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## **God's Wisdom To Children and Parents**

### **Ephesians 6:1-4**

#### **Introduction**

1. The home is God's proving ground for both parents and children.
2. It is here that children learn obedience to authority and self-discipline, benefitting them for the rest of their lives.
3. It is also here that parents learn how to serve, by preparing their children for eternity with God.
4. Needed today, more than ever are godly families — they serve as a powerful voice in a world of struggling people.

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#### **I. Children**

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother with is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3, NASB95).

#### **A. IT IS IN KEEPING WITH NATURAL LAW**

1. As the apostle Paul says, “for this is right.”
2. If we could go back and examine every society that has existed down through the ages, I believe we would find that all of them held to the belief that children are to respect and obey their parents.
3. Wherever it is absent, we find decadence and degeneration.
4. In the last half of Romans 1, the apostle Paul describes the demise of a society which rejects God.
5. In the last phase of their downward spiral, Paul states they no longer acknowledge God (v. 28).

6. The result is that “God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper” (Romans 1:28b).
7. As you read through the list of sins of which these people are guilty, one stands out which is pertinent to tonight’s lesson — they are “disobedient to parents” (Romans 1:30).
8. In Paul’s second letter to Timothy who is in Ephesus, he tells him in 3:1 that “in the last days difficult times will come.”
9. According to Paul, these will be times of societal degeneration.
10. A part of that degeneration is that “people will be . . . disobedient to parents” (2 Timothy 3:2).
11. No matter how natural it may seem to a child to disobey or dishonor his or her parents, such behavior is to live against the natural order of every civilization.
12. It is “right” to obey and honor our parents.

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**B. IT IS IN KEEPING WITH DIVINE LAW**

1. As Paul lays down this principle, he takes us back to the Ten Commandments.
2. In the fifth of those commandments God commands, “Honor your father and mother” (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16).
3. The simple truth is that children must obey and honor their parents because God commands it, period!
4. Paul tells us that there is a promise attached to that commandment.
5. It is, “so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:3).
6. In other words, it may affect how well and how long a child may live.
7. While each of us know children who died at a very early age, the general rule is that children who honor and obey their parents live longer and better.

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8. There are several reasons for this:

- a. A child who obeys his parents will regularly be warned from harm's way.
  - 1) Such a child will typically experience fewer accidents and physical trauma because he listened to his parents.
  - 2) How many of us wound up with a broken arm or skinned knee because we ignored our parents' warnings.

4a

- b. He or she will be spared the bad habits and bad friends which tend to ruin and shorten life.
  - 1) No doubt you have known a teenager whose attitude and actions have taken a turn for the worse because they started following "the wrong crowd".

4b

- c. He or she will be far more likely to develop healthy character traits.
    - 1) A disobedient child is much more likely to develop harmful patterns in his or her life.
9. Consider what Solomon had to say about the matter:

"Hear, my son, and accept my sayings and the years of your life will be many." (Proverbs 4:10, NASB95)

"The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened." (Proverbs 10:27, NASB95)

"The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it." (Proverbs 30:17, NASB95)

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### **C. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD?"**

1. The word translated "obey" comes from two Greek words which literally mean "*to listen under.*"
2. Obedience requires conscious listening.
3. Time and time again, during their wilderness wandering, God commanded the Israelites to "listen" to Him (Deuteronomy 4:1; 6:3; 7:12).
4. And, time and time again, they suffered because they did not "listen" to Him (Deuteronomy 1:43; 8:20).

5. For any child to "obey [his or her] parents in the Lord" means that they listen to their parents with the intent to understand and do whatever their parents have told them, in those things which are consistent with God's Word.
6. To a great extent any child's obedience is a matter of attitude.
  - a. Honoring and obeying one's parents goes beyond mere outward obedience.
  - b. It involves loving them, holding them in high regard, showing them respect and consideration.
7. Even as adult children, we will never outgrow the obligation to honor our parents.

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## **II. Parents**

### **A. DO NOT PROVOKE YOUR CHILDREN TO ANGER**

1. Through Unreasonableness
  - a. We make unreasonable demands of our children and establish petty rules.
  - b. We do this when we expect too much from our children.
  - c. We require something of our children that is beyond their capability.
  - d. We place so many demands upon them that they can't help but be frustrated.

**6a**

2. Through Fault-finding
  - a. Always blaming and never praising.
  - b. No doubt we have all seen the parent in whose eyes the child can do nothing right.
  - c. Such a parent is always demeaning his or her child, in public and private.
  - d. I have felt for those children because I am sure that in the moment they have wished they could crawl under a rock and simply disappear.

**6b**

3. Through Neglect
  - a. Such parents fail to be present for their children either physically,

emotionally or spiritually.

- b. This was David's sin when it came to his son Absalom (2 Samuel 14,15).
- c. It resulted in Absalom's conspiracy and attempted murder of his father, David (2 Samuel 15-18).

**6c**

4. Through Inconsistency

- a. A parent continually makes promises to their child which are never kept.
- b. The child's hopes are continually raised only to be destroyed each time the parent doesn't follow through with the promise made.

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**B. BRING THEM UP IN THE DISCIPLINE AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD**

1. Through Gentleness

- a. The Greek word translated "bring up" literally means to nourish or nurture.
- b. Paul used the same word back in Ephesians 5:29 where he said that a man "nourishes and cherishes" his own body.
- c. As men we are to be tender in bringing up our children.
- d. Men this is what we do when we hold that baby in our arms, when we get down in the floor and play with our toddler, when we hug our teenager or our grown son or daughter.

**7a**

2. Through Discipline

- a. Not only did Paul say that we should "nourish" our children, but also that we should "discipline" them.
- b. There are times when this discipline involves punishment.
- c. Pilate used this word concerning Jesus when he said, "I will punish Him and release Him" (Luke 23:16).
- d. In the book of Proverbs we find these two statements from Solomon:

"Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death."  
(Proverbs 19:18, NASB95)

"He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to

reproof acquires understanding.” (Proverbs 15:32, NASB95)

e. The writer of Hebrews included these words:

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” (Hebrews 12:11, NASB95)

f. It has been almost 40 years ago now, but in 1986 singer, songwriter Holly Dunn released a song titled “Daddy’s Hands” which includes these lyrics in the chorus:

**Daddy's hands were soft and kind when I was cryin'  
 Daddy's hands were hard as steel when I'd done wrong  
 Daddy's hands weren't always gentle but I've come to understand  
 There was always love in daddy's hands**

**7b**

3. Through Instruction

1. The Greek word translated here as “instruction” literally means “to put or place before the mind.”
2. It is a word which can also mean to “rebuke or restrain.”
3. It is the word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament where God told Samuel that He would punish the priest Eli for failing to “restrain” his sons (1 Samuel 3:13).

“The Lord said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. “In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. “For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them.” (1 Samuel 3:11–13, NASB95)

4. Paul tells us that this “discipline and instruction” is “of the Lord.”

- a. The Lord Himself stands behind this kind of discipline and instruction.
- b. Ultimately, we as parents are the instruments who carry out His discipline and instruction.

- c. The Lord is working through us to accomplish His will in the lives of our children.

## **Conclusion**

1. Childhood is a time when lives are made and broken.
2. For those who are children it seems like an eternity.
3. As adults, we look back and wonder where the time went.
4. Parents, our children need to live out God's direction in their lives so that they can embrace life to its fullest.
5. One day, that baby boy will be leading his own family.
6. One day, that baby girl will give birth to your grandchild.
7. Parents please pray that God guide you in your parenting.
8. The eternal well-being of your children will be affected by it.