



## Worthy of Respect

**Genesis 18:16-19; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21**

**June 16, 2019**

Scripture views the breakdown of the family, and specifically children's rebellion and disobedience to their parents, as one of the marks of a sinful society (Romans 1:30; 2 Timothy 3:2). If children obey their parents, and if we follow all God's ways, things will well for us collectively as well as individually (Ephesians 6:1-3; Deuteronomy 4:40; 5:33). Much is needed to address the difficulties of family, but one vital component is for fathers to fulfill the role God has given them. Fathers are worthy of respect but also need to be worthy of respect by heeding God's guidance.

Moms certainly have a role in raising children (Proverbs 6:20; 31:1; 1 Timothy 5:14; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15; Titus 2:4-5), but so do fathers (Genesis 18:16-19; Proverbs 6:20; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21). Modern research verifies that the role of the father is vital to healthy development of children.

Fathers need to guard against exasperating (make angry) or embittering their children (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21). Sometimes children will get angry regardless, but it must never be because of fathers placing unrealistic expectations on them, being inconsistent and unpredictable in how we deal with them, or having rules without relationship.

Instead, fathers are to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). The word for discipline

also carries the ideas of punishment, correction, education, and training. The word for instruction also carries the ideas of admonishing and warning. Both of these functions need to be "of the Lord," that is, directed toward Christ and in a Christ-like way (note the emphasis on Christ in this entire section: 5:21; 6:1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). If we provide the discipline and instruction of the Lord for our children, we will be worthy of respect as fathers. Don't expect to find a role model on TV for this kind of father or anything close to it.

Some practical ways of acting on these responsibilities include: 1) having a sincere faith and discipleship personally, 2) loving your children's mother like Christ loves the church, 3) making your children a high priority in your life, especially while they live at home, 4) finding and using resources to help you grow as a father, 5) developing a personal relationship with your children, 6) initiating and maintaining a regular devotional time with your children, 7) making the most of teachable moments whenever they occur, 8) participate in, utilize, and support the activities, classes, and opportunities organized by our youth and children's ministries to supplement and support you in your role, 9) forgetting about the past and starting now to be the best father you can, and 10) relying on God's power and guidance to help you become a good, good father.

All of us need to hear and heed God's instructions to "Honor your father and mother" (Ephesians 6:2), one of the Old Testament statements mostly commonly quoted in the New. To honor them is to respect them, consider them and treat them as valuable—in attitude, word, and deed. This commandment was given long before we had "Father's Day," and clearly applies every day of the year. It is not conditioned upon whether we think our fathers deserve honor. Plus, we do so not only for the sake of our fathers, but for our own sake as well. So Fathers, we honor you today to encourage you and to commit ourselves to honoring you every day. You are worthy of respect.

