

## **Ephesians Chapter 6**

**Ephesians 6:1 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."**

"Obey ... in the Lord":

See Colossians 3:20.

The child that is in the home is to be willingly under the authority of parents with obedient submission to them as the agents of the Lord placed over him, obeying parents as if obeying the Lord Himself.

The reasoning here is simply that such is the way God has designed and required it ("right").

"Children":

This does not refer particularly to your children but to all offspring.

Sons and daughters still under their parents' roof are to obey and honor them.

Obey has to do with action, and honor has to do with attitude.

Although men and women are no longer under the authority of their parents once they themselves marry (5:31), special respect and concern for their parents should continue as long as they live.

The child who is brought up to obey and honor his parents will always be sensitive to their wisdom, counsel and welfare.

The first step in promulgating God's truth was to pass it on to their children.

"And you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7).

Parents were to continually speak about the things of God, so that knowledge and love of Him would become a matter of life and breathe for the family.

When the parents were not speaking, the testimony would continue.

It is God's plan for His Word to be passed on from one generation to the next.

And His primary agent is the family.

"In the Lord":

This phrase grammatically does not modify “parents,” for this would mean that only Christian parents are to be obeyed.

Rather the phrase goes with “obey,” that is, obey those parental instructions, whether from Christian or non-Christian parents, that are in line with the Lord’s will.

“Obey your parents in the Lord”.

One of the lessons that is most important to the spiritual growth of a child is to teach them to obey the Lord.

Obedience to the Lord is taught a child in obedience to his parents who are in the Lord.

Disobedient children are a problem to themselves, their parents, and to the Lord.

### Verse 2-3

“Honor” means have inward respect and reverence for.

It is inadequate for children to obey parents only outwardly (verse 1); they must also respect or honor them inwardly.

“Which is the first commandment with promise” (or otherwise, “for this is the first command with promise”).

The fifth of the Ten Commandments (in Exodus 20:3-17), is the very first of all God’s Old Testament injunctions to be given that possesses an attached promise.

The promise is twofold: honoring and obeying parents ensures a long and a prosperous life upon this earth.

While verse 1 speaks of action, this term speaks of attitude, as Paul deals with the motive behind the action.

When God gave His law in the Ten Commandments, the first law governing human relationships was this one (Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16).

It is the only command of the 10 that relates to the family because that principle alone secures the family’s fulfillment.

Proverbs affirms this principle.

**Ephesians 6:2 "Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;"**

The right attitude behind the right act of obedience is honor (Timao), which means to value highly, to hold in the highest regard and respect.

In both its verb and noun forms the word is often used as a term of reverence, preciousness, and honor regarding God the Father and Christ.

“Honor thy father and mother”:

This is the only commandment of the ten that relates to the family, because that on principle alone, when obeyed, is enough to secure the right relationship of children to their parents.

A person who grows up with a sense of respect for and obedience to his parents will have the foundation for respecting the authority of other leaders and the rights of other people in general.

"Honor" means to have high regard for those in authority above you.

The reason they are over you, is because it is by God's plan for them to be over you.

Children are to honor both their father and mother, to hold them in the highest possible respect.

“The first commandment with promise”:

Although submission to parents should first of all be for the Lord’s sake, He has graciously added the promise of special blessing for those who obey this command.

Deut. 5:16. “Honor thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”

Respect for parents is of such grave importance to God that Moses commanded, “He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”

And “He who curse his father or his mother shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 21:15; Leviticus 20:9).

Either to physically or verbally abuse a parent was a capital offense in ancient Israel.

If your parents were to go completely against God teachings, then your first obligation would be to keep God's law.

Children who respect and obey their parents will build a society that is ordered, harmonious and also productive.

A generation of undisciplined, disobedient children will produce a society that is chaotic and therefore destructive.

The honor of parents does encompass providing for them when they can no longer provide for their own selves.

Just as parents spend twenty or so years taking care of and providing for their children, their children are to spend whatever time and money is necessary to care and provide for their parents should the parents be no longer able to do so for themselves.

**Ephesians 6:3 "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."**

The command to honor your father and mother (in 6:2), is twofold.

