



**“Shepherding Your Child’s Heart”  
— Go Deep—  
Small Group Plan**

*When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.  
Trust and obey, for there’s no other way,  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

-- John H. Sammis

**OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- How would you describe your relationship with your parents?
- How has that relationship impacted your parenting style or plans?

**LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

**Ephesians 6:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father and mother” — which is the first commandment with a promise — <sup>3</sup> “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

- How does mutual submission (v. 21) continue through this section?
- Paul does not simply command obedience; he provides reasons. Why is it logical and fair to want to know the reasons?

**TO CHILDREN  
OBEY YOUR PARENTS**

**IT IS THE CHRISTIAN WAY — “in the Lord” (v. 1)**

- The word “obey” in vs. 1 is literally “listen to.”
- Where else in Christian faith do we find the concept of “listening” “hearing” “following” and how are they foundational to every aspect of faith?

**IT IS STANDARD BEHAVIOR IN ANY SOCIETY** – “this is right” (v. 1)

- Is it possible to obey your parents without honoring them? How?
- How can family harmony bring stability to an entire society?
- How can family chaos and confusion undermine a nation?

**IT IS GOD’S COMMAND** – “commandment” (v. 2)

- Over all the other 600+ commands that were given to Israel, why did God reserve a spot among the Ten Commandments for “*honor your father and mother*”?

**IT WILL PRODUCE GOOD REWARDS** – “it may go well with you” (v. 3)

- How will it help a child later in life to have learned the principles of obedience early in life?
- What are some of these rewards?

**TO PARENTS**

**NURTURE YOUR CHILDREN**

*“The instruction to children to obey their parents presupposes ... the fact of parental authority. Yet when Paul outlines how parents should behave towards their children, it is not the exercise, but the restraint, of their authority.”* - John R.W. Stott, The Message of Ephesians, pg. 245.

- What does it mean to “exasperate” a child (v. 4)?
- What kinds of things will damage or embitter a child’s heart?
- If parents are to follow the parenting style of God - “*of the Lord*” (v. 4) – how would you describe God’s parenting style?
- Why is it easier for children to “obey” nurturing, listening and loving parents than unreasonable and demanding parents?

**A SHIFT IN “CONTROL”**

**PREPARE YOUR CHILDREN FOR LIFE**

**YOUR CONTROL** (small children under their parents control)

- What are the areas of a small child’s life that need to be tightly controlled? Explain why?
- Why do young children become bewildered and demanding when they are given no direction or limits?

**SELF CONTROL** (children who are self-controlled)

- How is the hand-off made from parents to child as the child matures and grows up?

- What are some the most common mistakes made by parents during this time?

**GOD'S CONTROL** (children make the choice to surrender control to Jesus)

- What kind of “wilderness wanderings” do children sometimes go through on their way to surrender to God?
- How can parents “train” and “instruct” their children while also releasing them?

#### **USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- How can young children who live at home honor their parents?
- How can adult children honor their parents?
- What can you do this week to improve or strengthen your relationship with your parents or children?
- Close by thanking God for your family relationships. Ask Him for a clearer picture of Him as our Father.