

The Christian Family

Ephesians 6:1-4

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April 11, 2010

Lesson Aim: To look at the relationship between parents and children from a Biblical worldview. To see the results of parenting God's way are much better than the parenting by the ways of the world.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: What has happened to the Christian family?

1. Discuss the following statistics shared in Ron Luce's book, *"Battle Cry For A Generation"*:

Builders (born 1927-1945): 65% Bible-based believers

Boomers (born 1946-1964): 35% Bible-based believers

Busters (born 1965-1983): 16% Bible-based believers

Bridgers (or Millennials, born 1984 or later): 4% Bible-based believers

2. What are some of the major causes that have led our nation in less than 70 years to go from 65% of the Builders generation having a Bible-based worldview to only 4% of the Bridgers generation (those born after 1984)? How is this change affecting our society? Who is responsible for the changes that have occurred? What are some ways our generation has failed to pass the gospel message on to the next generation? What are some things we can do to correct the problem?

3. According to John MacArthur, Marxist socialism has been working its way into our society for some time (*Ephesians Commentary – published 1986*). According to MacArthur's 1986 list, humanistic groups have been working with the goal of liberating children from: "traditional morals and values, parental authority, physical punishment, religion, nationalism, patriotism, and capitalism." They want children to have complete "sexual freedom, homosexual 'marriage', abortions, free information and devices for contraception, children to have the right to sue their parents and to choose their own family." Take some time and examine each of these goals. How many of these goals have the Marxist socialist/humanistic groups reached? Why are they succeeding and the Christian Church is failing?

Part II: Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (Eph. 6:1-4)

1. Why is it important for our children to be raised with a Biblical worldview? How does having a Christian worldview affect a parent/child relationship? What does God command in this special relationship in verse 1? According to the Bible, how does God view children who obey their parents? (See Col. 3:20) Does God require children to obey their parents when they are asked to do something contrary to God's Word?

2. What does it mean to obey *"in the Lord"*? Which of "The Ten Commandments" is verse 2 quoted from? (See Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16) How can children honor their mother and father in today's world (vs. 2)?

3. What was the promise of verse 3? Is this the case with every child or is a biblical principle being laid out here? Under the Old Covenant, severe punishment could result from disobedience. How severe could the punishment be in some circumstances? (See Exod. 21:15; Lev. 20:9)

4. More than likely the promise *"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth"* is a warning not to live carelessly, but to listen to the instruction of your parents. How might such living lead to a longer life? Can you think of any scriptural examples of children who lived their lives unwisely and died an early death as a result? (See Lev. 10:1-3; 1 Sam. 2:34,35; 2 Sam. 13:1-29)

5. In light of Genesis 2:24, list some ways we as adults can honor our parents?

Part III: Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath (Eph. 6:4)

1. What does it mean for fathers to *"provoke their children to wrath"* (vs. 4)? (See Col. 3:21) What is the opposite of discouraging your children? Why were the teachings of Paul radical to the concepts of family relationships in his day?

2. What are some practical ways that Christian parents and grandparents more effectively bring up their families *"in the training and admonition [instruction] of the Lord"* (vs. 4)? What does Deut. 6:1-9 teach us about nurturing our children and grandchildren spiritually?

Parents are the primary religious instructors of their children and the church's role is to assist them in that task. What are some tools that parents can use to instruct their children spiritually? How can the church more effectively assist parents and grandparents in the spiritual instruction of their children? Who has God called to be the spiritual leader of the family?

4. Discipline comes from the root word for disciple, which means "to teach or to train". Does God desire for

us to discipline our children? Why? (See Prov. 12:1; 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17; 22:6) Is spanking wrong? If so, when?

5. What are some practical ways you can discipline your children in the various stages of life? Why can talking with your children about a given situation be helpful?

6. How does God Himself set the example for properly disciplining children? (See Heb. 12:1-11)

7. Parents should love their children no matter what. Why? Name some examples of children who were terrors in their youth, but turned out to be dynamic Christians in adulthood. What are some practical principles you can take home with you from today's message? "God gave us children to teach us to pray." Why not take some time now and pray for your children and grandchildren?

MINER'S CORNER – *Today's manna for life!*

- * Children are a gift from God, parents are called to raise their children in the training and instruction of the Lord.
- * Parents should discipline with love "in the Lord", and not in anger.
- * Parents should love their children no matter what! (Always keep the communication channels open and be praying for your children.)