

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

Living the Lordship of Christ

Scripture text: Ephesians 6:1-9

LIVING THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST *Ephesians 6:1–9*

After watching a television presentation about rebellious youth, a husband said to his wife, “What a mess! Where did our generation go wrong?” The wife calmly answered, “We had children.”

It seems no matter where we look in modern society, we see antagonism, division, and rebellion. Husbands and wives are divorcing each other; children are rebelling against their parents; and employers and employees are seeking for new ways to avoid strikes and keep the machinery of industry running productively.

We have tried education, legislation, and every other approach, **but nothing seems to work.**

Paul's solution to the antagonisms in the home and in society was ***regeneration—a new heart from God and a new submission to Christ and to one another.*** *God's great program is to "gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10).* ***Paul indicated that this spiritual harmony begins in the lives of Christians who are submitted to the lordship of Christ.***

In this section Paul admonished four groups of Christians about how they could have harmony in Christ.

Christian Children (Eph. 6:1–3)

Paul did not tell the parents to admonish the children; he did it himself. **Children were present in the assembly when this letter was read.** Did they understand all that Paul wrote?

Do we understand it all?

Christian families attended the public worship together, and **no doubt the parents explained the Word to the children when they were at home.**

He gave them four reasons why they should obey their parents.

They are Christians (“in the Lord,” v. 1a).

This argument is an application of the theme of the entire section, which is **“submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God”** (Eph. 5:21). When a person becomes a Christian, he is not released from normal obligations of life. If anything, **his faith in Christ ought to make him a better child in the home.** To the Colossians Paul enforced his admonition with **“for this is well pleasing unto the Lord”** (Col. 3:20). Here is harmony in the home: the wife submits to the husband “as unto Christ”; the husband loves his wife “even as Christ also loved the church”; and the children obey “in the Lord.”

Obedience is right (v. 1b).

There is an order in nature, ordained of God, that argues for the rightness of an action.

Since the parents brought the child into the world, and since they have more knowledge and wisdom than the child, **it is right that the child obey his parents.** Even young animals **are taught to obey.**

The “**modern version**” of Ephesians 6:1 would be, “Parents, obey your children, for this will keep them happy and bring peace to the home.” But **this is contrary to God’s order in nature.**

Obedience is commanded (v. 2a).

Here Paul cites the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16) and **applies it to the New Testament believer**. This does not mean that the Christian is “under the Law,” for Christ has set us free from both the curse and the bondage of the Law (Gal. 3:13; 5:1).

But the righteousness of the Law is still a revelation of the holiness of God, and the **Holy Spirit enables us to practice that righteousness in our daily lives** (Rom. 8:1–4).

Romans 8:1-4 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, **he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us,** who walk not according to the flesh **but according to the Spirit.**

All of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament epistles for the Christian to observe except, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.”

It is just as wrong for a New Testament Christian to dishonor his parents as it was for an Old Testament Jew.

To “honor” our parents means much more than simply to obey them. **It means to show them respect and love, to care for them as long as they need us,** and to seek to bring honor to them by the way we live.

A young couple came to see me about getting married, and I **asked if their parents agreed to the wedding.** They looked at each other in embarrassment, then confessed, **“We were hoping you wouldn’t ask about that.”**

I spent the next hour trying to convince them that their parents had a right to rejoice in this event, and that **to exclude them would cause wounds that might never heal.** “Even if they are not believers,” I said, **“they are your parents, and you owe them love and respect.”** They finally agreed, and the plans we made together made both families happy.

Had we followed the couple's original plans, **the two of them would have lost their testimony with their relatives**, but, instead, **they were able to give a good witness for Jesus Christ.**

Obedience brings blessing (vv. 2b–3).

The fifth commandment **has a promise attached to it:**
Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

This promise originally applied to the Jews as they entered Canaan, but Paul applied it to believers today.

He substituted “earth” for “land” and **tells us that the Christian child who honors his parents can expect two blessings.**

It will be well with him, and **he will live long on the earth.** This does not mean that everyone who died young dishonored his parents. He was stating a principle: **when children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives.**

But life is not measured only by quantity of time. **It is also measured by quality of experience.**

God enriches the life of the obedient child no matter how long he may live on the earth.

