

1 Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 6:1

1. Is there a distinction between a Christian Family and a family of Christians?

A Christian family is loving led by a father who follows Jesus' lead in the discipling of his family.

2. Is having a Christian Family worth all the effort? Is it worth fighting up stream?

3. Do you have a clear picture of what a Christian Family is or should be like?

-Dads would you like to be the kind of dad your children joyfully and willingly love, respect and obey?

-Moms would you like to be led by your husband (initiating & participating) in discipling your children?

-Children/young people would it be cool to have parents you willingly & joyfully love, respect, obey?

Eph 6:1-4 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),

3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

2 Marriage was designed by God to--

1. Be a visible picture of how Jesus loves His church & how the church is to love & follow Christ.

2. Make children . . . joyful followers of Jesus.

Marriage is for making children--that is, procreation. Having babies.

Marriage is for making children joyful followers of Jesus -discipleship. Making Jesus followers

Reason: #1: Not all couples can make children (infertility) but can still make children disciples of Jesus.

Reason: #2: Having children in marriage was not fill the earth with people but Jesus worshipers.

-Marriages can fill the earth with Jesus worshipers by procreating & discipling them to follow Jesus.

-Marriages can fill the earth with Jesus worshipers by adopting & discipling children to follow Jesus.

3 Three Truths about Marriage...

1. Having children in marriage is God's will.

God's plan in creation was for a man & a woman to marry & have children--having children is good.

Genesis 1:26-28, "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." The Bible puts a huge value on having and raising and blessing children.

2. Having children in marriage is Not ultimate.

Getting married (1 Cor. 7:6f) & producing children in marriage (Job 24:21) are not absolute callings.

While one of the purposes of marriage was giving birth to children, this purpose is NOT absolute.

In this fallen age, *nature* by itself does not dictate when or whether a couple will beget children.

The ability to bear children does NOT define a normal marriage.

In the beginning, God said, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.' Bearing children is good.

But bearing children is NOT absolute in marriage any more than marriage is absolute for everyone.

3. YET marriage is a great place for making joyful followers of Jesus

Marriage is a great context to make children followers of Jesus.

Marriage is not absolutely for making children...but making children followers of Jesus.

Deuteronomy 6

Mark 10:29-30, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."

Jesus shifts the focus from having children biologically to having children spiritually in Christ.

This might include adoption, foster care, making your home a place for backyard Bible clubs.

It might include hospitality in a neighborhood where your home is every kid's favorite place.

It might include your nursery job or your care for children or the Sunday School class you teach.

Marriage is not absolutely for making children; but making children Jesus followers. Eph. 6:4

4 Four Thoughts on Eph. 6:1-4

1. Fathers Place: Primary responsibility to evangelize and disciple children. Eph. 6:4

Verse 1 says, "Children obey your *parents*." Both. Not only *father* or only *mother*. But *parents*.

But when the focus shifts from the child's duty to the parents, father is mentioned, not the mother.

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, ..."

2. Parents United: Teammates having the same Goal. Eph. 6:1-3

Verse 1: "Children, obey your *parents* (mother and father) in the Lord."

Proverbs 6:20 *"My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck."*

Teammates: Being united is not always possible: 1 spouse is not a believer—find common ground.

God's design is a united front. One common goal & strategy: discipline & instruction of the Lord

Children need one united front coming from mom and dad. Don't confuse the children.

Work through differences: what to teach, how & when to discipline: stand united before them.

Don't let the children manipulate you against each other. Make that a hopeless ploy. God is one.

3. Parents Goal: show God to the children. Eph. 6:4

Children know their parents before they know God. Children get to know God through their parents.

This is a huge – it should cause every parent to be desperate to become more like Christ personally.

Children will experience the kind of authority, justice, love there is in the universe

before they meet the God of authority and justice and love who created and rules the universe.

Children absorb from dad his strength and leadership and protection and justice and love; and

absorb from mother her care and nurture and warmth and intimacy and justice and love.

And all this happens before a child knows anything about God, but it is profoundly all about God.

Ask yourself: Will our child be able to recognize God for who He really is in His authority, love and justice because we have shown our child who God is like in the way we live?

The chief task of parenting is to know God for who he is and then to live in such a way with our children that we help them see and know God.

And direct them to the infallible portrait of God (in Bible & in Jesus) since yours is faulty.

4. Parents' Marriage: fathers are husbands & mothers are wives FIRST. 6:1f follows 5:22f

What you are as a husband and wife is what God wants to show your child: a relationship to Christ!

A husband and a wife are a drama of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and the church.

