

## **Sermon Series: It Starts at Home**

### **Sermon Title: The Godly Family**

#### **Sermon Text: Ephesians 6:1-4**

**Sermon Summary:** In these verses Paul continues his theme of submission as it applies to the family. The concept of submission is vital if we are to have a Godly home! In this study we begin to understand how the concept of submission applies to the whole family if we are to have a Godly home. A good question for us to ask is this: How does the concept of submission apply to the family and result in a Godly home? The answer is found when you explore the ways submission applies to the family and results in a Godly home! There are five ways presented. Two of them were the subject of the previous two weeks of study. The final three are discussed in this study and focus on the children's obedience and honor for their parents, as well as the way in which parents treat and train their children in the Lord.

#### **Full Sermon Notes:**

"There at the cross You paid the debt I owed, broke my chains, freed my soul, for the first time I had hope....There is nothing stronger than the wonder working power of the blood"

Jesus made our salvation possible because He was willing to submit to The Heavenly Father's will. As we come to wrap up this short series on family we once again come face to face with how important submission is when it comes to family life! Let's read our text together for today. It is found in Ephesians chapter 6:1-4. Let's read it together...

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

Ephesians 6:2 "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—

Ephesians 6:3 "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

In these verses Paul continues his theme of submission as it applies to the family. The concept of submission is vital if we are to have a Godly home! My prayer today is that we can begin to understand how the concept of submission applies to the whole family if we are to have a Godly home. A good question for us to ask is this: How does the concept of submission apply to the family and result in a Godly home? We'll discover the answer as we look at the ways submission applies to the family and results in a Godly home! The first way is this...

- 1. Submission applies to the family and results in a Godly home through a woman's submission as a willful help-mate to her husband.**

We had a whole sermon on that point two weeks ago! Then last week we discovered this...

- 2. Submission applies to the family and results in a Godly home through a man's submission as a watchful leader for the family.**

There is a third thing...

### **3. Submission applies to the family and results in a Godly home through a child's willing obedience to his or her parents!**

Paul now moves to another aspect of family life. Submission for the Children. So kids, it's your turn today! Children, young people, please listen...

Submitting to your parents by obeying them is so important!

Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Ok, you may not think they're right. This is where you obey and trust the Lord to work it out. If they are wrong they are responsible before the Lord and He will deal with them. If you disobey, whether they were wrong or right, you're still guilty of disobedience. Very rarely have I ever seen young people in big trouble because they obeyed their parents. Is there ever a time we shouldn't submit to parents? Yes, if they ask you to do something illegal or immoral. The Bible says to obey our parents in the Lord, which in the original Greek language and grammar here, is really saying, obey your parents as you obey the Lord. However, If they go against the Lord, the Lord prevails! We know this from the way the apostles responded to those in authority after they asked them to stop telling people about Jesus. Even though God had told them to obey earthly authorities, there was a line. If those in authority are asking you to do something un-Christlike and immoral you have the obligation to disobey! Listen...

Acts 4:18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.

Acts 4:20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

So the same thing goes for children as it does for wives when it comes to submission. If someone asks you to submit to something ungodly, then you have the right and the obligation to disobey. Now kids you might not like what I'm about to say, but I've got to say it...Washing the dishes, cleaning your room, doing your homework, mowing the yard, are not evil things. They may not be fun, but they are not evil. And I know there might be some here who would say, "But Brother Larry, my parents are not Christians and they have such a bad attitude."

Let me encourage you. The way you live your life could be the very thing that brings them to Christ. I've known young people who've come to Jesus and eventually led their parents to the Lord! And not only that, but when you obey your parents you are also being a great example to your friends and you could literally change their lives because of your good behavior and especially if they decide to follow your example. Let me just tell you something you need to hear, and Kids, trust me on this one, someday you're going to be a parent and look back at your life as a child and think: Boy, I should have had a little more patience with my parents! This

parenting thing is not as easy as I thought it would be! My Dad says, "Son, we were so young when we had you and your sister and we didn't really know what we were doing. You guys didn't come with an instruction manual!" So while there's not a parent's manual, per se, we do have God's Word and it's principles. And let me ask you young people something. Wouldn't it be great if you had a manual for how to be a good kid? How about a really good example to follow? Well you kind of do have both! We have God's Word and while we know very little about Jesus' life as a kid, we do have this one story and in it we find that...

