

(Ephesians) the Christian Family

by Brian Brodersen

The Christian family is God's ideal, and obedience to parents is a key part of that, leading to a good, long, healthy, enjoyable life.

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Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of the Christian home and how it should be a reflection of God's divine order. He emphasizes the need for children to obey and honor their parents, as this command is often dismissed in today's culture. The speaker also highlights the tragic consequences that occur when parental authority is undermined. He urges parents to treat their children with love, respect, and kindness, reminding them to model their behavior after God's dealings with them.

Transcript

Let's open our Bibles this evening to Ephesians chapter 6. As we continue our study through Paul's epistle to the Ephesians and as we continue our series within Ephesians on marriage and family, we come tonight to the topic of the Christian family. Ephesians chapter 6, we're going to read verses 1 through 4. Ephesians 6, 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.

And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. The traditional family of father, mother, and children is being attacked from every angle today. Powerful forces are at work to undermine the family unit.

The Christian family, which is God's ideal, is especially under attack. Satan is working overtime trying to destroy Christian families. Therefore, we have got to be on our toes.

We have got to be committed to the family. We have got to be committed to the Lord. We've got to be committed to strengthening and preserving the family.

Satan's hatred for the family lies in the fact that the family is the place where the love and the truth of God can be experienced and then passed on from generation to generation. The family is precious in the sight of God, and it must be precious in our sights as well. Now, here as we move into the sixth chapter, Paul

turns from having addressed first of all the wives, showing the wife her role within the marriage relationship, and then dealing pretty extensively with the husband's role.

Speaking to the husband about the fact that Christ is his role model, and he's to love his wife as Christ loved the church, and to give himself, and then talking about how the husband is really to love his wife as himself, and so forth. And now he continues on, and he comes to children. And notice here once again, the apostle addresses the children first, then the parents.

And we see in this, as we saw with the wives and the husbands, we see the divine order. There's an order here. God is a God of order, and he set things in a certain order.

And if we seek to fall into place where God has appointed us to be, then we can anticipate a good life. But if we rebel against that system that God has established, if we rebel against the divine order, that is going to simply create problems in our lives. Now, the movement to undermine parental authority, a movement that is quite prevalent in our world today, the movement to undermine parental authority, whether it comes from the UN, the United States government, the National Educators Association, MTV, or Bart Simpson, whatever, it is all an attack on the divine order.

And look at the range there. What would Bart Simpson and the UN have in common? Well, the producers of The Simpsons, and many people at the United Nations, would like to see parental authority undermined. But it's an attack, not simply against parental authority.

It's an attack against the divine order. There's an all-out war against God and against God's way of viewing things, setting up things. So, God says that children are to obey their parents.

Children are to honor their parents. And every culture that has made light of or dismissed this command has suffered dire consequences. And as we are becoming more and more careless as a culture in regard to these kinds of commands, we're seeing the tragic consequences of it all around us today.

And so, we want to look at these two different things tonight. We want to look at the commandment to children to obey their parents. And then we also want to look at the instruction for the parents in dealing with their children.

So, Paul says, children, obey your parents in the Lord. And then he gives us a couple of reasons. Reason number one, obey your parents' children because it is right.

It is the right thing to do. In our society today, there is a strong denial of any moral absolutes, a strong denial of anything that's actually truly right or anything that's actually truly wrong. It's all relative.

But yet, although relativism is prevalent in our culture, God has not adopted the relativistic philosophy of the day. God is still into absolutes. And God says that children are to obey their parents, first of all, because it is the right thing to do.

It's right because God said it is right. And so, that ought to be our first motive in obeying parents as children, knowing that it's pleasing to God because God said it's right to do it. Now, the encouragement to obedience is not something that you're going to get from many of the movies that are out today.

It's not something that you're going to hear in many of the songs that are being sung today. Quite often, your friends are going to seek to persuade you not to obey your parents. And sometimes even teachers

get into the whole mix and seek to discourage young people from parental obedience and those kinds of things.