God wants your child to delight in: **Christ loving the church** as they see their dad love their mother & **how the church is to joyfully obey Christ** as they see their mother respectfully follow their dad.

5 CHILDREN: You're under the authority of your parents, who are under Jesus' authority: OBEY

Issue: Respect & Submit to & Obey Authority

This is one of the first verses we taught our children to memorize.

v1 **Children:** 'to be produced' = anyone who has a parent

Children, when you are Spirit-filled, the Spirit will direct you and empower you to obey:

Obey: 'to hear under', 'be under the hearing of another', to hear with action/accountability

Parents: from the verb that means, 'to cause to be': people who brought you into existence

In the Lord: Relate to your parents as you do to the Lord: honoring obedience!

The way you treat your parents is actually treating Jesus Christ the same way! His representatives!

For this is right: reason: for this is righteous: God-determined: Not because they are perfect...

v2 **5th Commandment:** honor your father & mother—promise: go well with you & live long on land.

Don't disrespect God's: 1 Uniqueness, 2 Identity, 3 Name, 4 Day: rest/rejuvenation, 5 Disciplers

1st Tablet: Responsibility to God: the way you are towards your parents, is how you are towards God.

Honor: esteem, value, accept/rejoice in your parents' God-given role/place in your life, submit to it!

A child who honors/obeys his parents is honoring/obeying God!

Children: honor is obeying! Youth: honor is respectful obeying! Older: honor is respect/care for!

v3 **General encouragement...** as children respect/obey their parents--God blesses/protects

The point is not that every child who respects and obeys his parent will live a long life. Rather...

God delights in obedience & gives blessings to families, churches, peoples where children obey!

Children & Youth:

Because your parents' represent God's authority in your life this is what I want you to do tomorrow.

Get all your friends together tomorrow at school and say to them, "You know, sometimes it's hard to figure out how we are supposed to follow Jesus Christ—how we are supposed to follow after God.

It can get really confusing, so this is what I want you to do. I want you to watch the way I obey my parents and the way I talk to my parents and the way I talk about my parents when they aren't around.

The way you see me be towards my parents that is the way you should be towards Jesus Christ."

6 **FATHERS:** Don't provoke your children but disciple them (help them become Christ followers)

Get equipped by others to lead your wife to evangelize/disciple your children for next generation.

v4 **Do NOT provoke to anger:** Why this command?

Paul could have said: don't discourage, pamper, tempt, abuse, neglect, manipulate... your child...

Why? Children are prone to be or get angry... Seek to not cause anger in your child

1. **Position: Dads=authority:** Anger is a common emotion of sinful heart when it confronts authority

Dad: Christ-like figure=authority Child: Self-willed sinner responds to authority with anger

2. **Poison: Anger is deadly: devours/overshadows all other emotions:** deadens soul, hardens heart

Treat your child in a way you do not cause anger in their heart that doesn't need to be there.

How?

1. **ROOT OUT YOUR OWN ANGER and replace it with tenderhearted joy...**

Don't yell, give unjust/excessive punishment, be hypocrite, use verbal putdowns/vain threats

HOW? Receive/rejoice in God's love and forgiveness of you, a sinner!

2. **GIVE LOVE: Bring them up:** BE IN HIS/HER LIFE! LOVE=TIME, INVOLVEMENT

Bring them up: nourish, (5:29 nourish your body) to bring up, to train to maturity/healthiness!

by... Discipline... nurture: educate/train/equip/correct Teaching of the bible-- 2 Tim. 3:15-17

by... Instruction... admonition, warning, correction

of the Lord... God-centered, Christ-exalting... All of life is related to God and in God!

7 **GOAL:** win your child's heart and direct it to Jesus by serving as 'priest', 'prophet', & 'king'.

Pr. 23:26 says, 'My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.'

Priest: Represent Christ to your children, Pray for your children

Prophet: Speak God's word into your children's lives, Live God's word in your own life

King: Give loving discipline: give instruction & correction:

Set boundaries and appropriately punish when boundaries are crossed...

Fathers you are your daughter's priest, prophet, king until a man commits to serve that for her.

Fathers teach and train your son to serve as a priest, prophet, and king for his future wife & children

8 **STRATEGY:** Balance love & discipline

Bring them up...

Love is an act of the will (decision) accompanied by emotion (not led by emotion or void of emotion) that leads to action of good will for the person loved.

Love consists of: unconditional acceptance, constant affirmation, appropriate affection

Four Principles to Love your child

1. **Give your heart to your child** (unconditional acceptance, affection and appreciation).
AND seek to win your child's heart: it can be won, earlier the better!
2. **Be consistent:** practice what you preach
3. **Be available:** it takes time invested to be able to communicate with your child
4. **Be vulnerable:** admit your mistakes, say you're sorry and ask for forgiveness when you fail

9 in the discipline and instruction of the Lord...