### **Jesus submitted to His earthly parents!**

Luke 2:41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.

Luke 2:42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.

Luke 2:43 After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.

Luke 2:44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.

Luke 2:45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

Luke 2:46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Luke 2:47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

Luke 2:48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

Luke 2:49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

Luke 2:50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Luke 2:51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

So even Jesus, though He was God in the flesh, submitted to His earthly parents! How cool is that? Very! Let us learn from His example! Paul continues in our text to say that there's another way submission applies to the family and results in a Godly home!

#### **4. Submission applies to the family and results in a Godly home through a child's well-placed honor of his or her parents.**

Ephesians 6:2 "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—

Ephesians 6:3 "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Honor is so important it rated one of the 10 commandments. Check this out: Paul's instruction here is based on Old Testament Scripture, and again, one of the Ten Commandments from God. Exodus 20:12 says...

Exo 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

It says it just a little bit different in Deuteronomy...

Deu 5:16 "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

This command is unique from all of the others. Do you know what sets it apart? It has a promise... "that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you!" We find some interesting things about the word honor. According to the Broadman Commentary "The verb 'honor' (kabad) is directly related to the noun translated both honor and glory! Throughout the Old Testament the 'glory of God' (kabod) described the nature and presence of God...Children, therefore, were expected to manifest honor toward parents and glory to God; glory and honor are identical." You see when you honor your parents it glorifies God! It's the right thing to do. God created us and also created an order for things. It is in the order of God's intentions for us to honor our parents. Again, some of you might protest "But Pastor Larry my parents don't deserve my honor! They don't know Jesus, don't live for God, they were abusive and unworthy of honor!" Of course it might just be one parent that you feel that way towards. Or you may not even know your biological parents, or they may have passed away before you even got to know them. But regardless of the circumstances, your biological parents were used by God to bring your life into this world. The situation may have been good or may have been horrible, but you have life and for that you can be thankful and give honor. That may be where it has to end, but at least do that. The book of Proverbs says this...

Prov 23:22 Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

If you've not been honoring your parents, ask God to help you do so! As I've already said, you may not agree with your parents on everything and if they aren't living for the Lord, you may actually be disappointed in some of their choices. However, if you honor them because they are your parents, and you treat them with respect even when you disagree, one day they may ask you why you are so respectful and obedient. When you tell them it's because God's Word tells you to honor and obey your mother and father, it could be the very thing that turns them towards Jesus! But again, I realize that for some young people this is not an easy thing to do because of the way the parents are living their lives. In fact the NIV practical commentary states this dilemma very well...

"The less integrity a parent has, the more difficult honor will be. At times honor may even be reduced to honor for the "office" of parents rather than the person. Showing honor should never require distorting the truth. The guideline here, as everywhere, is speaking the truth in love.

Where the parents' will conflicts with God's will, again the attitude of the early church is the right path: 'We must obey God rather than men'" (Acts 5:29) Snodgrass, K. (1996). Ephesians (p. 326). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

But having said that, let me share with you some insights on honoring your father and mother. If they are your biological parents, no matter what they are like, good or bad, at least honor the fact that they gave you life. That alone is worth something. If they are your adopted parents, you've got to remember, they had no responsibility in bringing you into this world, but chose to take on that responsibility anyway and offered you a home and a future. That's pretty special! They may not be perfect, I don't know any perfect parents, but wow what an awesome thing it is to be adopted. Think about this...natural parents decide to get pregnant and they have no idea what they will have. Boy or girl, or anything else about their features or personality. You might say it's the luck of the draw, there's no choice other than the choice to have a child. With adoptive parents, they choose you. That's pretty special. And if it's a step parent, they've had a responsibility placed on them as a result of other choices. Do your best to honor them and treat them with respect and you might be able to make an otherwise terrible situation pretty good.

My parents had a choice on whether or not to have children, but they didn't have a choice on what they got! Bless their hearts, they're stuck with me. They couldn't take me back. And if they could have, I was born at an air force hospital in Washington State and only cost them around \$7.00. I tell them all the time "You get what you pay for!" My Mom just rolls her eyes!!