But whether it's movies or music or friends or teachers or whoever else, remember this, God says it's the right thing to do, to obey your parents is right before God. And God is watching. God is taking everything into account.

And God says it's the right thing to do. That's the first reason. The second reason is that it's the best thing to do.

You see, if God says something's right, then inevitably it has to be the best. Because God only does what's best. God doesn't do anything that's not the absolute best.

And so, it just, you know, follows logically. If God says it's the right thing to do, then it has to be the best thing to do. And it is the best thing to do.

He says that it may be well with you. God says obey your parents because it's right and it's the best thing to do. When you obey your parents, things go well with you.

Now, there's nothing more that a parent could want than for good things to happen to their children. I don't know of any parents that are hoping and praying for their kids to have a miserable life. I don't know anyone that's, you know, setting out intentionally to ruin their child's life.

But so often children think that, man, my parents, they must hate me because, you know, they won't let me do the things I want to do and so forth. Actually, the fact that they care about you enough to tell you you can't do certain things, that really shows that they don't hate you at all. They love you.

As a matter of fact, the Bible says the parent who hates his child is a parent who neglects to discipline. The parent who just says, oh, whatever you want, it's, you know, up to you. You decide.

I don't really care. That parent doesn't really love its child, the scripture says. Now, I know for my children, I want the best in their lives.

I want the absolute best. I was so exceedingly thrilled when my oldest daughter got engaged to the man who's now her husband. Because in my opinion, there couldn't have been a better guy come along to be her husband.

And I was so happy for her and I'm still so happy for her today because I wanted the best for her life. And as I saw her grow up and now she, you know, reaches adulthood and I'm concerned about her and how's she going to do and who's going to take care of her now that she's an adult. And here comes Michael Smith and he falls in love with her and asks her to marry him.

Oh, this is great. I'm thrilled. Why? Because I love my daughter and I want her to be blessed.

And that's the way we are as parents. We love our children. And so we're not seeking to quench their fun or to make their lives miserable, but we know what's best in most cases.

And so we're just trying to do what we know is best. You know, sometimes children, young people, I think they somehow forget or they just can't conceive of the possibility that we as parents were once children or teenagers either. You know, and how many times have parents, you can certainly relate to this and, you

know, some of you younger people in here, maybe you can identify with it as well.

How many times have, you know, we as parents experience where our kids look at us like, you don't have a clue. You know, what are you talking about? You don't know anything. And I remember being a teenager and thinking that my parents didn't know anything.

And I personally had forgotten that they were once children and teenagers as well. And I guess it's just something that, you know, happens from generation to generation. We forget these things.

But as I'm seeking to mold my children and help them grow up in a positive way and want to see their lives blessed, I'm giving them instructions and things based on not only the word of God, which is the most important, but based upon experience as well. Oh, I know that that might look good to you, but I've been there and have done that. And I'm going to tell you that is not something you want to do.

It's not because I dislike my child that I'm seeking to deprive them. It's because I love them so much. And I know that's damaging and I don't want them to be damaged.

And so that's why, that's why I sometimes say no. You know, kids are notorious for wanting to do stupid things that are going to get them hurt. And that's why God has brought parents along.

Now, I did a bunch of stupid things when I was a kid. And so I can see it coming. Oh, yeah, I've done that before.

But, you know, a child can't see it. The child says, oh, well, what's the problem? What do you mean I could break my neck? I can never break my neck. Oh, you could.

So it's the best thing to do. And then another reason, Paul goes on and he says that you may live long. Now, in the old days, when you rebelled against your parents, if it was a serious ongoing rebellion, like we see in our culture today, there was punishment for that.

And so when the command was originally given, it was given in that setting. And children who rebelled against their parents in those days, their godly parents, children who rebelled against them were punished by being stoned to death. Now, we don't do that anymore.