Discipline is an expression of love—I value you enough to teach you how to live as a Christ follower, correct you when you fail and cheer you on to deeply love and obey Jesus in all of life.

Discipline is both instruction and correction: teaching and

Four Principles to Discipline you child

1. **Show how to relate to God: Fear, Trust, Delight, Love, Obey ... by your example**
What and who you are is more important than what you say!
You can't influence or impact your child past where you are in your walk with Christ.
2. **Teach God's Word... Ezra 7:10** study God's word and obey it so we can teach it to others.
Our failure to teach God's word is because we fail to obey it ourselves because we don't care!
Teach: Who God is? What God expects (character/law)? What we need—grace?
3. **Establish clear boundaries of acceptable/godly behavior:** Boundaries of GRACE
1. Obey, 2. Honor/respect, 3. Tell truth, 4. Have a positive Attitude.
Give from the Scripture and your own life the reasons for these four walls of grace.
4. **Consistently correct foolishness:** disobedience, disrespect, lying, bad attitude.
Use Biblical Methods: Communicate love, Appeal to conscience, Correct (right use of 'rod')
Children: Spank your child to correct the foolishness in your child's heart.
If you faithfully and graciously spank your child when he/she is young (win heart),
You will have many options as they grow older BECAUSE you have won his/her heart.
Youth: agree together on appropriate punishment for disobedience, etc.. Get their buy in!

10 1. Spirit-filled Children...Have a great opportunity...

2. Spirit-filled Parents (fathers)... Have a huge impact...

Father (husband): Jesus' love for sinners... Mother (wife): Church's response to His love...

3. Marriage is about discipling children to...

-Be joyful followers of Jesus Christ

-By winning their hearts for/to Christ

-By unconditional love & consistent discipline

-For God's pleasure & your happiness in Him.

All Fathers & Mothers Please stand with your children

DADS, say the following to your children

God has commanded me to serve as His authority in your life _____, not to hurt you but to bless you.

I admit I have failed to always love your mother. I also have failed to love and disciple you.

I am sorry my failure tempts you to be angry with me. I am sorry for failing you. Will you forgive me?

Jesus, I ask you to fill me with Your Spirit, so I may unconditionally love and disciple them by Teaching

Your Word & Correcting them as they fail.

CHILDREN, say the following to your parents

God has commanded me to submit to your authority by respectfully obeying you.

I admit I have failed to always respectfully obey you. I admit that I am tempted to not give you my heart.

I admit my failure dishonors you and Jesus Christ. I am sorry for failing you. Will you forgive me?

Jesus, I ask you to fill me with Your Spirit... So I may daily respectfully obey my parent.

Because I delight in Your love for me through them.

Books: FAMILY DRIVEN FAITH by Voddie Baucham Shepherding Your Child's Heart by Tripp

My first aim is to honor my earthly father in obedience to Ephesians 6:1-2. When children are younger and moving toward adulthood, they should honor their father especially by obeying him. As children move out of childhood into adulthood the way we honor our fathers is not primarily in the category of obedience, but rather by tribute and care. Eph. 6:3 is a general encouragement based on the fact that in the days of Israel when there was humility and respect and obedience to parents God protected the people from their enemies and prospered them. But when they forsook his laws and became arrogant and disrespectful and disobedient he gave them over to their enemies. The point is not that every child who is obedient will live a long life. The point is that God delights in obedience and gives special blessings to families and churches and peoples where that kind of humility and respect and obedience prevails.

My second aim is to inspire fathers to be worthy of this kind of tribute—to help you see the glory of your calling to exhibit the fatherhood of God to your children and lead them to faith and Christian maturity. I pray that Christ will take what I say about my own father and will use it to make you better fathers.

My third aim is to glorify the Fatherhood of God whose Fatherhood is the source and pattern of all human fatherhood. Human fatherhood exists to display the beauty of God’s Fatherhood. Our highest calling as fathers is to be the image of God’s fatherhood to our children. I think this is implied in the words of Ephesians 6:4b: “Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” What does it mean that our discipline and instruction should be “of the Lord”? It means, in part, that in our fathering we take our cues from the Lord Jesus. Jesus, in his human nature and in his earthly ministry directed the disciples again and again to the Father in heaven. And in his life and death he modeled for us how to relate to God as our Father. His longest prayer in John 17 begins, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you’ (v. 1). The discipline and instruction of the Lord takes its cues from the Lord Jesus who lived and died to glorify his Father in heaven. No father here should do less. Our calling as fathers is to exhibit the glory of the Fatherhood of God.

