

For This Is Right

Ephesians 6:1-4

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FOCAL Read Responsively Ephesians 6:1-4

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. **(2) Honor 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.**^{KJV}

ILLUSTRATE I like to know what's in something before I eat it. I'm not a particularly finicky eater (you can tell that by looking at me), and I have eaten things that many of you may not like. In addition to pork and steak, I was raised on things called “grits, frog legs, chicken, liver, crayfish, and potted meat”. Some of you may not even know what some of those things are, and others may know what it is but not want to eat it. We weren't rich when I was growing up. Momma and daddy did the best they could to feed us, and we ate - without complaining – many nutritious things that you might not want to eat today. I'll eat any of the things I just listed but one, and that's “potted meat”.

You might like “potted meat”, but frankly I don't care for it. I didn't like it as a kid, and I don't like it now. When I first opened a can of it and looked inside, I couldn't tell what that stuff was. Was it animal, vegetable, or mineral? It's kind of a strange color, off colored, and it had a strange tinny taste. “Potted meat” - even the name was like a lie. What kind of meat are you? So I looked at the ingredients on the label. When you look at the label of most “potted meat” today you'll see that it's

ingredients are “machine separated chicken, pork, and beef, in a beef stock”. That's deceptive. I read the label years ago when I was a boy, and I distinctly remember that “potted meat” consists of things like “tongue, snout, ears”, and so on. In short, it's the *leftovers* after the better cuts of meat are packaged and distributed. Yuck! When I grew up I promised myself that, short of absolute abject poverty, I would *never* eat another can of “potted meat”. So far the Grace of God has blessed me to where I can keep this promise.

It's good to know the ingredients of what you're eating.

In Ephesians chapter 6 the Bible is going to give us the *ingredients* for a long and blessed life. It might surprise you to know that a long life blessed by God can only come through three things:

1. Obedient Children, Following God's Design
2. Honoring Father and Mother Brings Long Life and
3. Fathers Must Teach Their Children

Let's go through each of these requirements in our text. First we see:

1. Obedient Children Following God's Design

FOCAL Ephesians 6:1 **Children, obey¹ your parents in the Lord: for this is right.**

1 G5219, ὑπακούω, hupakouō, *hoop-ak-oo'-o*, From G5259 and G191; to *hear under* (as a *subordinate*), that is, to *listen attentively*; by implication to *heed* or *conform* to a command or authority: - hearken, be obedient to, obey.

On “Mother's or Father's Day” children will take mom or dad out to lunch, buy them gifts, and honor them on that day. Yet the Scripture tells us that children are not just to honor mom and dad on a special day, but *everyday*.

Children are to **listen attentively to and obey** the direction of their parents. But the text doesn't stop here. We read:

FOCAL Ephesians 6:1 **Children, obey² your parents in the Lord**

Children are to be obedient to their parents **in the Lord**, for righteousness sake.

1. The phrase **in the Lord** occurs *115 times* in the King James text. This phrase always refers to an attitude of *godly righteousness*.

In other words, **in the Lord** emphasizes *what God would do*, not what man would do.

When I was in the military we were taught to obey all *lawful* orders. For instance, if we were ordered to clean up our barracks, or march in union, or told to deploy to a certain place to go to war, this we would do. A *lawful* order was direction from a superior officer (someone with more rank than I) that *did not violate written*

2 G5219, ὑπακούω, hupakouō, *hoop-ak-oo'-o*, From G5259 and G191; to *hear under* (as a *subordinate*), that is, to *listen attentively*; by implication to *heed* or *conform* to a command or authority: - hearken, be obedient to, obey.

military codes of conduct. If an officer ordered me to lie, to steal, or to murder someone – all violations of the *Uniform Code of Military Conduct* – then my duty was *not* to follow that order. Instead I was to say, “Sir (Ma'am), I respectfully refuse to obey this order, for it is unlawful according to the UCMJ”. I was *never* ordered to do anything contrary to *lawful order*. I remember once having a supervisor who frequently drank on duty. When he was caught, he ordered me to lie while on the witness stand. I refused to lie, for such a thing was contrary to good order, contrary to the *Uniform Code of Military Justice*.

In the same way, children are to **obey their parents in the Lord**. You have a sacred obligation to obey them as long as their directions do not lead you into areas forbidden by God. **In the Lord** emphasizes that **God's commands take precedent**. Obey your parents, for, as the Scripture says:

FOCAL Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: **for this is right**.

Obey your parents – listen to them. This is God's Divine Design, **this is right**. You came to your parents as a *gift from God*. The Bible says:

Psalms 127:3-5 Lo, children [are] an heritage of the LORD: [and] the fruit of the womb [is his] reward. (4) As arrows [are] in the hand of a mighty man; so [are] children of the youth. (5) Happy [is] the man that hath his quiver

full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

You are a blessing – or were meant to be a blessing – to your parents. Two people loved one another ... this is your momma and your daddy ... and God gave them you.

2. Children carry on the family name. **Honor your parents in the Lord, for this is right**. This is God's design for you, what He would have you to do.