But in obeying your in honoring your parents as children, it does lead to long life. Generally speaking, you wonder, well, how? Well, the child who obeys will, first of all, be protected from danger. He or she will experience less accidents or harm.

Now, I've seen many kids over the years who just, you know, their parent says, don't do that. Oh, no, Johnny, don't do that. And, you know, kid doesn't pay any attention.

And pretty soon, boom, you know, he's tumbling down the stairs or something. He's cracked open his head. He's going to the hospital, getting stitches.

And some children are just constantly getting themselves into situations and not being obedient or responsive to parents. They're injuring themselves. They're harming themselves.

You see, it goes back to a failure to obey. So, an obedient child will be spared of many of those kinds of things. An obedient child will be spared the bad habits and bad friends that tend to ruin and shorten life.

You can get into bad habits early in disobeying your parents. You can get connected with the wrong people. You know, I was talking to a friend the other night, a police officer.

And he works up in Los Angeles. And he was telling me about how out of control the whole gang warfare is in LA and how out of control the racial conflict is. And he was actually telling me the story of these young kids, 13, 14, 15 years old, stealing cars and having guns and driving by and shooting at each other and killing each other.

And it's just unbelievable to hear that this kind of stuff is going on. And we don't have to go all the way to LA to find it. We can just go right up the road to Santa Ana and find that kind of thing going on.

But what has happened there? Well, part of what has happened is that, obviously, these children didn't obey their parents. I don't think most of their parents are encouraging that kind of behavior. Some are bad parents.

And they've maybe even led the way in it. But they've started developing bad habits and they never were corrected. Or they got connected with the wrong people.

And the wrong people can bring devastation into a person's life. They can lead to a ruined life or a shortened life. You can become corrupted through other people.

You could end up spending your life in prison or something like that by getting around the wrong people. But the child who is obedient develops healthy patterns, good relationships, and those kinds of things. And, of course, this leads to a long and a good life.

The scriptures repeat this principle over and over again. Let me quote to you from a couple of the Proverbs. Proverbs 4.10 says, Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.

Proverbs 10.27, The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short. And there are many other passages that communicate the same principle. So why do we obey our parents as children? We obey because, first of all, it's the right thing to do.

God said to do it, and we do it because God said it, and it's right. But God said it, and it's right because it's the best thing. It's the best thing for us.

It leads to a good, long, healthy, enjoyable life. Now, questions arise when we talk about obedience to parents or honoring parents. And one of the questions that arises is, is there ever a time when children do not have to obey their parents? Does there ever come a time when children do not have to obey their parents? And the answer is yes.

When children become adults, they no longer have to obey their parents. Now, but even as adults, they are to honor their parents, which means to love them, reverence them, regard them highly, and show them respect and consideration. So I have two children that are grown and two children that are younger.

Now, my older children, they do not have to obey me at this point in their lives, but they do honor me. And for the most part, that leads to somewhat of obedience. I don't make it a habit of commanding them to do much at this point in their lives, but they respect my perspective on things, and they want to know what I think, and they quite often will be in agreement that my advice is good, and they will follow that lead.

And I think that's the idea that is being communicated in this. Now, I'm 45 years old, and my wife and I, we have been in a transition. We moved out of a house, and we just moved into a new house today, and we've been living with my wife's parents for the past few weeks.

And we are about as grown up as you can get, I guess. I would say 45 is pretty grown up. I still don't believe I'm 45, but my birth certificate says that I am.

But, you know, as we're there living with them, they're not seeking to, you know, boss us around or anything like that, but, you know, we respect their opinion, their view on things. We're going to listen to them, and many times take their counsel and advice and things like that, and that's part of honoring your parents, because they're our parents, and because they love us, and because they have experience and wisdom and those kinds of things, and that's the way it's supposed to be. That's what the scripture is talking about.

So, although there does come a point when, you know, ultimately we are adults, and yes, we make our own decisions, and, you know, the law says that happens when you're 18. Some people at 18 are adults. Others are just entering into adolescence, and they need a lot more help.

