

## Ephesians 6:1-8

Ephesians 6:1-8 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) “Honour your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: (3) “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” (4) And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (5) Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; (6) not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, (7) with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, (8) knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

### Questions On The Text

#### How should children relate to parents?

Verses 1-3: Children are to obey their parents. “Obey” means to “listen to” in the sense of being obedient. The tense of the word in Greek means that it is to be done continuously, habitually. Obedience is a duty in the Lord and applies to children, obviously meaning children who are still at home under their parents’ authority.

This duty of obedience is to be given to both parents and for the reason that it is right. “Right” in Greek is from the same root as “righteousness,” a word denoting something that is required by law. Paul then quotes the relevant law in Deuteronomy 5:16. It is the fifth of the Ten Commandments (the Decalogue) and the first with a promise (prosperity and long life). The second commandment does not contain a promise, but rather a description of God.

The Decalogue can be divided naturally into two parts. The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God. The fifth commandment, therefore, becomes the first in priority to deal with our relationship to other people.

#### What is a father’s responsibility to his children?

Verse 4: Fathers are to ensure that they do not provoke their children to anger. This would also apply to mothers, but is probably addressed to fathers because they are the heads of households. Also, it is possible that fathers are more likely to provoke their children than mothers are.

Instead of provoking, fathers are to bring up (same word translated “nourish” in Ephesians 5:29) their children in the training and admonition of the Lord. “Training” can mean “correcting, instructing.” See Hebrews 12:5,7,8,10,11 where the same word is translated “chastening, chastened.” “Admonition” means “training by word” which contrasts with the previous word which trains by act and discipline.

Despite this general distinction between the two words, both are actually used in relation to Scripture. The first word is used in 2 Timothy 3:16 where it is translated “instruction” in righteousness. The second word can be found in 1 Corinthians 10:11 and is translated “admonition.”

#### How should slaves behave?

Verses 5-7: Bondservants (literally, slaves) are to obey their human masters. This is to be done with fear and trembling, a phrase Paul applied to the Philippians (Philippians 2:12), the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 7:15), and himself (1 Corinthians 2:3), and meaning that they were to be conscientious.

They were to serve with sincerity of heart, as if they were working for Christ Himself. “Eyeservice” refers to the kind of work done only when the master is looking. Instead, slaves are to do God’s will from the heart, with goodwill (well-wishing, enthusiasm), as if working for the Lord, rather than for men.

## **Why are slaves to work like this?**

Verse 8: Slaves need to understand that their reward will come from the Lord for any good that they do. This is equally true of those who are slaves and those who are free.

## **Further Questions For Discussion:**

Why do you think that obedience to parents is so important to God?

How can fathers bring their children up in the training of the Lord?

How do employees today render eyeservice to their employers?

How can the principles that applied to the slaves of Paul's day be applied to employees today?

In what way does God show impartiality in His system of rewards?