

A LOOK AT THE NEW TESTAMENT

// Read Ephesians 6:1-4

Look back to Ephesians 5:15-21. List the kind of actions and attitudes that should be priorities for followers of Jesus. In what ways might this impact the actions and attitudes in the relationship between children and their parents?

In Ephesians, the whole section from 5:21-6:9 describes the kind of lives followers of Jesus should be living in relation to specific other people. Compare the word 'obey' (Eph 6:1) with the word 'submit' (Eph 5:21). What is the difference? How are they similar? How do you think they work in practice?

Verse 1 says that children should 'obey their parents in the Lord, for this is right.' What difference does the phrase 'in the Lord' make to why children should obey? What does it actually mean? What limits might it put on parental obedience?

Many of us have ageing parents. Do these verses apply to us too? In what ways?

What specific ways can parents exasperate their children? How can they change?

Notice that Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 5:16 (in verses 2-3), and he also reminds the parents of their responsibility to carry out Deuteronomy 6:6-7. Think of practical ways that this might be done.

How do these verses apply to people who don't have children?

God is often called our 'father' in the bible. How does this knowledge help both parents and their children to live out these verses?

study notes
week **six**

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

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WAY IN

Reflection: When we start to look at the Bible's teaching on parent/child relationships, our own experiences and current situation will have an impact on our thinking. Take a few moments either on your own or with people in your group to take stock and to acknowledge before God where you are at.

As a group, try to identify the pressures on family relationships today. Discuss the extent to which these pressures have always been there. Are there some that are particularly challenging in our culture today?

A LOOK AT EXODUS

// Read Exodus 20:12

This is the only command that comes with a promise. Before you look at the connection, try to work out what it might mean for children to honour their parents. How will honouring change as parents and children get older? Can you give examples?

What do you think is not included in the command to honour? How can you honour parents when you disagree with them? Are there ways that we can honour the memory of parents after they have died?

The command promises blessing from God. Later in Deuteronomy 5:16 Moses gives a fuller explanation of the commandments and expands on the promise.

Why is there such a clear connection between children honouring parents and a society experiencing God's blessing? Can you identify the practical ways that this either works out positively or fails to work out in our culture today?

The trinity is marked by relationships of love and submission. As people who are made in God's image, love and submission should mark our closest relationships. Why is this so important, and why is it so difficult?

What practical steps could you take to honour your parents? If you have children, are there things you could do to make it easier for them to honour you?

When we are faced with family situations of pain and brokenness we need to trust in God's ability to forgive, heal and restore. Take time to pray for God to be glorified in your family relationships.

QUOTES TO REFLECT ON

"As we contemplate our desire to bring young people into the Church, we need to ponder the well-known dilemma faced by parents: Do we try to force young people to become like us? Or do we freely resource them to become all they can be, trusting that this process will lead them - beyond us - towards God?" (Church of England Report, 'Making sense of Generation Y', 2006)

How might the fifth commandment influence this 'dilemma'?

What role does the whole church family have in building healthy Christ followers of all ages and stages?