That it may be well with you relates to the quality of life, and that you may live long on the earth relates to the quantity of life promised.

The original promise was to Israel and involved many tangible, physical and earthly blessings.

Paul's reference here shows that it also extends to believers today.

Though its blessings may not always be tangible, a family where children and parents live in mutual love and submission will have rich, God given harmony and satisfaction that other families can never know.

We find in Christian families that parents are very interested in their children's welfare.

Children, who honor their parents, can learn from the parent's experiences.

Children, who are obedient to parents, do not get on drugs and alcohol.

They stay in school and do well.

If parents, that are much older and more experienced, cannot fulfill their responsibilities without being saved and being filled with the Holy Spirit, how much less can children be expected to fulfill their responsibilities without those spiritual requirements?

Discipline follows in their life and they become responsible adults.

Discipline and success go hand in hand.

Children are just as much commanded to "be filled with the Spirit" (5:18), and to "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (5:21), as the husbands and wives of (5:22-23), and the parent of (6:4).

**Ephesians 6:4 "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."**

The first command to parents by Paul is negative: fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.

That was a totally new concept for Paul's day, and especially in such pagan strongholds such as was Ephesus.

As most families were in shambles, mutual love among family members was almost unheard of.

A father's love for his children would have been hard even to imagine.

"Fathers":

The word technically refers to male parents, but was also used of parents in general.

Since Paul had been speaking of both parents (verses 1-3), he probably had both in mind here.

The same word is used (in Hebrews 11:23), for Moses' parents.

"Provoke not":

In the pagan world of Paul's day, and even in many Jewish households, most fathers ruled their families with rigid and domineering authority.

The desires and welfare of wives and children were seldom considered.

By Roman law, a father had virtual life and death power not only over his slaves but over his entire household.

He could cast any of them out of the house, sell them as slaves, or even kill them, and be accountable to no one.

Harvard University sociologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck developed a test that proved to be 90% accurate, to determine whether or not 5 and 6 year old's would become delinquent.

They discovered that the four primary factors necessary to prevent delinquency are: the father's firm, fair, and consistent discipline.

The mother's supervision and companionship during the day.

The parents demonstrated affection for each other and for the children.

And the family's spending time together in activities where all participated.

The apostle makes clear that a Christian father's authority over his children does not allow for unreasonable demands and other strictures that then might drive his children to anger, despair and resentment.

"Nurture and admonition of the Lord":

This calls for systematic discipline and instruction, which brings children to respect the commands of the Lord as the foundation of all of life, godliness and blessing (Prov. 13:24; Heb. 12:5-11).

“Fathers” can “provoke” their “children to wrath” by injustice, loss of temper, undue severity, cruelty, discouragement, overprotection, favoritism, pushing achievement beyond reasonable bounds, suppression, sarcasm, ridicule, and misuse or abuse of authority.

“Nurture”:

This basically means “training,” here denoting spiritual education.

“Admonition”:

This is instruction that points out one’s responsibilities and duties.

“Of the Lord”:

This is in Greek a subjective genitive.

This indicates that behind the parents’ rearing and instruction of their children stands the Lord as the chief teacher in child education.

Parents do not rear children alone.

Parents must discipline their children in love.

To be hateful and short with children is setting a bad example for them.

Parents should be loving and caring for their children.

Criticism of children makes them feel discouraged.

Parents should encourage them every chance they get.

Parents who are unstable tend to have unstable children.

Parents who are disciplined loving people have disciplined loving children.

The most important thing to teach a child is the love of God.

They can always depend on God, even when things are going bad in their life.

The key to right discipline and instruction of children is its being of the Lord.

Everything parents do for their children is to be of Him, according to the teaching of His Word, by the guidance and power of His Holy Spirit, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to His own glory and honor.

**Ephesians 6:5 "Servants, be obedient to them that are [your] masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;"**

In this passage, Paul continues to deal with the practical effects of the Spirit filled life (5:18), without which none of God's righteous standards can be met, including those with regular working relationships.

(Verses 5-8), teach about the submission of slave, or workers, and (verse 5:9), teaches about the submission of master, or employers.

"Servants, be obedient":

Servants (Greek meaning doulas or slaves).