So let me say this, whether natural parents or adopted parents, if you do have a parent who doesn't know God or was not a loving parent, or might have even been abusive, pray for them that they may fall under conviction and repent of the wrong they've done. One of the hardest things in the world is to pray for someone who has hurt you, but remember, that forgiveness is never saying it was okay that you were wronged, but it is saying, "I'm not going to allow the wrong that was done to me cause me to become bitter, hateful, and vengeful. I will allow God to handle the judgement of that person and their actions, but I pray they repent and let Jesus change their life!" Forgiveness doesn't mean you allow someone to continue to be abusive to you. No! You take the steps you need to take to protect yourself, but remember, God knows all things. He knows your heart. Why do I say that? Because sometimes we may say someone's being abusive when they're not. It's not abusive when your parents ask you to clean your room, to wash dishes, to mow the lawn or to take the garbage out. It's not abusive when they set some limits on what you can and can't do. That's not abuse, that's love. That's caring for you and giving you safe boundaries within which you can grow and mature. You see your parents have been down the road a ways. They've lived a little life, and they know where the really bad potholes are and may even be able to warn you about a bridge that is out around the next curve. And to be sure, they've experienced some dead ends. If you are smart you will listen to their wisdom.

Listen to God's Word in Proverbs 1:1-9

Prov 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

Prov 1:2 for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight;

Prov 1:3 for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair;  
Prov 1:4 for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young-- Prov 1:5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance--  
Prov 1:6 for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. Prov 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.  
Prov 1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.  
Prov 1:9 They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

As I said, there are no perfect parents, but I bet the majority of adults in this room would be quick to say they sure wish they would have followed the advice of Solomon and listened to their parents more than they did. Let me say this, I've discovered that my parents were right about 95% more than they were wrong, maybe 99%! You've heard me say this before, but my Dad has often told me this...

"A smart man learns from his own mistakes! A wise man learns from other's mistakes, but a fool learns from no one's mistakes!"

If you've got a Mom and Dad who are humble enough to let you learn from their mistakes I would highly encourage you to take advantage of their offer. I remember telling my dad some time after I had accepted Jesus as my Savior that I was tired of running into all of the stumps on the path of life and if he knew where any were, I would be more than happy for him to point them out to me and I would heed his advice. Did you hear what Solomon said in verse's 8 & 9?

Prov 1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.  
Prov 1:9 They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

Listen and do not forsake their teaching. A garland was a wreath of flowers and leaves worn like a crown! A chain to adorn your neck was like a beautiful necklace. What kind of flowers or jewels can be found on this crown or in this necklace? I think we find that answer in verses 2-7. Let me list them for you...

Wisdom, discipline, understanding, insight, prudence, righteousness, justice, fairness, knowledge, discretion, learning, guidance, and respect for God!

That's an impressive list of Jewels! And guess what? If you receive these from your parents by listening to them and obeying them, you will honor them in the highest way possible. There's nothing that would bring more glory and honor to your Mom or Dad than for you to heed their hard earned advice in life. When they see you avoid some of the mistakes they made because you were willing to learn from them, you will make them proud! Now there's one more way in which submission applies to the family...

**5. Submission applies to the family and results in a Godly home through a parent's wise training and instruction for their children.**

Paul gives this wisdom to the families at the Ephesian Church...

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

I love what the NIV application commentary says about this verse...

“The text implies a value on children that should not be taken lightly. They are not to be ignored or merely tolerated, but cared for and instructed about life in Christ. If stewardship is the proper management of assets, Christian stewardship should focus first of all on nurturing children. Neither the church nor the family has an asset more valuable than its children.”

Snodgrass, K. (1996). Ephesians (p. 326). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

While Paul specifically mentions Fathers as leaders of the family, we know the principle he is giving applies to parenting in general as well! Paul puts it this way in his letter to the Colossian Church.

Col 3:20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Col 3:21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Since Paul mentions the dads twice let me talk to you fathers just a little bit, but moms listen too!

