can leave for our children—a legacy that will bless them and impact future generations.

Consequences of Disobedience

Proverbs 30:17 contains a powerful warning for those who disobey and dishonor their parents. This verse vividly shows the consequences of mocking one's father and scorning obedience to their mother. The analogy of the ravens of the valley picking it out and the young eagles eating it paints a striking picture.

This verse serves as a reminder that God takes the command to honor parents seriously. Disobedience and disrespect toward parents can lead to severe consequences. While this image might sound extreme, it is a powerful illustration of the seriousness of dishonoring parents.

Proverbs 30:17 states:

The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother,

The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

The underlying message of this verse is clear and significant: Honoring and obeying parents is not only a promise of blessing but also a warning of the potential consequences for those who disregard this vital commandment. There are consequences of disobedience and rebellion that lead to a lack of vision, clarity, longevity, and prosperity. As the Scriptures emphasize throughout, disobedience to parents ultimately amounts to rebellion against God.

Expressing Appreciation

It's crucial to take the opportunity today to honor and thank our parents for their investment in our lives. If your parents are still alive, don't wait until tomorrow; seize

the chance today to show them respect and gratitude. You can do this in various ways, but the most important thing is to do it from your heart.

May our relationships with our parents be filled with gratitude, understanding, and an ever-deepening appreciation for their valuable role in shaping who we are today.