Sin always robs us; obedience always enriches us.

So, the child must learn early to obey father and mother, not only because they are his parents, but also because God has commanded it to be so.

Disobedience to parents is rebellion against God. The sad situation in homes today is the result of rejecting God's Word (Rom. 1:28–30; 2 Tim. 3:1–5).

By nature, a child is selfish, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, a child can learn to obey his parents and glorify God.

Romans 1:28-32 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, **disobedient to parents**, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. **Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.**

2 Timothy 3:1-5 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, **disobedient to their parents**, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power**. Avoid such people.

Remember: Sin always robs us; obedience always enriches us.

Christian Fathers (Eph. 6:4)

If left to themselves, children will be rebels, so it is necessary for the parents to train their children.

Years ago, the then Duke of Windsor said, **“Everything in the American home is controlled by switches—except the children!”**

The Bible records the sad results of parents neglecting their children, **either by being bad examples to them or failing to discipline them properly.** David pampered Absalom and set him a bad example, and the results were tragic.

Eli failed to discipline his sons and they brought disgrace to his name and defeat to the nation of Israel.

In his latter years, even Isaac pampered Esau, while his wife showed favoritism to Jacob; and **the result was a divided home.**

Jacob was showing favoritism to Joseph when God providentially rescued the lad and made a man out of him in Egypt.

Paul tells us that the father has several responsibilities toward his children.

1. He must not provoke them.

In Paul's day, **the father had supreme authority over the family.**

When a baby was born into a Roman family, for example, it was brought out and **laid before the father.** If he picked it up, it meant he was accepting it into the home. But if he did not pick it up, it meant the child was rejected. It could be sold, given away, or even killed by exposure.

No doubt a father's love would overcome such monstrous acts, but these practices were legal in that day.

Paul told the parents, “**Don’t use your authority to abuse the child, but to encourage and build the child.**”

To the Colossians he wrote, “**Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged**” (Col. 3:21).

So, the opposite of “provoke” is “encourage.”

I was addressing a group of Christian students on the subject of prayer, and was **pointing out that our Father in heaven is always available when we call.**

To illustrate it, I told them that the receptionist at our church office has a list of names prepared by me, and these people could get to me at any time, no matter what I was doing. Even if I was in a staff meeting, or in a counseling session, if any of these people phoned, she was to call me immediately. **At the top of this list was my family.** Even if the matter seems to me inconsequential, I want my family to know that I am available. After the service, one of the students said to me, “**Would you adopt me?** I can never get through to my father, and I need his encouragement so much!”

Fathers provoke their children and discourage them by saying one thing and doing another—by **always blaming and never praising**, by **being inconsistent and unfair** in discipline, and **by showing favoritism** in the home, by **making promises and not keeping them**, and by **making light of problems** that, to the children, are very important.

Christian parents need the fullness of the Spirit **so they can be sensitive to the needs and problems of their children.**

2. He must nurture them.

The text reads, **“But nurture them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.”** The verb translated **“bring them up”** is the same word that is translated **“nourisheth”** in Ephesians 5:29.

The Christian husband is to nourish his wife and his children **by sharing love and encouragement in the Lord**. It is not enough to nurture the children physically by providing food, shelter, and clothing.

He must also nurture them emotionally and spiritually.

The development of the Boy Jesus is our example:

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

Here is balanced growth: **intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social.**

Nowhere in the Bible is the training of children assigned to agencies outside the home, no matter how they might assist. God looks to the parents for the kind of training that the children need.

3. He must discipline them.

The word “nurture” carries with it the idea of learning through discipline. It is translated “chastening” in Hebrews 12.

Some modern psychologists oppose the old-fashioned idea of discipline, and many educators follow their philosophy. “Let the children express themselves!” they tell us. “If you discipline them, you may warp their characters.” **Yet discipline is a basic principle of life and an evidence of love.** “Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth” (Heb. 12:6). “He that spareth him chasteneth him diligently” (Prov. 13:24, literal translation).

