

Children and Parents

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. – Ephesians 6:1-4

Children and Parents, Walk in Love and Be Filled with the Holy Spirit in your Relationship

I. The “Duty” of Children

“It was a radical change from the callous cruelty which prevailed in the Roman Empire, in which unwanted babies were abandoned, weak and deformed ones killed, and even healthy children were regarded by many as a partial nuisance because they inhibited sexual promiscuity and complicated easy divorce.”¹

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. – Mark 10:13-16

1. Obey Your Parents

“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 are disobedient to parents...” Romans 1:28-32

2. Obedience at All Times?

II. The “Duty” of Parents

“A Roman father had absolute power over his family. He could sell them as slaves, he could make them work in his fields even in chains, he could take the law into his own hands, for the law was in his own hands, and punish as he liked, he could even inflict the death penalty on his child.”²

¹ John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, pg. 238

² William Barclay

1. Don't provoke (exasperate) your children to anger.

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from *you* [not just your children!], along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” – Ephesians 4:31-32

“What a fragile flower a child is. He (or she) can be so easily crushed by his parents, or, he can be made to blossom beyond expectation, bringing untold joy to his parents and himself.”³

2. Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. – Proverbs 13:24

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. – Proverbs 22:15

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol. – Proverbs 23:13-14

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. – Proverbs 29:15

When I was a child I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. – 1 Corinthians 13:11

“The opposite of wrong discipline is not the absence of discipline, but right discipline, true discipline. To the other extreme we need to say: The opposite of no discipline at all is not cruelty, it is balanced discipline, it is controlled discipline.”⁴

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. – 3 John 1:4

³ R. Kent Hughes, pg. 200

⁴ Martyn Lloyd-Jones