

Scripture Text

Ephesians 6:1-4

Context

Paul is in the middle of a household code in which the rightful relations between various parties are spelt out. Having already dealt with husbands and wives, Paul now speaks about the relations between parents and children. These instructions are for those who are now living in the light of God's work of salvation in their lives. We see that the implications of the gospel are incredibly real in the family. Children are directly addressed in this letter, which underlines the importance of them being included in the church family.

Observation and Meaning

- What are the two commands given to children in this passage, and what is the difference between them?
- Why does the passage say that children must obey their parents? What is the reason given?
- What is the promise given to children for honouring their parents and how should this stir us to live in a way that honours our parents?
- Fathers (and by implication, parents) are told to refrain from provoking their children. What does this mean?
- What are the two positive things that parents are supposed to train their children in? How are these two things distinct from each other?

Big Idea

The nuclear family is ideally to be a place where God's ways are taught and where children learn to honour the authority that God has put in place in their lives. Hence, parents are to model this godly authority and teach their children to love the Lord. This godly parenting helps to direct children towards joining the family of God.

Connecting to the whole Bible's storyline

God's command to Adam and Eve was to fill the earth and subdue it. Through having children who would continue their mission, God's purposes are advanced. Where sin destroys family relations, the Gospel restores them, and brings all who trust in Christ into the true family of God.

Application

- Why do we often not want to obey the authority God has put in our lives? What does this tell us about ourselves?
- When we are adults, how can we continue to honour our parents even when we have to do something that we know is against their wishes?
- How have you honoured your parents this week and this month? How can you do so?
- Parents, what do you need to change in both your actions towards and communication with with your kids that will help to not provoke them?
- Parents, how committed are you to discipline your children, and what does this look like in your home?
- How are you bringing up your children in the instruction of the Lord? What rhythms can you put into place in your home to help you do this?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?
 What is the situation of the author and of the readers?
 Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?
 Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.