We must be sure, however, **that we discipline our children in the right manner.**

To begin with, we must discipline in love and not in anger, lest we injure either the body or the spirit of the child, or possibly both. If we are not disciplined, we surely cannot discipline others, and **“flying off the handle” never made either a better child or a better parent.**

Also, our discipline must be fair and consistent. “My father would use a cannon to kill a mosquito!” a teenager once told me. “I either get away with murder, or get blamed for everything!”

Consistent, loving discipline gives assurance to the child.

He may not agree with us, but at least he knows that we care enough **to build some protective walls around him until he can take care of himself.**

“I never knew how far I could go,” a wayward girl told me, “because my parents **never cared enough to discipline me.** I figured that if it wasn’t important to them, **why should it be important to me?”**

4. He must instruct and encourage them.

This is the meaning of the word “admonition.” The father and mother not only use actions to raise the child, **but also words.**

In the Book of Proverbs, for example, we have an inspired record of a father sharing wise counsel with his son. Our children do not always appreciate our counsel, but **that does not eliminate the obligation we have to instruct and encourage them.** Of course, our instruction must always be tied to the Word of God (see 2 Tim. 3:13–17).

2 Timothy 3:12-17 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, **continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.**

When the Supreme Court handed down its ruling against required prayer in the public schools, the famous editorial cartoonist Herblock published a cartoon in the Washington Post showing an angry father waving a newspaper at his family and shouting, “What do they expect us to do—listen to the kids pray at home?”

The answer is: Yes! Home is the place where the children ought to learn about the Lord and the Christian life. It is time that Christian parents stop “passing the buck” to Sunday School teachers and Christian day-school teachers, and start nurturing their children.

Christian Servants (Eph. 6:5–8)

The word “servants” undoubtedly refers to Christian slaves, but we may certainly apply these words to the Christian employee today.

There were probably 6 million slaves in the Roman Empire in that day, and slavery was an accepted institution. Nowhere in the New Testament is slavery per se attacked or condemned, though the overall thrust of the Gospel is against it.

Paul’s ministry was not to overthrow the Roman government or any of its institutions, but **to preach the Gospel and win the lost to Christ.**

Certainly the results of his evangelism ultimately led to the overthrow of the Roman Empire, but **that was not Paul's main motive**. Just as the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield resulted in the abolition of slavery and child labor, the elevation of women, and the care of the needy, so Paul's ministry contributed to the death of slavery and **the encouragement of freedom**.

However, **he was careful not to confuse the social system with the spiritual order in the church** (1 Cor. 7:20–24).

1 Corinthians 7:20-24 Each one **should remain in the condition in which he was called.** Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. **You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.** So, brothers, **in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.**

Paul admonished the servants to be obedient, with several good reasons.

First, they were really serving Christ. True, they had “masters according to the flesh,” but **their true Master was in heaven** (Eph. 6:9).

The fact that an employee and his employer are both Christians **is no excuse for either one to do less work.** Rather, **it is a good reason to be more faithful to each other.**

The employee should show proper respect for employer, and **not try to take advantage of him.** He should devote his full attention and energy to the job at hand (“singleness of heart”). **The best way to be a witness on the job is to do a good day’s work.**

The Christian worker will avoid “eye service” — working only when the boss is watching, or working extra hard when he is watching to give the impression he is doing a very good job.

The second reason is that doing a good job **is the will of God**. Christianity knows nothing of sacred and secular.

A Christian can perform any good work as a ministry to Christ, to the glory of God. For this reason, the worker must do his job “**from the heart,**” since **he is serving Christ and doing the will of God.**

There were tasks assigned to these slaves that they detested, but they were to perform them just the same, **so long as they were not disobeying the will of God.** “Singleness of heart” and **“doing the will of God from the heart”** both indicate the importance of a right heart attitude on the job.

Paul’s third argument is that **they will be rewarded by the Lord** (Eph. 6:8).

In that day, slaves were treated like pieces of property, no matter how well educated they might be.