Slaves in both Greek and Roman culture had no rights legally and were treated as commodities.

Roman citizens came to look on work as beneath their dignity and the entire empire gradually came to function largely by slave power.

Slaves were bought, sold, traded, used, and discarded as heartlessly as if they were animals or even tools.

There was much abuse and seldom good treatment of slaves.

The Bible does not speak against slavery itself, but against its abuses (Exodus 21:16, 26-27; Lev. 25:10; Deut. 23:15-16).

Paul's admonition applies equally well to all employees.

The term "obedient" refers to continuous, uninterrupted submission to one's earthly master or employer, the only exception being regarding a command that involves clear disobedience of God's Word as illustrated (in Acts. 4:19-20).

Because the command of mutual submission is possible only to the Spirit filled believer, Paul is addressing Christian slaves, just as he later addresses Christian masters (verse 9).

He calls them to have the right behavior, the right perspective, the right attitude, and the right commitment that reflect their right relationship to God through Jesus Christ.

"Your masters according to the flesh"

This means "your human masters."

Servants are to carry out their slave duties “with fear and trembling,” that is, with careful concern to do a good job and with referential respect for their masters.

Believers are not to obey simply when they desire to or when their employers are fair and are also reasonable.

They are to obey in everything and at all times, the only exception being when they are instructed to do something immoral, idolatrous, blasphemous, or the like.

The first obligation of a Christian is to please his Lord and to be a faithful testimony to Him.

One way to do this, Paul tells us, is to give willing obedience to those under whom you work, regardless of who they are or what their character is like.

Being a Christian should always make a person a better, more productive and much more agreeable worker.

People will not be inclined to listen to the testimony of a Christian who does shoddy, careless work or who is constantly complaining.

“Singleness of your heart”:

This refers to a mental disposition, and attitude that renders obedience out of sincerity, and not out of hypocrisy.

“As unto Christ”:

This explains why servants should obey masters in the manner prescribed here: obedience rendered to their masters is obedience rendered to Christ.

We must be careful to see in this that the servant is a servant in the flesh.

To keep your job and to advance in that job would be more likely, if you were obedient to the boss over you.

Sincere loyalty toward an employer, not just lip service, will make you an employee who never has to look for a job.

How a believer works in his job reflects on His Lord, regardless of who his human master or employer may be.

The boss rewards such loyalty.

One thing in our society that I believe this is leading to, is after you have agreed to work for a certain sum of money for a certain time, do not go back and renegotiate.



Be true to your own word.

Verses 6-7

God's credits and rewards will be appropriate to the attitude and action of our work.

No good thing done for His glory will go unrewarded.

**Ephesians 6:6 "Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;"**

"Eyeservice":

Working well only when being watched by the boss.

"Men-pleasers":

Working only to promote one's welfare, rather than to honor the employer and the Lord, whose servants we really are.

"Singleness of heart" or sincere disposition excludes "eyeservice," that is, duty performed only when the master is watching; but it includes "doing the will of God from the heart," that is, enthusiastic service coming from within and not having to be coerced by external pressure.

This is just saying again, that you should be loyal to your boss.

The heart is what makes you loyal to your boss.

This is saying the person is loyal when the boss is looking, and then he is sneaking around and doing things he should not when the boss is not looking.

This person does not need to be checked up on, because he always does his work to the best of his ability, whether or not anyone else is around.

And he works just as hard when he is passed over for a raise or promotion as when he is being considered for them.

All of us, no matter if we are servants, or the boss, will stand before the Judge of all the world to be judged.

We can have no secrets from Him.

He knows even the thoughts we have.

If you find yourself in a position of serving, be the very best servant you can possibly be.

Do it as if you were serving God.

**Ephesians 6:7 "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:"**

“Good will”:

This means “good intention.”

The Christian servant (employee), seeks the best interests of his master (employer).

This reinforces what Paul has just said.

With good will expresses the attitude of the worker who does not need prompting or compelling.

When a Christian is where God wants him to be and is obedient to render service, as to the Lord, that is the most challenging, productive, and rewarding place to be.

We will be judged by what we did in the position the Lord put us.

Everything we do in this life is as unto the Lord.

