

Raising and Relating to Our Children

Opener: What's the best parenting advice you've heard?

Scripture: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:1-4

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord.²¹ Fathers, do not antagonize your children, so that they will not become discouraged. Colossians 3:20-21 (NASB)

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:11

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to “obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right?” Does this apply only to children still living at home? How can we obey our parents when their directions are contrary to honoring and serving God? Examples? Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20
2. How is honoring our parents a little different than obeying them? Can we obey without honoring, or honor without obeying? How can we balance the command to honor our parents with the idea of being our own person and making our own decisions? Ephesians 6:2
3. How have you seen the promises of these verses fulfilled? Does this mean obedient children will live longer than disobedient children? If not, explain what he means. Why might an obedient child live longer than a disobedient one? Ephesians 6:3; Hebrews 12:11
4. Paul warns fathers not to antagonize their children. When we antagonize someone we irritate or provoke them. Give some examples of how fathers antagonize their kids. Why do you think Paul didn't include mothers in this instruction? Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21
5. How do you train and instruct children without antagonizing or provoking them? What are the best ways to encourage, rather than discourage, your children? Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21
6. When you marry into a family, how does this instruction apply to relationships between in-laws or in blended families?

Wrap Up: God said, “be fruitful and multiply.” That's probably the only commandment he gave that we've obeyed consistently. So now what? How can we parent in a way that honors the Lord? Here are a few ideas to consider:

- Think of parenting as discipling.
- Really get to know your children. They're not carbon copies of one another or of you.
- Think through issues in advance if you can, rather than reacting as they arise.
- Tell them the truth. Don't make up things to avoid hurting them. They won't trust you.
- Don't yell at them. It's not right to yell at children.
- Don't make idle threats. They backfire.
- Teach principles, not rules.
- Be kind and loving, no matter what.
- Parenting isn't a competition and our self-worth shouldn't rise or fall on how our kids do.