But then, also, we would have to bring up the whole idea of children who are being told to do something by their parents that God has forbidden to be done, and in those cases, and I would think that those would be rare to some extent, especially among us. I would certainly hope so, but if those kinds of things do develop, then, of course, the child is to be obedient first and foremost to the Lord. The only time we are to disobey the authorities that God has put over us, parents over children, government over us as citizens, the only time we're to disobey is if the commands or the request or the laws or whatever are in conflict with what God has clearly stated in His law for us.

So, children would not be obligated to obey parents if the parents were prohibiting them from obeying and serving God or if the parents were telling them to do things that God has clearly forbidden. Now, this question arises. What about non-believers? What about Christians who have parents who are non-believers? Well, unless, and this is for the younger children, unless your parents are asking you to do something that is against what God has already said, then you need to be obeying them because it's through your obedience to them that you're going to be showing them that there really is a God that you're serious about and your obedience to them is going to be a strong witness to them.

And even for adult children, when it comes to non-believing parents, unless they're just downright wicked, we need to be giving them the honor and the respect and the things that are due to them as parents. So, these are the things that I think are contained in Paul's command here to the children to obey their parents. But then he moves on and he says, and you fathers do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and in the admonition of the Lord.

Now, Paul pinpoints the father here. Now, that does not at all imply that the mothers are not involved in the process of raising children or disciplining children and any of those sorts of things. We know that that is a role that mothers participate in to a large extent.

But I think the reason why Paul said you fathers, because men have a tendency to be negligent when it comes to those things. And Paul's wanting men to know that you have a responsibility here as well. How many families have been left to be raised by the mother? While the dad went out and worked, which is fine because that has to be done, but so often the dad doesn't just go out to work.

Then after work, he goes out to play because he never grew up either. And the wife is stuck with all the responsibility of raising the family and so forth. That's wrong.

And Paul shows here by specifying the father that the father has a responsibility in the home. The father has a responsibility in bringing up the children in a godly way so that they will go on and serve the Lord. And I'll tell you where there's been a good strong father figure in the home, generally speaking, you have strong families and you have children that grow up to serve the Lord.

They see that leadership in their father and they say, I want to be like my dad. I want to follow in his steps. And that's the way that it ought to be.

So now Paul transitioning from the children to the parents, fathers do not provoke. This addition is not to neutralize what has been said about children obeying, but rather to safeguard it and to remove every hindrance that may be in the path of children and giving obedience to their parents. You see, it's similar to what Paul said back there when he was talking to the wives.

Wives be submissive to your husbands. Oh, that hurts. Oh, be submissive.

Oh, the wife says, I hate that word. And my husband, he's a dictator. He's a tyrant.

And he's, if I be submissive, he's just going to roll right over me. But Paul immediately comes with husbands, love your wives as Christ of the church, assuring the wife that submission is not going to be this horrifying thing under this domineering person, but rather it's going to be done in an environment where you're loved. Now, children obey your parents.

And for some children, that's a frightening prospect. My dad's an ogre. He's cruel.

He's mean. But immediately going from the children, Paul moves right to the parents and particularly to the fathers in order to encourage the children that obedience is not going to be as painful as you might think, because the father has a responsibility to behave in a certain way as he's seeking to bring up his children. So fathers do not provoke your children to wrath.

Do not provoke your children to wrath. Now, generally speaking, and you know, I say that often, generally speaking. And the reason I say that is because there are always exceptions to the rule.

And inevitably somebody will come up and say, hey, you said this, but did you know that there was this one person? And they'll tell me the big story about the one in a million. Okay. There might be a one in a million, but I'm talking about generally, you know, I'm talking about the rule, not the exception.

Generally speaking in today's society, parents are usually at one extreme or the other in dealing with their children. And these are the two extremes. They're either oppressive or permissive.