What ever position you are in, if you are a Christian, you are there because that is where God wants you for the moment.

You really are doing the job for yourself, your boss, and for God.

To be the head of the company, it is better if you start at the bottom and work yourself up, because then you know the functions of all the jobs.

Every day should be a day of service to the Lord.

“Whatever your hand finds to do”, Solomon tells us, “do it with all your might” (see Ecclesiastes verses 9:10-11).

In his letter to Rome, Paul tells us not to lag behind in diligence, but to be “fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (12:11).

And in Colossians, “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” (see 3:23).

That is the work attitude of the Spirit filled Christian.

**Ephesians 6:8 "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether [he be] bond or free."**

The basis for the servant's "good intention" (verse 7), toward his master is his being recompensed by the Lord, both in this life and in the one to come, "the same" good he has performed in his servant duties.

The rewards for every job well done, is given in heaven.

The boss will be judged, and so will the servant.

Each person must give an account unto God.

Those who have more are judged more harshly, than those who have less to do with.

Lay up your treasures in heaven.

God's credits and rewards are always dependable and always appropriate.

An employer may not appreciate or even be aware of the good work done, perhaps because he is indifferent or because someone else takes credit for what is done.

But God knows and God rewards.

No good thing done in His name and for His glory can pass His notice or fail to receive His blessing.

**Ephesians 6:9 "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."**

"Ye masters, do the same things unto them":

There should be mutual honor and respect from Christian employers to the employees, based on their common allegiance to the Lord.

A Christian employer's relationship to his employees should have the same motivation and goal as a Christian worker's relationship to his employer: the desire to obey and please the Lord.

An employer is to use his authority "as to the Lord," just as workers are to submit to authority "as to the Lord."

That is an expression of their mutual submission in being "subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (5:21).

"Forbearing threatening":

The Spirit filled boss uses his authority and power with justice and grace, never putting people under threats, never abusive or inconsiderate.

He realizes that he has a heavenly Master who is impartial (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; James 2:9).

The Spirit filled employer is careful to give up threatening.

The term used suggests the idea of loosening up, or releasing.

He uses his authority and power as little as possible and does not throw his weight around or lord it over those under him.

He is never abusive or inconsiderate.

Earthly masters are to behave in a reciprocal manner toward their slaves, (i.e., with respect, sincerity and careful concern).

For earthly masters have a heavenly Master who will judge them without partiality.

He realizes that his own authority, though God given, is strictly functional and temporary.

He knows that he and his workers alike are under the supreme authority of God, that their Master and his is not on earth but in heaven.

The faithful Christian employer knows that he is a fellow servant of Jesus Christ with his employees, and is accountable to the same Master.

Everyone has someone over them.

Someone who is in charge on the earth will have to answer to His boss in heaven.

We will receive the same type of treatment that we have treated others with.

We are all servants of Christ.

Kindness to servants gets much more work done than harsh treatment.

The master will have to give an account to Jesus the same as the servant.

God is not a respecter of persons.

Use what God has given you to the best of your ability, and be kind to others around you in the doing, and great will be your reward in heaven.

Verses 10-17

The true believer described (in chapters 1-3), who lives the Spirit controlled life of (4:1 – 6:9), can be sure to be in a spiritual war, as described here.

Paul closed this letter with both warning about that war and instructions on how to win it.

The Lord provides His saints with sufficient armor to combat and thwart the adversary.

In verses 10-13, the apostle briefly sets forth the basic truths regarding the believer's necessary spiritual preparation as well as truths regarding his enemy, his battle and his victory.

In verses (14-17), he specifies the six most necessary pieces of spiritual armor with which God equips His children to resist and overcome Satan's assaults.

**Ephesians 6:10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might**

The Christian who continually seeks to grow in his knowledge of and obedience to the Word and to serve the Lord more faithfully will not find ministry becoming easier.

As the Lord gives mastery over certain temptations and weaknesses, Satan will attack elsewhere.

Faithful witnessing, preaching, teaching, visiting and every other service for the Lord not only will bring victories but will also bring their own special difficulties and opposition.

A Christian who no longer has to struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil is a Christian who has fallen either into sin or into complacency.