Our text further states:

FOCAL Ephesians 6:1-2 Children, **obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right**. (2) **Honour thy father and mother**; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

! Two commands are given here, **obey** and **honor**. **Obey** is the action, but **honor** is the attitude. Respect your parents in the Lord, treat them with all due obedience.

Children today have much greater liberty than they did in the ancient world. Both *Jewish* as well as *Roman* societies treated children with respect, but children had absolutely no rights until they reached a certain age. This may seem strange to many of you who are driving cars at the age of 16, who have mobile phones and computers,

television, stereos, but the ancient children had no such things. We pretend that American economy is failing, yet our children have *much more* than children in other parts of the world. Please, dear children, do not allow *things* to lead you into disrespect of your parents. There is a good reason for respecting your parents.

2. Honoring Father and Mother Brings Long Life

FOCAL Ephesians 6:2 Children, ... **Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)**

Look at that phrase, **which is the first commandment WITH PROMISE**. What is the Lord talking about? The *fifth commandment* that God gave Israel on Mount Sinai was:

Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

5. Of all the commandments given to Israel, the *fifth commandment* contained a *built in promise*. It says **that thy days may be long upon the land**. If you want a long life, obey your parents.

If you want to stay on this earth a long time, to die in old age, then obey this commandment. This is not just a practical commandment, but it is also a *promise from God*. God will - He said - give you *long life* if you obey

your parents in the Lord. Part of this is *common sense*, something in desperate shortage nowadays. Your parents have lived through many things, made many mistakes along the way, and know from *experience and scarring* certain things are right, whereas other things are wrong. Listen to your parents in the Lord - heed those who have gone before you. I have seen too many young people die what appeared to be *foolish and unnecessary deaths*. Listen to those who have lived through their youth, and live long lives!

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

! There are only *two* dominant personalities on this earth. There is the Personality of God, and the Personality of Satan. God loves you, but Satan desires to curse you! He has proven this over and over.

Satan is the same one who came into the Garden of Eden and said:

Genesis 3:1 ... Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

What Adam and Eve should have said was "Yes, you old devil, God HAS said this, and this we will do." Yet they did not do this. Instead they began to examine the claims of that personality called "Satan" apart from what the Loving Creator had told them to do.

Many a child has failed to obey their parents, and have discovered, as our first parents did, that Satan and his fallen friends care little for your life. God wants you to **live long on the earth**. I tell you this, you will surely shorten your lives if you do not heed your mother and your father. The text says:

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

That word **mayest** means that long life is not certain unless the Lord's command is followed. Satan does not know all things, but he does know this: if he can get you to following his direction, he can lead you to a premature and needless death. Satan (or one of the countless fallen angels that follow him) will come along and tell you, "It really doesn't matter. Mom and dad don't know what they're talking about! Did God *really* say that?"

! When people want to walk away from God, they often begin to *justify* what they do before they do it. The *very first children* on this earth, Adam and Eve, did not start out jumping straight into sin. They *thought* sin out.

Look at the Genesis account:

Genesis 3:6 And **when the woman saw that**

the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

You see how we *reason ourselves* into evil, and how Satan leads us there. "Go ahead - God is just trying to take away my fun. My parents don't know - it was different when they were kids". No it wasn't. Technology might have been different, but little has changed. If the first children had listened to the First Father, we wouldn't be in the mess we're in today. Satan tricked Adam and Eve - don't let him trick you!

Finally, and **since it's Father's Day**, here's the last point:

3. Fathers, You Must Teach Your Children

FOCAL Ephesians 6:4 And, ye **fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:** but bring³ them up⁴ in the nurture and admonition of the Lord

Since 1973 we have seen **Roe verses Wade** and **radical feminism** redefine the family unit. We have seen men mocked as idiots, inconsequential, unneeded,

3 G1625, ἐκτρέφω, *ektrepō*, *ek-tref'-o*, From G1537 and G5142; to *rear up* to maturity, that is, (generally) to *cherish* or *train*: - bring up, nourish.

4 Present Active Imperative of G1625, ἐκτρέφω, *ektrepō*, *ek-tref'-o*

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unnecessary.

"The lack of effective, functioning fathers is the root cause of America's social, economic and spiritual crises," (Dr. Edwin Cole).

Men are portrayed on television as mindless baboons who have little or no function in the family unit. This is a line that Satan has sold the liberal media, but it is nowhere supported in God's Scripture.

"According to the {Center For Disease Control, Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services} and the Bureau of the Census, the 30 percent of children who live apart from their fathers will account for 63 percent of teen suicides, 70 percent of juveniles in state-operated institutions, 71 percent of high-school dropouts, 75 percent of children in chemical-abuse centers, 80 percent of rapists, 85 percent of youths in prison, and 85 percent of children who exhibit behavioral disorders. In addition, 90 percent of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes." (Patriot Post Digest 06-24)⁵



Men, fathers, husbands, YOU are IMPORTANT to the stability of your family. Here's something that you need to understand. Children are *not* naturally good, *not* naturally "little angels", *not* naturally precious. You MUST be an example to your children.

The Bible teaches that:

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Your children are beautiful to me, and I love them. But Beloved, children are not born *lovable*.

