

WARM-UP

- If money were not a factor, what gift do you wish you could give your parents or guardian? Why?
- What is one thing you appreciate most about your father or a person who has been like a father to you? Recall an instance explaining this.
- What terms do you use to refer to your parents? How do you think those terms of endearment reflect your relationship with them?

WORD *¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. **EPHESIANS 6:1-4***

Continuing from how a husband and wife should relate with each other, the apostle Paul turns to children and parents. He focuses particularly on fathers. If we have believed the gospel and our lives have been transformed by Christ, all our relationships, including with our parents and our children, should reflect this. Even amidst brokenness and relational dysfunctions, the Bible gives instructions and promises for obedience. This can result in discipling godly generations to follow Christ.

1 | We are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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EPHESIANS 5:21

The apostle Paul charged the Ephesian church to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) by worshiping and giving thanks to God as well as by submitting to one another. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live humbly, in a way that reveres Christ. Why do you think Paul taught about mutual submission before going into specific relationships, like marriage and family? What do you think Ephesians 5:21 would look like in a home and what could its effects be?

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2 | Children obey and honor their parents.

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If children obey and honor their parents, God promises to bless and reward them. They will experience and enjoy full and long lives. This is because obedience to parents is *right*. While many of us are no longer children who are dependent on our parents, the command to honor them remains. We can honor them in how we relate with them and how we talk about them with others. How does honoring your father and

mother look like for you? How have you experienced the benefits of this commandment?

3 | **Fathers instruct and admonish 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***

Interestingly, Paul singled out fathers and their relationships with their children. He tells them to lead, train, and relate with their sons and daughters in God's ways. Fathers are to discipline their children without exasperating them, and direct them without discouraging them. In practical ways, how should a father instruct his children? What can future fathers do today in preparation for this?

APPLICATION

- In what way do you think your relationship with your parents or guardian needs to grow? What is your prayer for this relationship, and what are you willing to do about it, starting this week?
- If you are a parent, what is your desire for your child or children? How can you reflect Christ in your relationship with them every day? How can you instruct them in God's ways?
- How can your relationships reflect Christ to those around you? What did you learn from this lesson, and what will you do about it?