Back in Paul's day, the culture pretty much was one where dads were not encouraged to be friends at all with their kids. Fathers in that age could abuse their children and even sell their daughters into slavery without repercussions. Many ancient cultures just made the fathers the authoritarians and some even taught that fathers were to discipline their children but were not to laugh with them or play with them. It was thought they should only be in control of them. So the fact that Paul is telling fathers not to exasperate their children or embitter their children was a radical concept for his culture. While there are still fathers who are disconnected from their kids, don't spend time with their kids, and only act as the disciplinarian, the pendulum may have swung in the other direction and we have dads today, who just want to be their kids' friends and as a result the kids get no direction or discipline and that's not healthy either. So we desperately need to find the right balance. And let me say this, while exasperating your children may not be what it was back in Paul's day, Dads, you need to be careful when you're playing with your kids and picking on them, that you don't aggravate them or exasperate them? I've been guilty of that. Again, we need to play with them, and have fun, but if we're to win their honor and respect we must make sure we don't exasperate or embitter our children.

And let me just say, it's typically not playful picking that exasperates or embitters children. It's when we say one thing but live another thing. It's when, through our actions, we seem to be saying: “don't do as I do, do as I say! Children at a very young age can detect hypocrisy! And when we give no reason, and just fall back on our authority and say, “because I said so,” that can be a problem. Now dads I totally get it, sometimes it just needs to be “because I said so”,

and we have to be the parent and set the rules. But if we can give our kids a good reason for the demands we place on them, it could go a long way in gaining respectful submission. And sometimes our kids just want us to take them seriously and have an adult-like conversation with them. I think the reason some dads pick and aggravate is they're actually scared to have those deeper conversations their kids so desperately want and need! My advice to you is this: In case you haven't noticed, your kids are growing up really, really fast and the time to build a strong relationship is now, not later!!! And hear this: Seek to earn their respect. Don't just demand it from your position of authority. Parent in such a way that the children honor you not just because you gave them life, but because you give them a great example of how to live life! Now, I'm painfully aware that there are some children who will rebel no matter how deserving of honor a parent is, because I was one of those children! For a number of years I refused to give my Mom and Dad the honor and respect they deserved. I was determined to go my own way no matter what they said or did. I disrespected them, disobeyed them, and dishonored them! In the process I broke their hearts. But thank God they didn't give up on me! And here's a very important concept for every parent in this room. My Mom and Dad's life served as a boundary for me even though I was doing everything I could to escape those boundaries. What do I mean by this? Let me put it this way. During my rebellious years, I sought desperately to find fault with my Mom and Dad. I remember when my Dad would be talking to me after I had broken yet another rule, crossed another boundary, and he would be so aggravated. I remember thinking, "Just cuss me!" You see I wanted an excuse for my bad behavior to throw back at him, but here was the problem...my Dad didn't curse! I never heard him curse even one time in my whole life! I wanted to catch my mom or dad drinking or smoking so I could have an excuse to do those things with my friends, but there was a problem, my parents didn't do those things. I told you there are no perfect parents, but my parents not only believed in Jesus, they lived for Jesus. And that just messed up so many of my plans! And as badly as I disobeyed, I believe their lives gave me enough pause and concern about the bad decisions I was making that I didn't go nearly as far as I would have gone, and this probably saved my physical life on more than one occasion! It also set up the opportunity I had the night I received Jesus into my life as my Savior! Sadly, in many cases, children don't have to look for excuses, they are handed multiple excuses by their parents on a daily basis. Demanding respect where respect has not been earned breeds rebellion! Authority derived only from a position of authority is weak and requires constant enforcement. On the other hand, authority derived from a life that lives out the principles of God's Word with authenticity, honesty, and integrity creates a moral authority that is difficult to deny! It stifles rebellion. This doesn't mean you have to be perfect, but you have to be genuine. Your children will forgive mistakes if they sense you are not fake! But hear this clearly: If you don't live the principles you're trying to get your children to live by you are throwing your children to the wolves because the chances are they will rebel against what you say you believe! Like a Daddy saying y'all get ready to go to church with your Mom, it's important! That's not gonna work! Again, it's not that you have to be perfect, in fact sometimes the best way to show authenticity and genuineness is to admit when you're wrong! Here's the thing, you may do all of the right things and they may still rebel but if they do and you've truly done your best then it's on them,

In the King James version of God's Word we read these words...

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

In the Hebrew language the subject - verb agreement are different than in English and it is proper to translate one of two ways...

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

Or

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, it will not depart from him!

So parents submit yourselves to God's will to train up your children in the Lord and tho they may depart from the teaching that teaching will not depart from them, because they cannot deny the beautiful picture of truth they saw in the life you lived before them. Let's pray!