And both approaches to parenting are bad and they're wrong. And neither one of them are biblical. Now, the oppressive parent is demanding, emotionally, verbally, and sometimes physically abusive, unwilling to show approval or affection or that sort of thing, a dictator, a tyrant, a person who is disconnected emotionally and, you know, is just there as sort of the king of the hill, ruling over the family.

And it's a miserable, miserable experience for everyone under his authority. That is the wrong way to lead a family. That is a complete failure to do what the scriptures say that a father is to do.

But then we have the permissive parent as well. And as you so often have, you have two extremes. The oppressive environment, the oppressive parent is one extreme.

Then you go to the other extreme of the permissive parent. And although it's a completely different situation, it's still a totally unhealthy situation. The permissive parent is basically unwilling to be a parent.

Either they are preoccupied with other things or wanting to be liked by their children to the extent that they refuse to discipline, lest they fall out of favor. Or they simply have no real interest in the lives of their children. I know that's hard to believe, but there are parents who have no interest.

Or they have embraced a humanistic view of raising children that says the child knows what's best and should be allowed to do whatever comes natural or whatever it wants to do. That is a picture of the permissive parent or the permissive approach to parenting. And just now see what's happened.

Years ago, the problem was more on the other side. The problems in families generally tended to be the problem with oppressive parenting, with a dictatorial father, maybe an alcoholic, a drunkard who would come home and in a rage and beat everybody up and all that sort of thing. And so then psychology moved in and started evaluating and making judgments and saying that this kind of discipline is wrong and we should never do that.

And the experts came and started giving their opinions. And what they did is they swung the pendulum to the other side. And recognizing that the oppressive environment or that oppressive attitude coming from a parent is detrimental to children and to a family, they then swung over to the other side of being permissive.

And they still haven't realized, although they should, they're blinded by their own prejudice. But the permissive situation is just as bad. It's just as bad.

In some cases, I actually think it's probably worse. But both of these positions are unbiblical and both are equally wrong. The opposite of wrong discipline is not no discipline, but rather right discipline.

See, and that's what they've done. They've thrown out everything. Discipline is wrong.

That's their thinking. No, bad discipline is wrong. Good discipline is right.

So here Paul gives us the things that we are to do or to avoid doing in regard to raising our children. Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath. Now, let me give you an expanded translation of what Paul said.

Do not provoke your children means do not irritate and provoke your children to anger. Do not exasperate them to resentment. See, parents can be hard on kids to the point that a child just flat out gives up and becomes bitter and resentful against the parent.

How many times have we heard a child say, or even an adult now, looking back on their child and say, you know, I could never please my parents. Nothing I ever did pleased them. Sometimes that's just an exaggerated perspective on their point, but sometimes it's true.

So there are certain things when we look at Paul's command to the not to provoke the children to wrath. There are certain things that we as parents should never do in raising our children. And I want to talk about these and then we're going to close.

There are five things that we should never do if we're going to fulfill Paul's admonition here. Number one, we should never be violent toward our children. Never be violent toward our children.

Violence is absolutely unacceptable. And again, it's been those outbursts of wrath and the violence that's caused the overreaction or that's caused the reaction and the bouncing to the other extreme of permissiveness and the whole idea in society today that you can't even spank your child. Now, when I was living in Europe, there are actually countries in Europe where it is illegal to spank your children.

When I was living in England, there was a man in Scotland who was arrested for spanking his child in a dentist office. The child was there to get the tooth filled or whatever. And when it came time to go in, the child just went hysterical, just absolutely wouldn't go in to get the tooth filled.

And so here's the parent. What do you do at this point? The parent spansks the child. You're not going to beat your child in a dentist office.

So, you know, the parent just simply gives a child a spanking. Well, some enlightened person saw that that was child abuse and this guy was actually put in jail. And in the European Union, many of the countries within the union have adopted those kinds of views and it's against the law to corporately discipline your children to spank them.

