

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT -- HOME AND CHURCH

BIBLE TEXT : Ephesians 6:1-4

LESSON 356 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Ephesians 6:1-4

- ¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
- ² Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)
- ³ That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.
- ⁴ And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Obedience to Parents

"Children, obey your parents." How hard that is for children to do! They can think of so many excuses to avoid doing what their parents desire. They like to have their own way. They many time feel that they know more than their parents do, and that their parents are old-fashioned.

But the Word of God says: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." "In the Lord." If your parents would tell you to do things that Jesus would not what you to do, you are not bound to obey them. But parents who are doing the right thing must be obeyed.

"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:2, 3).

Happy Children

God knows what makes people happy, and He wants His people to be happy. The children who always have their own way are not happy. Those who have been disciplined when they were small, so that they know how to obey their parents and how to be kind and unselfish to everyone are much happier than those who selfishly insist on doing as they please. Do you think that a child is happy who goes into a tantrum in order to have his own way?

And think how unpleasant it is for others to be around a stubborn, disobedient, disagreeable child. Solomon said: "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (Proverbs 10:1). The wise son is the one who obeys God's Word and honours his parents. The foolish son is the one who disobeys both God and man.

God is watching everything we do. He watches the children and has sent His guardian angels to protect them; but if they insist on being rebellious, they will have to be punished. They suffer in this world; and if they do not repent, they will suffer more when they stand before the Judge of all the earth.

Parents must teach children how to be obedient. Children are not born naturally good. The Prophet Isaiah said: "All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6); and the Psalmist said: "They go astray as soon as they be born" (Psalm 58:3). Children must be taught in the home to have respect for the rights of others and to obey certain rules. Those who have no regard for the rules of their parents will not have much regard for the laws of the land, nor for the laws of God.

Even Jesus, the Son of God, when He came to earth as a man, was obedient to His earthly parents. He gave us an example of how we are to live. Some children think they are too old at 12 to be obedient to their parents or to be punished by them. When Jesus was 12 years old He was found in the Temple talking with the Jewish rabbis about the things in the Bible. He told His mother that He must be about the business of His Father in Heaven, which was very important. Nevertheless, He went back home with Mary and Joseph, to Nazareth, and "was subject unto them" (Luke 2:51).

Commandment to Parents

Parents will have to give an account to God for the way they have brought up their children. They, too, have a commandment from God: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Parents are duty-bound to make their children obey; but they must be kind, and punish with love in their heart.

When God chose Abraham to become the father of the Jewish nation, He saw an important characteristic in him that would help in the founding of that nation. He said: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

Children of Christian parents can help them very much by studying the Bible with them and co-operating in obeying the Word. The children and grandchildren of Abraham helped him to fulfil the will of God by being obedient to what he said and to the commands of God.

Conforming to the World

Often children think that the most important thing in their young lives is to have a good education, to be like the other young people with whom they go to school. Clothes-fads become very important, too. Worldly clubs, games, theatres, and parties entice many young people from the Word of God. They have a desire to be popular with the worldly crowd, and often their parents try to help them. Many mothers will wear old clothes so that their daughters can be dressed in the fashion. Parents will deny themselves many things in order to give their children advantages in life.

But what is the greatest advantage in life? Though our parents should leave us nothing of this world's goods, if they left us an example of Christian living and a sincere confidence and trust in the Word of God, we could ask for no greater heritage. This life with its honour and pride will soon be past. What we have of the love of God in our heart is all that will endure.

The Family Altar

"The family that prays together stays together," has often been quoted. A fellowship is enjoyed, through the family altar and through group study of the Bible, that can be built in no other way. Family worship is blessed by God because it is obeying the will of God. God's instruction through Moses was: "Ye shall teach them [the words of God] your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 11:19). But studying the Word in the home is not enough. Children must also be taken to Sunday School and church. Children even when small learn much when taken to adult services, and the blessing of God rests upon them.

When Joshua gave instructions to the Children of Israel, the little ones were there, too. "There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them" (Joshua 8:35). And how the people rejoiced when God poured out His blessings upon their sacrifices! "For God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off" (Nehemiah 12:43).

Jesus wants the little ones in His service. He said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). If little children are that

important to Jesus, think how they should behave themselves in the house of God. He loves them and wants them there; but they must be respectful and honour His church. They should be very quiet and not move around when someone is leading the congregation in prayer. He is talking with God, and the should pray, too.

One time the evil priests wanted to arrest Jesus, and many of the people had left the Temple. But there were many children in the Temple who loved Jesus, and they sang, "Hosanna to the Son of David." This made the priests angry, but Jesus said: "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matthew 21:15, 16). The children were honouring Jesus more than the religious adults were.

Many times faithful Christian children have led their parents to Jesus. A child may have been saved in the Sunday School, and he has gone home to tell his parents about the joy he feels. And he has prayed for his parents. God hears the simple prayer that a child prays in faith, and He answers. Many times sinners will listen to a child tell the Story of Jesus when they would not listen to a grownup. How important is the conduct of a child! And what great things he can do as he lives for Jesus!

QUESTIONS

1. What is God's commandment to children?
2. What is the promise He gives for obedience?
3. Which children are the happy ones?
4. Where should children first be taught to respect law and order?
5. How do we know that Jesus was obedient to His parents?
6. What is God's commandment to parents?
7. What things in school might entice a child from God if he is not careful?
8. What is our greatest heritage in this life?
9. What did Jesus say about welcoming little children?
10. What are some things Christian children can do for their parents?