

GOD- CHILDREN

Elements of Family 6:

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Nov. 4, 2012

Sermon in a sentence: As a child, you please God by honouring and obey your parents, and worshiping Him with a committed heart.

Scriptures: Ps. 127:3-5; 2 Ch. 34-35 (2 Kings 22:1-23:25); Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-2 (Col.3:20); 1 Sam. 18 – David's wise behaviour; Ps. 119:9-16; 1 Jn. 2:13

There is one thing all children have in common. We have all grown up with imperfect parents. Worse yet, some have grown up with no relationship with one or both biological parents and life has been tough.

Still, as members of their family, children have great responsibilities, and the privilege to be a force for good in their homes!

God does not look at children as useless, inconvenient or a pain in the neck. Actually, children are a sign of His blessing and favour toward our parents – His reward to them.

Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. 5 How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate. (Ps. 127:3-5 NASB)

As soon as we are aware of the world around us and are able to think independently and process information, God has a desire to use us for His glory in His kingdom!

When we think of the Ten Commandments, which of them refers specifically to children? Yes, it's number 5, right in the middle of the list: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (Ex. 20:12 NASB). As the apostle Paul observed, this was the first (and only) commandment with a promise attached to it (Eph. 6:2).

In fact, Ephesians 6:1-2 (see also Col. 3:20) gives us the two main responsibilities of children in their homes – to obey their parents "in the Lord", and to honour them.

Quite simply, we obey our parents unless they are telling us to sin in disobedience to God's Word. To be honest, they may have some really weird rules that we just don't understand, and we may feel they are being totally unfair to us. And we may well be right.

But do you remember what I said we all share? Imperfect parents! So, they may be right, or they may be wrong in the way they treat us compared to our siblings, our friends or whomever, but still, our responsibility is to obey.

Childhood is the time we experience the 'slavery' aspect of family life (see Gal. 4:1-2), being at the bottom of the totem pole, with everybody ruling over us. But as v.1 tells us, one day the child will be master of all!

Therefore we need to pay attention to what's happening around us, obey and submit to those in authority, and make good use of the time to determine what we will and won't do when it's our turn to be in charge.

That first quarter of our lives can be a real struggle at times, but if we learn our lessons well, we will be well set for success in the last three quarters of our lives.

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We also need to honour our parents. If we do, the Lord says we will get to live long. If not, we may get to live short!

So, what does it mean to honour our parents?

Honoring your father and mother is being respectful in word and action and having an inward attitude of esteem for their position. The Greek word for honor means “to revere, prize, and value.” Honor is giving respect not only for merit but also for rank. For example, [we] may disagree with the [Prime Minister’s] decisions, but [we] should still respect his position as leader of [our] country. Similarly, children of all ages should honor their parents, regardless of whether or not their parents “deserve” honor.

We should seek to honor our parents in much the same way that we strive to bring glory to God—in our thoughts, words, and actions. For a young child, obeying parents goes hand in hand with honoring them. That includes listening, heeding, and submitting to their authority. After children mature, the obedience that they learned as children will serve them well in honoring other authorities such as government, police, and employers.¹

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The example we will use to illustrate the privilege and responsibility children have to worship God takes us back to around 640BC, to the life of a young boy named Josiah. His father Amon had reigned for two years as the king of Judah and was so wicked that his own servants rose up

¹ <http://www.gotquestions.org/honor-father-mother.html>, accessed Oct. 30, 2012

and killed him in his own house. He was only 24 years old (2 Ch. 33:21-24)!

Amon was a teenage father, having had Josiah when he was 16 years old, and when he died, as strange as it may seem, the people made Josiah king at the tender age of 8 years old!

If you go back a little further into his history, Josiah's grandfather Manasseh had also been a wicked, idolatrous king, even though God permitted him to be the longest serving king of Judah, reigning 55 years. So for 57 years before Josiah came to the throne, there had only been bad examples to follow.

Yet, in spite of all this, starting at 8 years old, this is the description of Josiah's life: "He did right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of his father David and did not turn aside to the right or to the left" (2 Ch. 34:2 NASB).

And yes, you too can become a "God-child", worshiping and serving God from your youth!

Even from his childhood, Josiah was wise enough and godly enough to reach back 17 generations and 370 years to his greatest ancestor and the greatest king ever to rule in Israel, David the shepherd – a man after God's own heart. (That's like us going back to the year 1642. Do you know who your ancestors are?)

Josiah found himself a righteous father he could follow and dedicated himself to living for God.

At 16 years old, he set his heart to seek the Lord (2 Ch. 34:3).

When he was 20, he began to purge Jerusalem of all the idols he saw around him, and to tear down all the 'high places' of worship to false gods (v. 3).

At 26, he set his heart to repair the temple of the Lord so that Judah would have a house of worship worthy of Jehovah (v. 8).

The priests found the book of the law hidden in the temple, (most likely the book of Deuteronomy), brought it to Josiah and read it to him (v. 14). He tore his clothes in mourning over the fact that Judah neither knew, nor was obeying the law of God (v. 19-21).

He called the whole city together to the temple, read the law to them, then led them in re-covenanting and re-committing themselves to obey the Word of the Lord (v. 30-32).

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In summary:

- **Josiah found himself a good example to follow.**
- **He set his heart to seek the Lord.**
- **He purged idolatry from his surroundings.**
- **He established a suitable place of worship to God.**
- **He read the Word of God and committed himself to obey it.**
- **He encouraged others to follow his example and led them in renewed worship (2 Ch. 35:1-19)**

As 'God-children' in our human family, we need to honour and obey our parents and receive the blessing of long life.

As 'God-children' in the family of God, we are to become leaders in worship, both at home and in the house of God.