That's what's also the predominant view of the UN. The UN is trying to impose it on the world, tried to impose it on the United States. There's many people in our country that want to have this sort of a rule as well.

But of course, we would agree that being violent to children is absolutely unacceptable. It's wrong. We should never do it.

But we don't agree that we go to the other extreme because to give a spanking under the right conditions for the right things is not the equivalent of being violent. I'm sorry. It's a misinterpretation based upon, I think, a twisted view.

So, never be violent. If you got a hot temper, if you get angry, then go away. Get on your knees and ask God to change your heart.

Never be capricious. There's nothing more confusing and frustrating to a child than the kind of parent whose moods and actions can never be predicted, whose condition is always uncertain, who one day in a good mood is indulgent and allows the child almost anything, and then the next day explodes for the smallest thing. That thing is really confusing and frustrating to a child.

We should not be that way. When Paul said, do not provoke them to wrath, he's talking about exasperating. That kind of thing will exasperate a child.

That kind of thing will just wear a child down and I think would lead to resentment. And so, we never want to be capricious as parents. We want to be steady, even keeled.

If something is right and okay now, then it's going to be right and okay tomorrow. If something is not, then be consistent. We need to have a consistency.

We should never be unreasonable or unwilling to listen to our kids. You know, there was a time when the philosophy, the prevailing philosophy in the culture was children should be seen and not heard. And again,

that was one extreme.

We've gone to the other extreme now. Parents should be seen and not heard nowadays. And in some cases, not even seen or heard.

And we totally disagree with that. But we would disagree as well with the idea that we would not allow our children a voice or allow them to express themselves or to have, you know, an opinion or a part in a decision or something like that. And as parents, we need to guard ourselves against being unreasonable.

And when we're making, you know, rules and things like that, we need to weigh them out and not just sort of randomly throw things out that, you know, when you sit down and think about it, you think, wow, that's really stupid. Why did I come up with a rule like that? And you think, oh, wow, my dad did that to me. I hated that.

You know, if your parents did something to you that you hated, you probably shouldn't do it to your own kids because they feel the same way about it that you did. So we should never be unreasonable or unwilling to listen. Many times I have come into a situation with my children ready to take action and yet pausing to listen to what they had to say and then realizing the action that I was going to take was not the right action at this point.

By listening to them, they gave me an understanding of what the situation really was and then helped me to actually make a better decision at that point to help everybody involved. But the unreasonable person just goes into it. I don't want to hear it.

No, I know already. Don't tell me. And, you know, and that's not the way to do it because, again, that leads to frustration.

That leads to exasperation. We should never discipline too severely. You know, the old axiom, the punishment ought to fit the crime.

Well, that needs to be true in our homes as well. If you discipline too severely, you break the spirit of the child. And again, you create a resentment and a bitterness in their hearts.

You don't want to do that. And sometimes that can happen in a moment of anger. You, you know, slap some sentence on your child for something that they did that wasn't even intentional maybe.

Maybe they broke your favorite golf club or something accidentally. And then, you know, so you just put them on restriction for five years. That's severe discipline.

And here's one that I think is probably one of the most important. We should never use bad or demeaning language toward our children. Never use bad language toward your children.

I cannot believe some of the things I hear parents call their kids. I want to take them and wash their mouths out with soap. Obviously, that's the way they grew up.

What a sad thing. I remember being in a store one time, and this guy had his little girl. She was two years old, and the things he was saying to her, I could not believe it.

It's just horrible. But we should never use bad language toward our children. We should not use demeaning language.

We shouldn't call them ugly, fat, stupid, those kinds of things. That is just completely unacceptable, completely ungodly and unchristlike. And in a Christian home, none of that kind of thing should ever be going on.

And here's the rule. If you forgot what I've said already, remember this and you'll get it. In all your dealings with your children, remember God's dealings with you.

If you keep that in mind, you'll do okay. How does God deal with you? Is God violent toward you? No. Is God capricious, unpredictable, never know what he's going to do? No.