An educated, cultured slave who became a Christian might receive even harsher treatment from his master because of his faith, but harsh treatment was not to keep him from doing his best (1 Peter 2:18–25).

1 Peter 2:18-20 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

1 Peter 2:21-25 For to this **you have been called**, because **Christ also suffered for you**, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but **continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly**. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and **live to righteousness**. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

We are to serve Christ, not men.

We shall receive our rewards from Christ, not from men.

Christian Masters (Eph. 6:9)

The Christian faith does not bring about harmony by erasing social or cultural distinctions. Servants are still servants when they trust Christ, and masters are still masters. Rather, the **Christian faith brings harmony by working in the heart.** Christ gives us a new motivation, not a new organization.

Both servant and master are serving the Lord and **seeking to please Him**, and in this way **they are able to work together to the glory of God**. What are the responsibilities of a Christian master (or employer) to his workers?

He must seek their welfare.

“Do the same things unto them.” If the employer expects the workers to do their best for him, **he must do his best for them**. The master must serve the Lord from his heart if he expects his servants to do the same. **He must not exploit them.**

One of the greatest examples of this in the Bible is Boaz in the Book of Ruth. He greeted his workers with, “The Lord be with you!” And they replied, “The Lord bless thee!” (Ruth 2:4)

Boaz was sensitive to the needs of his workers and generous to the stranger, Ruth. **His relationship with his workers was one of mutual respect and a desire to glorify the Lord.**

It is unfortunate when an employee says, **“My boss is supposed to be a Christian, but you’d never know it!”**

He must not threaten.

Roman masters had the power and lawful authority to kill a slave who was rebellious, though few of them did so. Slaves cost too much money to destroy them.

Paul suggested that the Christian master has a better way to encourage obedience and service than threats of punishment.

The negative power of fear could result in the worker doing less instead of more, and this kind of motivation could not be continued over a long period of time. **Far better was the positive motivation of “that which is just and equal” (Col. 4:1).**

Let a man share the results of his labor and he will work better and harder. Even the Old Testament gives this same counsel: “Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God” (Lev. 25:43).

He must be submitted to the Lord.

“Your master also is in heaven” (Eph. 6:9). **This is practicing the lordship of Christ.** The wife submits to her own husband “**as unto the Lord**” (Eph. 5:22), and the husband loves the wife “**as Christ also loved the church**” (Eph. 5:25). Children obey their parents “in the Lord” (Eph. 6:1), and parents raise their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

Servants are obedient **“as unto Christ”** (Eph. 6:5), and masters treat their servants as their **“Master in heaven”** would have them do. Each person, in submission to the Lord, has no problems submitting to those over him.

Jesus said the way to be a ruler is first to be a servant (Matt. 23:12). The person who is not under authority has no right to exercise authority. **This explains why many of the great men of the Bible were first servants before God made them rulers:** Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, and Nehemiah are just a few examples.

Even after a man becomes a leader, **he must still lead by serving**. An African proverb says, “The chief is servant of all.” “And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:27).

A friend of mine was promoted to a place of executive leadership and, unfortunately, **it went to his head**. He enjoyed all of his executive privileges and more, and never lost an opportunity to remind his employees who was in charge. **But he lost the respect of his workers, and production and efficiency went down so fast that the board had to replace him.**

Because my friend forgot that he had a “**Master in heaven,**” he failed to be a good “master on earth.”

He must not play favorites.

God is no respecter of persons. **He will judge a master or a servant if he sins, or He will reward a master or a servant if he obeys** (Eph. 6:8). A Christian employer cannot take privileges with God simply because of his position; nor should a Christian employer play favorites with those under his authority. Paul warned Timothy to “**observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality**” (1 Tim. 5:21).

One of the fastest ways for a leader to divide his followers and lose their confidence is for the leader to play favorites and show partiality.

This closes the section we have called “Walk in Harmony.” If we are filled with the Holy Spirit and are joyful, thankful, and submissive, then we can enjoy harmony in the relationships of life as we live and work with other Christians. **We will also find it easier to work with and witness to the unbelievers who may disagree with us.** The fruit of the Spirit is love, and love is the greatest adhesive in the world!