A Christian who has no conflict is a Christian who has retreated from the front lines of service.

“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Phil. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:1).

Basic to the effective Christian life is preparation.

The unprepared believer becomes the defeated believer who seeks to serve the Lord in his own wisdom and power.

The strength of the Christian life is dependence on God, being strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.

Any other strength proves to be impotent.

The cardinal reality presented in the book of Ephesians is that as believers, we are in Christ and are one with Him.

His life is our life, His power our power, His truth our truth, His way our way and, as Paul goes on to say here, His strength is our strength.

The Lord's strength is always more than sufficient for the battle. It is not the amount of the strength we have that is important, only its source.

Ultimately, Satan's power over Christians is already broken and the great war is won through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, which forever conquered the power of sin and death (Rom. 5:18-21; 1 Cor. 15:56-57; Heb. 2:14).

However, in life on earth, the battle of temptation goes on regularly.

The Lord's power, the strength of His Spirit and also the force of biblical truth are all that are required for victory.

"Finally":

This may be rendered "from now on" or "henceforth."

The spiritual battle Christians are engaged in exists "from now on" until the Lord's return.

There is no quarter given, no cease fire, no temporary truce, and no cessation of hostilities.

"From now on", till the end there is all out war.

The remainder of the verse may be paraphrased, "Let yourselves constantly be strengthened by the Lord; more precisely, by His mighty power."

We find that muscles are not what this is speaking of.

This is speaking of the strength of the Lord working through you.

Christians have great help in their endeavors on this earth.

The Spirit of the risen Christ within us strengthens us to whatever task the Lord has for us to do.

Most of us find that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

God will not call you to do any job for Him, without equipping you with all that you need to do the job.

Paul is speaking to believers here, because he says brethren.

To sum this lesson up, I would have to say that the Lord is telling all of us to be thoughtful of others around us, as we do the job at hand.

Sometimes wives feel useless, because they are not bringing in a paycheck.

We should never feel that way, because there are many jobs around home that we can do to help the family progress.

One of the greatest jobs a woman can do is to be a homemaker and mother.

Many of the great men in the ministry, such as John Wesley for one, were greatly influenced by godly mothers.

We know that Timothy was greatly influenced by his mother and grandmother.

One job is no less than someone else's job.

We all must work together to get the job done that God wants us to do.

Husbands should respect the wife for sacrificing and becoming a servant to him and the family.

If he had to pay someone to do her job, he would probably have to hire 3 or 4 people to fill his wife's shoes.

Wives, on the other hand, should appreciate a husband who will go out and work and provide the financial needs of the family.

Our society has changed so that now many wives must work outside the home to help with the family expenses.

This lesson is just saying, whatever your job in life is, do it to the very best of your ability.

If you are not rewarded on this earth, God will reward you in heaven.

Wives love and respect your husbands, husbands love your wives.

Children listen to your parents and respect them.

Parents love your children and guide them in love.

Everyone, remember, you are really doing all these things as unto the Lord in heaven.

All of the instructions in this lesson to wives, husbands, children, and servants were all given, so that we might live peaceable, productive lives while here on earth.

God was thinking of us, when He gave these instructions.

## **Ephesians Chapter 6 Questions**

1. Children, \_\_\_\_\_ your parents.
2. What is one of the most important things in the spiritual growth of a child?
3. Which is the first commandment with promise?
4. What does "honor" mean?
5. Who is your first obligation to?
6. What is the promise?
7. What helps children become responsible adults?
8. Fathers, \_\_\_\_\_ not your children to wrath.
9. Bring them up in the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.
10. Criticism of children makes them feel \_\_\_\_\_.
11. What is the most important thing for a parent to teach a child?
12. The servant, in verse 5, is a servant in the \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Verse 6 says, do not be \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Who are all of us really servant to?
15. How is the best way to become head of your company?
16. Why is this so?
17. Who must give an account to God?
18. A master dealing with a servant should remember what?
19. Finally, my brethren, be \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord, and in the \_\_\_\_\_ of His \_\_\_\_\_.
20. Why should we not worry about any job God calls us to do?
21. How can you sum up this lesson?