Is God unreasonable? No, he's not. Is God severe? No, he's very merciful, isn't he? And he's very compassionate, and he's gracious. Does God ever call you stupid? Does God ever say, hey, ugly? Listen.

No, he doesn't do anything like that, does he? And we should never do these things either. The family, as I said initially, is under serious attack. And we have got to be serious about girding up and strengthening the family.

And if we take God's word seriously, and if we apply it, children, obeying your parents, parents not provoking your children, then we are going to have that blessed experience of family. Family can be the greatest thing in the world, or it can be an extremely miserable thing. I grew up in a fairly decent family, but we had some relatives, you know, people that were connected to us by marriage.

And I remember this part of the family. There was never a time when there wasn't some problem going on. You could never get together with them for anything without all hell breaking loose when you got together.

I mean, seriously, you know, fights, and threats, and screaming, and oh, it's just, you know, unbelievable. Try to go have Christmas, and, you know, beer bottles flying, and hatchets, and stuff. And, you know, hey, they weren't blood relatives, okay? It was a marriage deal.

But, you know, I remember as a kid, I hated it. It's like, oh, no, we got to go be with them. Because you just knew that it was going to be frightening.

It was going to be a miserable experience. And sadly, there are families that are like that. They're just feuding clans.

They're just at war with themselves, and at war with everybody around them. But that's not what God intended with a family. God intended for a family to be a beautiful thing, a wonderful experience.

And if we take God's instruction and apply it to our lives, you know, the family will be what God intended it to be. And that's where we have an opportunity today. Because families are so messed up, to just live as a godly family, you are making a major statement in this culture.

You're sending out a strong message as a husband by just loving your wife, and being faithful to her. As a wife, by loving your husband, and being faithful to him, you're sending out a strong message. Children obeying their parents.

Oh, my goodness. What a message that is. Because the culture is moving in the opposite direction.

And parents really concerned about children, really taking the time to invest in them. All of this is so contrary to so much of what's going on. By just doing this, we're sending out a message of the goodness

of God, and the blessing of being in a relationship with Him.

It's like with Israel. God gave them all of these great commandments, and blessed them, and prospered them. And the Lord's goal was that all the nations around would look and say, man, look at Israel.

What a blessed people. We want their God to be our God, so we could be blessed too. And that's what God wants to do through your marriage, and through your family.

And hopefully, this series has served to strengthen that to some degree. Now, finally, Paul says, but bring them up in the training, and in the admonition of the Lord. So, first, he gives, you know, the negatives.

What we're not to do in provoking them. But now, we're to bring them up in the training, and the admonition of the Lord. Bringing them up in the Lord.

Having a family life, a home life, where the Lord is the center of it all. And things are revolving around Him. And you're bringing them up in the Lord.

They're experiencing the love of God through you. They're experiencing the grace of God through you. They're experiencing the wisdom of God, as you conduct yourself according to His Word.

And you see how it brings about a prosperous situation. The blessing of God. All of these things.

We're going to talk more extensively about the positive side of things in the next message, when we talk about the Christian home. And what the Christian home ought to look like. And so, we will conclude our series with that.

And that'll tie into the second part of verse four. Bringing them up in the training, and in the admonition of the Lord. So, let's go ahead and end a bit early tonight.

And that'll open up the doors for the people who are here for the play, to come in and enjoy the play this evening. Father, we thank you for your Word. And Lord, we pray now that we might hide it in our hearts and live according to it.

And that Lord, our families would be strengthened. And Lord, that we would be blessed in our homes. And through your blessing upon us, that we would be a testimony to others.

And Lord, we know there are many families that are so messed up tonight. But Lord, at the root of their problems, lies their failure to obey you. Help, Lord.

Help those who have been walking in disobedience to humble themselves before you. To receive your forgiveness. And to walk on in your strength.

To glorify you in their personal life and their family life. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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