

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Ephesians 6:1-4.**
- B. There are three great institutions of God in the world; the family, the government, and the church.
- C. The family is the backbone of the other two. Without strong families there will be weak governments and nations, and without strong families there will be weak congregations of the church.
- D. The strength of a nation should never be measured in its firepower and size of defense. Neither should the strength of the church be measured in its building or size of budget.
- E. When the home is strong and operating as X would have it, then all other facets of society will benefit.

I. TO THE FATHERS: YOU HAVE A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

- A. Scripture text: Ephesians 6:4.
- B. The phrase "provoke not unto wrath" means that the father will realize that children have rights and they are of great value. He will treat his children with respect and dignity, so that they will develop a good self-esteem.
- C. Children need to learn they are important and to be able to feel good about themselves. This type of good mental outlook will stay with them their entire lives (the reverse is also true).
- D. To bring up children in the discipline of the Lord means the showing of love. A father who disciplines his children for their good is a father who loves his children. God disciplines those whom He loves (Heb. 12:6-11).
- E. To bring up children in the instruction of the Lord means the father is responsible for and must:
 - 1. Know the word himself.
 - 2. Live the word as an example.
 - 3. Get his children into learning situations.
 - 4. Be a learner himself (he who has ceased to learn is not qualified to teach).

II. TO THE CHILDREN: THE ADMONITION TO OBEY.

- A. Scripture text: Ephesians 6:1.
- B. The phrase "in the Lord" is most interesting. It probably means in this context "as the Lord directs" or "according to the teachings of the Lord." If it means Xian parents, then those children having non-Xian parents would not have to obey them, and this would be wrong.
- C. Look at Paul's use of the term "in the Lord" in Eph. 5:22; 6:1,4,5.
- D. Obedience is a stronger concept than is submission (Eph. 5:22). Obedience carries with it the idea of complete and total surrender to the one in authority. Submission would be to recognize such authority while still having a say in some matters.
- E. Children are told to obey the dictates of their parents which are in keeping with sound doctrine, for that is what the parents are to teach (Eph. 6:4).

III. TO THE CHILDREN: HONOR YOUR PARENTS.

- A. Children are to honor their father due to his special duties (Eph. 6:4).
- B. Children are to honor their mother also. She does a great deal for the family:
 - 1. She loves her husband.
 - 2. She loves her children.
 - 3. She is sensible.
 - 4. She is a worker at home (Ti. 2:4,5).It takes more than just giving birth to be a good mother.

- C. The word honor can mean to give praise and adoration, but it can also mean to give financial support (1 Tim. 5:3,17). Although children are not required to financially support their parents, they are to "pay back" their parents with a life that is blameless and worthy of their upbringing.

IV. TO THE CHILDREN: YOU HAVE A COMMANDMENT WITH A PROMISE.

- A. Scripture text: Ephesians 6:3.
- B. One probable meaning of this verse (along with v2) is that this commandment (to honor the father and mother as found in the Decalogue) is the first one specifically to children and there is a promise of blessings attached to it--you will live long on the earth.
- C. Many good things happen to children when they grow up if they have obeyed the godly things their parents told them to do. They have:
 - 1. Strong homes and families themselves.
 - 2. Good discernment between good and evil.
 - 3. A good knowledge of the importance of X and the church.
 - 4. A knowledge of acceptable behavior.
 - 5. A good idea of an example to follow in raising their kids.
- D. These are all valuable rewards for doing the will of God. Truly a good commandment with some good promises.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Again, when the family unit is strong then the church and the nation will be strong.
- B. Let us do what is in our power to be good parents, good children, and as older adults encourage the parents and children we come in contact with to do things the Lord's way.
- C. One thing that helps families more than anything is for the parents to be Xians.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.