

6:1-2 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 so that it may turn out well for you, and that you may live long on the earth.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord,

Paul makes a direct appeal to the children of the families in the Ephesian church; children old enough to understand the concepts when the letter was read to the congregation. Probably those over, 6 or 7 years of age, where they're really beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong. Children are precious in the site of God. In Matthew 19:13-15 we read **13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He would lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.** Mark 10:14 adds **14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, Allow the children to come to Me; do not forbid them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.** Children in Jesus' time were not necessarily regarded as special or particularly endearing, except to their own parents. The disciples most likely rebuked those bringing the children to Jesus because they felt bringing children to Jesus was kind of a waste of Jesus' time—he had more important things to do. None of the other rabbis would usually be bothered with little kids, so they figured that Jesus was the same, and they wanted to respect Jesus' position as a teacher. But Jesus wanted the children to come to Him. He said, "Let the children come," because Jesus wanted them to know Him, and He wanted to bless them. They know that they need someone else's help to navigate through life. So, Jesus used them to teach the disciples saying, **"The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"** (Matthew 19:14). Scripture often compares believers to children. In fact, Jesus told those following Him, **"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 18:3–4).

Jesus' command to "let the little children come to me" reveals several truths: 1) Jesus wants the little children to come to Him—to get to know Him. Second, children need to be blessed by the Lord—they have their problems and life concerns, and issues just like we all so—and they need God's blessing and guidance. Third, it's obvious from these scriptures that Jesus wanted to bless the children—it gave Him delight—it pleases God. Fourth, Jesus is with believers all the time, and since Jesus has regard for the weakest and most vulnerable among us—His eyes are on our children to protect them. So, parents and grandparents should be encouraged to bring their children and grand-children to Jesus at an early age and teach them His ways. Like children who implicitly trust their parents, believers trust God. Those who come to Christ must do so in childlike humility, faith, and simplicity. Faith is not about knowing everything or doing everything right. It is about knowing that, no matter what happens, our Heavenly Father will take care of us. Trusting in God, maintaining our faith in Jesus even when everyone else lets us down, or the circumstances of life make us want to ask "where is God in this", is not only what carries us through, but what also makes us most like a little child.

in the Lord,

The phrase "in the Lord" doesn't just mean that the injunction to obey parents applies only to children whose parents are "in the Lord," that is, believers, but to all children, whether or not their parents are believers. The phrase "in the Lord" emphasizes the children's responsibility before God, as Christians to obey their parents, and their accountability before God. The parallel passage in Col 3:20 **20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord.** Makes this clear. So, obedience is not just limited to parents who are themselves being Christ-like in their conduct, limiting obedience, but instead explains the spirit in which the obedience is to be accomplished—"as to the Lord, because we love Him, and He has commanded us".

In the OT it frequently mentions the duty of children to obey their parents. In Exod 20:12 **12, the fifth of the 10 commandments states Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be prolonged on the land which the Lord your God gives you.** and Deut 5:16 adding **that it may go well with you.** Children are commanded to honor their parents—these two passages will be discussed in a moment. In

fact, the Mosaic law specifically states that a child who strikes or curses a parent should be put to death (Exod 21:15 15 **“And one who strikes his father or his mother shall certainly be put to death.”** Exodus 21:17 17 **“And one who curses his father or his mother shall certainly be put to death.”** And, so, Paul is letting children know that God is still serious about obeying and honoring their parents, and wants to instruct them in how their relationship with Christ demands that they conduct themselves as children. **for this is right.**

And, if the command from God wasn't enough, Paul adds—For this is right, making a moral argument as a motivation for children to obey their parents. It is the right thing to do before the Lord. Colossians 3:20 states it a little more explicitly: **“for this is well-pleasing to the Lord”**

6:2 Honor your father and mother.

Paul cites the OT to support his injunction that children should obey their parents. In 6:2–3 he quotes from the OT and in the middle of the quotation he adds a comment: “which is in fact the first commandment with promise.” In Exod 20:12 12, the fifth of the 10 commandments states **Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be prolonged on the land which the Lord your God gives you.** and Deut 5:16 adding **that it may go well with you.** The OT writings maintain that to obey one's parents is to honor them; conversely, to disobey them is to dishonor them. A child's honor and obedience to the parents is the first important step in learning to honor and obey God. If a child dishonors and disobeys the parent, he or she will most likely have the same attitude toward God.

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Which is in fact the first commandment entole ἐντολή which means a “command” or “order” with promise. This command is of primary important to children, since obeying their parents in this way will teach them to have the same kind of obedient relationship with God when they are an adult. Since the greatest and first commandment is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself (Matt 22:36–40 = Mark 12:28–31), obedience and honor toward parents begins to teach these lessons in the household, so that they are ingrained as the child grows up.

that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth

The purpose or result of both commands to obey and honor parents. The first “that it may be well with you.” Part of the reason that God wants us to pass on His admonition to obey His commandments, is so that our children will have a good life. God says of His people in Deut 5:29 29 **If only they had such a heart in them, to fear Me and keep all My commandments always, so that it would go well with them and with their sons forever!** If we could keep all of His commandments, and perfectly pass them on to our children, it would go well with us forever. Unfortunately, we all fall short, we all miss the mark, and sin—which causes trouble and evil and harm, and death.

The second promise is **“and that you may live long on the earth.”**

Generally under the old covenant, the promise of long life was given on the condition of keeping the law, and sometimes the result of not keeping it had a very clear impact on the length of their lives. For instance in Deut 4:3-4 3 **Your eyes have seen what the Lord has done in the case of Baal-peor, for all the men who followed Baal-peor, the Lord your God has destroyed them from among you.** 4 **But you who clung to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you.** So, those who obey God are not going to be under His wrath, and be killed early.

As a general rule, obedience and honor foster self-discipline, which in turn bring stability, longevity, and well-being; disobedience and dishonor promote a lack of discipline, which in turn bring instability, a shortened life, and a lack of well-being. The well-behaved child that honors and obeys their parents is likely to have good relationships with others later, and in general, have a better life.

Children who have obeyed and honored their parents are more likely to lead disciplined lives, and increase the likelihood of a good and long life.