Here is a fragment of the legacy of truth imparted to me by my father. And I hope that you will see before we are done that the word “imparted” is no mere transmission of information, but involves a whole life of demonstration of what he taught. I will mention eleven precious truths imparted to me by my father.

1. There is a great, majestic God in heaven, and we were meant to live for his glory not ours.

Most of these truths that I will mention are rooted in my memory of particular texts that were branded on my mind at home. Few texts were more often on Daddy’s lips in relation to me than **1 Corinthians 10:31**, “*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*” I am sure that in heaven some day the Lord will make plain the unbreakable chain of influences that led from that verse when I was a boy to the mission statement of this church: “We exist to spread a passion for the supremacy of God for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.”

2. When things don’t go the way they should, God always makes them turn for good.

Even more prominent in my growing up was the presence of **Romans 8:28** in our family: “*God works all things together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.*”

I have several vivid memories of this truth. One was in 1974 when I rode with my father in the ambulance from Atlanta to Greenville with my mother’s body in the hearse following behind. They had just been flown in from Israel where Mother had been killed in an accident and Daddy was seriously injured. All the way home, for three and a half hours, he would weep and talk and weep and talk. He was 56. They had been married 36 years. And when he talked it was Romans 8:28. I remember the very words: “God must have a reason for me to live. God must have a reason for me to live.” In other words, God governs our accidents and makes no mistakes. I will never cease to be thankful that I heard and saw the truth of Romans 8:28 in my father’s life, “When things don’t go the way they should, God always makes them turn for good.”

3. God can be trusted.

How many times did I hear the words of **Proverbs 3:5-6**, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.” And **Philippians 4:19**, “My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” I can see us as a family when I was just a child. We were all (Mother, Daddy, my older sister, Beverly) sitting around a card table my parents’ bedroom folding letters and stuffing envelopes which would be sent to pastors asking them to consider having my father come lead their churches in evangelistic meetings. This was Daddy’s life—he was a full time evangelist—and our livelihood. The answers to these letters meant bread on the table and paid bills. Then we prayed over these envelopes and Daddy closed in a spirit of utter confidence: God will answer and meet every need. He can be trusted. He told me more than once of a financial crisis when I was six years old in which he almost lost everything. And he said that God used **Psalm 37:5** to sustain him and bring him through: “Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him and he will act.” And so I saw and I learned: God can be trusted.

4. Life is precarious, and life is precious. Don’t presume that you will have it tomorrow and don’t waste it today.

My memory of my Father’s preaching was that he always began with humor but within seconds he was blood earnest and talking about heaven and hell, and sin and Christ and life and death. One text above all others rings in my ears with terrible seriousness. He squinted when he said it and his mouth pursed tightly the way it does after you taste a lemon: “It is appointed unto men once to die, after that comes judgment” (**Hebrews 9:27**) It made a huge impression on me as a boy. The motto on Daddy’s college wall was, “The wise man prepares for the inevitable” The plaque in our kitchen when I was growing up was: “Only one life ’twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.”

The stories of wasted lives tumbled from his mouth: “During a South Carolina [campaign] a lovely high school senior attended every night but refused to accept Christ. Shortly after the crusade while driving her car over a treacherous railroad crossing, she was killed instantly by a freight train she failed to see coming.” “While in a Pennsylvania campaign, I witnessed a whole town shaken by the sudden deaths of six young men. Driving home from an afternoon football practice, they failed to stop at a major intersection and were struck broadside by a heavy truck. Six were dead within three hours.” “I’ve seen babies die in their mothers’ arms. I’ve seen little boys and girls struck down before their lives had scarcely begun. I’ve witnessed men die in the prime of life and others at the height of success.” (*Menace*, pp. 49-50) He told story of a girl who said she would give her life to God when she was old. A wise old woman sent her a bouquet of dead flowers, and when the girl expressed offense, she said, “Isn’t that the way you are treating God?” And most memorable of all to my young mind: The old man saved in the eleventh hour of his life weeping in Daddy’s arms: “I’ve wasted it. I’ve wasted it.”