6. Children are born *physically alive but spiritually dead*. A child, if left untaught, will fall into all types of mischief.

Parents - and particularly *fathers* - are given the responsibility for training the children. The Bible tells us:

Proverbs 19:18 Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death. ^{NIV}

The *father* (and, by this, we include *grandfather* and *great grandfather*) should discipline and instruct the children. To fail to do so may be to contribute to that child's untimely death.

7. Fathers, you are **not to provoke the children to wrath**. Never set the bar of discipline so high that the child cannot reach it!

As a young parent I was often responsible for being *too stringent* with my children, for setting the standards of conduct a little too high. As I grew up as a parent I learned to be more willing to be stern on the things that mattered most, and to laugh off the things that mattered least. Children must *never* be made to feel inconsequential, unwanted, unneeded. Children are a gift of God, a gift He has given to YOU!

It is very possible for the father to *provoke* his children to anger. In fact, this is *so possible* that this command is repeated nearly verbatim in the book of Colossians:

Colossians 3:21 **Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.**

Children can be provoked to anger in a variety of ways. Each child is unique, is a little *person* who need to express themselves. Do not overprotect your children. Be a good example to them, remembering that they look up to you for encouragement. Challenge your children, but don't provoke them to **wrath or uncontrollable emotional anger**.



I remember not too long ago sitting at a local High School basketball match. A young man was running the ball down the court. He shot, missed, and his father - sitting not too far behind me - began to curse and scream at the boy like he was useless!

Praise God it was none of you doing this - but that's beside the point. Children are precious, wonderful people that need to be provoked - not to anger but to loving obedience. There is an old saying "One generation plants the trees, whereas the next generation gets the shade". I wonder if that child was pleased with his father that night? Children are easily scarred, sometimes for life. What the child learns from the parent he or she will carry into their future families.

FOCAL Ephesians 6:4 **And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture⁶ and admonition⁷ of the Lord**

When the Bible speaks of training the children, fathers are directed to **train them in the things of God - in the spiritual disciplines**.

6 G3809, παιδεία, paideia, *pahee-di'-ah*, From G3811; *tutorage*, that is, *education* or *training*; by implication *disciplinary correction*: - chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture.

7 G3559, νουθεσία, nouthesia, *noo-thes-ee'-ah*, From G3563 and a derivative of G5087; calling *attention* to, that is, (by implication) *mild rebuke* or *warning*: - admonition.



We train our children how to play baseball, basketball, soccer, football, any number of sports. We go with our children to games, cheer them on, show them that we love them. But we must not stop here! We must also train our children in prayer, in Bible study, in Church attendance.

Train your children in good Christian values, in living their faith for the Lord. The Scripture teaches us:

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

The Scripture tells us to **bring them up**, to **cherish them to maturity**. Your children are your heritage, your tomorrow. Train them in the ways of God. Lead them to the Cross of Christ, or lead them to eternal punishment. You *will* lead your children in one of two directions. I pray that you make the right decision, and lead them to Christ.

One day we will all be in Heaven (if we have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior). **Coach Dave Daubenmire** gave the following illustration. Think on this as we close:

"Imagine you're in Heaven sitting around a campfire (probably where the works are being burned) and you notice a familiar face reflecting the light of the dancing flames.

"Hey! Aren't you Moses?" you ask the majestic looking man, as he nods his head. "Man, tell me your story. What was it like to see God part the Red Sea? Weren't you scared of the chariots? What about all of the people grumbling in the desert? How did you put up it? And the frogs...and locusts... What did the death angel sound like as it passed over? Wow, Moses. I got to hear your story."

"And You. Aren't you David? What was it like to kill Goliath? Where did you learn to use a slingshot? How did it feel to cut off that dude's head? Did you really kill a lion and a bear with your bare hands?"

Samson? Oh my goodness! What was it like to pull those pillars down? Was Delilah really that beautiful? How could you let her trick you like that?

Daniel...Oh Daniel. Man you had guts. What made you open the window and defy the authorities? How did it feel to walk down the runway to the lions den? Were you scared? Did you really sleep like a baby? Tell me at least that you kept one eye open!

We will hear the stories of God's heroes. Saints known, admired, and made famous by their works.

For centuries we will sit around and listen to the tales, the stories of the great men of faith, testified to by the crowd of witnesses that are present. Your heart will leap out of your chest as the stories of courage, conviction, and self-sacrifice are relived.



And then all eyes will turn to you. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, will be there. Stephen, the nameless Saints of Hebrews 11, and those martyred for their stand for Christ will all look your way.

So, tell us your story. What did you do when you were on earth? If we remember right you were there at one of the most cataclysmic times in history. Mothers were killing their unborn children, homosexuals were demanding to be married, they were teaching God's children lies in school, and they were even attempting to remove the mention of the name of God from the nation? What did your faith cost you? What works did you perform for Christ?⁸

God help me to be faithful to Him for His glory both now and in eternity. Amen!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

⁸ Coach Dave Daubenmire,
<http://www.newswithviews.com/Daubenmire/dave26.htm>