5. A merry heart does good like a medicine and Christ is the great heart-Satisfier.

That’s a quote from **Proverbs 17:22**. My father has been the happiest man I have ever known. Here is the kind of things he said in a sermon called “A Good Time and How to Have It.” “Right from the start, let’s get one thing straight; a Christian is not a sour puss. I grant you that some of them look and act that way, but you simply can’t blame God for it.” “Some folks seem to have been born in the objective case, the contrary gender and the bilious mood.” “Mama, that mule must have religion too, he looks just like Grandpa.” (*Good Time*, p. 7). He preached another sermon called “Saved, Safe and Satisfied.” He said, “He is God. When you fully trust Him you have all that God is and all that God has. You cannot be otherwise than satisfied with the perfect fullness of Christ.” (*Good Time*, p. 48). He said worldly Christians are like a cow with her head stuck through fence eating stubby grass on the highway while a beautiful green pasture lies behind her. A merry heart does good like a medicine and Christ is the great heart-Satisfier.

6. A Christian is a great doer not a great don’ter.

We Pipers were fundamentalists without the attitude. We had our lists of things not to do. But that wasn’t the main thing. Here’s what my father preached in a sermon called *The Greatest Menace to Modern Youth*.

“Millions insist upon thinking that Christianity is a negative religion. You don’t do this and you can’t do that. You don’t go here and you can’t go there. To the contrary, the Bible constantly sounds the triumphant and positive note. “Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only.” . . . “Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do with all your might.” God wants us to be doers, not don’ters. A Christian who is only a don’ter is a sour saint who spread gloom wherever he goes. A don’ter is usually a hypocritical Pharisee. Years ago, I heard the late Dr. Bob Jones say. “Do so fast you don’t have time to don’t.” That sums it up. That left an indelible mark on my life. We had strict standards, but I never chaffed under them. They were not the point. Enjoying Christ, doing good and loving people was the point. The rest was just fencing to protect the good field of faith and purity.

7. The Christian life is supernatural.

I have one precious DVD of my father preaching. It is a message on new the new birth. **John 3:7** “*Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’*” Becoming a Christian was not a mere decision. It was a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. And therefore he believed in prayer—crying out to God to do the miracle of the new birth. We prayed together every night as a family, because the great need in life is supernatural, divine power to live with joy—and that is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, not a work of our own. I saw that my father’s work was not a human work. It was divine work. Impossible work. But with God all things are possible.

8. Bible doctrine is important but don’t beat people up with it.

At this point he admitted openly to me with grief that our fundamentalist tradition let him down. There was great truth, but too many of them were not great lovers. I can remember him saying: If they only understood **Ephesians 4:15**, “*Speaking the truth in love.*” So from as early as I can remember he showed me the importance of both right doctrine and the way of love. They must never be separated.

9. Respect your mother.

If you wanted to see Daddy angry, let one of his children sass our mother. He not only knew the command of God to honor our mothers; he also knew the extraordinary debt that every child owes a mother. Time and again he would compare true love not to married love but to mother’s love. He knew the price my mother paid for him to be away so much. Therefore, he would tolerate no insolence or disrespect toward her. I trembled at the fierce gaze in his eyes if I said something sarcastic to my mother.

10. Be who God made you to be and not somebody else.

My father was short, a good bit shorter than I am. But he was content and could joke about it. The one I remember is that he said he was part of a football team as boy, and the name of the team was “Little potatoes but hard to peel.” I think God delights to make short men great preachers. (Remember John Wesley!) For me this contentment with being who God made you to be meant freedom. He never forced me or pressured me to be an evangelist or a pastor or anything else. His counsel was always: seek God and be what he has made you to be. And then what your hand finds to do, do it with all your might for the glory of Christ.

11. People are lost and need to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

My father was an evangelist. His absence from home two thirds of the year (in and out, in and out) meant one main thing. Sin and hell are real and horrible, and Jesus Christ is a great savior. Here’s a direct quote from my Dad: “In my evangelistic career I have had the thrill of seeing people from all walks of life come to Christ. I have seen many professional people saved. I have knelt with Ph.D.’s and led them to Jesus. College professors, bankers, lawyers, doctors. I have seen them all saved. Then I have seen many from the other side of life come to the Lord. I have put my arm around drunkards in city missions and prayed with them. I have sat by the bedside of dying alcoholics and led them to Christ. I have seen the poor, the forsaken, the derelicts, the outcasts all come to the Savior. Yes, God takes them, too. Isn’t it wonderful that anyone who wants to can come to Christ.” (*Grace for the Guilty*, p. 111) Perhaps you never had a father like that, but right now you hear your heavenly father calling, “Come home, come home!”

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-Moms be led by your husband (initiating & participating) in discipling y children?

-Children/young people be cool to have parents willingly/joyfully love, respect, obey?

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AND seek to win your child's heart: it can be won, earlier the better!

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Give from the Scripture and your own life the reasons for these four walls of grace.

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