

Lesson
8

Duties of Children

When we consider the importance the Word of God gives to obedience, it is not strange that the one commandment to children found in the Bible is, “Children, obey your parents.” One of the most valuable lessons a child can learn is respect for authority. And the lesson begins at home.

Jesus our perfect example, through His obedience to the Heavenly Father, made salvation available to all mankind. The Son of God always did what pleased the Father (John 8:29), and He *first* learned obedience from His earthly parents (Luke 2:51).

A little maid of Israel, who was taken captive to Syria, gave a testimony to the power of God, which resulted in a Syrian captain being healed of leprosy. Undoubtedly, this young girl learned obedience to her parents, and in turn to their God, in her home back in Israel.

In this lesson we will consider reasons children need to learn obedience. We will also recognize some far-reaching effects in the lives of those who learn respect for authority and those who do not.



In this lesson you will study . . .

To Respect Their Parents
To Help Their Parents
To Love, Honor, and Obey God

This lesson will help you . . .

- Describe and give the scriptural basis for the responsibilities of children to their parents.
- Demonstrate from Scripture who is responsible when children fail to obey their parents.
- Explain how the attitude of children toward authority has far-reaching effects outside the home.

TO RESPECT AND OBEY THEIR PARENTS

Objective 1. *Review God's direct command to children and their reward for obedience to it.*

Because God Commands It

The fifth of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20 was to children, and it was the only one with a promise. Jesus repeated it (Matthew 15:4), and the apostle Paul also quoted it in his teaching:

Ephesians 6:1-3. Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do. *Respect your father and mother* is the first commandment that has a promise added; "so that all may go well with you, and you may live a long time in the land.

Children show their respect for their parents by obeying them. Every time that a child speaks disrespectfully to a parent, refuses to do what he is told, ignores his parent when spoken to, or fights back when disciplined, he is breaking one of the Ten Commandments.

In Old Testament times disobedience to parents was considered to be such a serious offense that it could be punished by death. The government, by resorting to such severe punishment, discouraged the spread of a lawless, disobedient spirit that would be a threat to society.

If all children respected and obeyed their parents, very few would ever become lawbreakers and criminals. Wise sons and daughters will choose to obey their parents, and make them proud of them.

Proverbs 10:1. A wise son makes his father proud of him; a foolish one brings his mother grief.

Those who do not respect the authority of their parents are not likely to respect that of anyone else. Until children reach the legal age of adulthood, God's laws and those of the land give parents authority over them. But even when a person is of age and begins to manage his own life and make his own decisions, directly under God's authority rather than that of his parents, he should always respect his parents.



For You To Do

- 1 Memorize Ephesians 6:1-3.
- 2 How do we know that the commandment to children is very important? Use your notebook for your answer.
- 3 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.
 - a People who become criminals are most likely those who, as children, had little respect for authority.
 - b When a person reaches adulthood it is no longer possible for him to break the fifth commandment.
 - c God is greatly displeased with children who do not respect and obey their parents.

Because of Their Love and Care

Objective 2. *Describe the partnership between God and parents in the training of children in the home.*

When God blesses a home with children, He expects the parents to give them loving care. A woman suffers a great deal of discomfort when she brings a child into the world. Many parents go without something they need in order to be able to take care of the needs of their children.

God expects parents to guide and train their children to the best of their ability. So, in cooperating with their parents, children are cooperating with God. The Lord said of Abraham,

Genesis 18:19. I have chosen him in order that he may command his sons and his descendants to obey me and to do what is right and just. If they do, I will do everything for him that I have promised.

What do children owe their parents? How can they ever repay them for the gift of life, their work to provide them with food, clothing, shelter, and teaching? Love, respect, and obedience are the best ways for children to say thank you to their parents for their love and care.

Parents have already passed through many of the experiences their children have yet to face. They sometimes understand a child's problems better than he realizes, and they can often give valuable help and advice. Children need to know that there is someone stronger and wiser in the family than they are.

Some young people may fail to show respect because their parents are poor and uneducated. Perhaps their parents do not dress as fashionably as some, and they may be unable to discuss world problems with great intellectual skills. But it could be that these parents have wanted so much for their children to have a good life that they have kept little for themselves. They have earnestly and without complaint given of their time, money, and strength, and deserve the love and respect of their children. Children who treat their parents unkindly, for whatever reason, not only hurt them but they hurt themselves. "You do yourself a favor when you are kind. If you are cruel, you only hurt yourself" (Proverbs 11:17).

In his book *Making the Home Happy*, R.T. Cross says:

There are two reasons why we should love God: first, because of the position which He holds in the universe; secondly, because of His loving and lovable character.

There are two reasons for honoring our rulers: first, because of the position they hold; secondly, because of their characters, if their characters are good.

There are two reasons for honoring our parents: first, because of the position which they hold as our natural protectors and rulers and providers; and secondly, because of their love for us, whatever is good in them, and whatever good they do us.

Love includes all the responsibilities, which we owe to our parents. We cannot honor our parents without loving them, or love them without honoring them.



For You To Do

4 Read 1 Timothy 3:4. What responsibility of a father is mentioned here?

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5 Who do you think is hurt when children fail to obey their parents?

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.....

Because of Love for Parents

Children who love their parents will want to please them. Sometimes we find it difficult to obey God in some things He asks of us, but we must learn to trust Him to know best. Children must also learn to trust their parents to know what is best for them, because God places parents in this position of authority over their children. Jesus is the perfect example for, although He is the Son of God, He obeyed His earthly parents.

Luke 2:51. So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them.

Read again the excerpt from *Making the Home Happy*, found in the previous section.



For You To Do

- 6 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.
- a It is not always easy to obey God, but if we love Him we want to please Him.
 - b Jesus did not need to obey His earthly parents because He was the Son of God.
 - c Children can honor or respect their parents without loving them.

TO HELP THEIR PARENTS

Objective 3. *Observe how home training can prepare children for their adult roles of responsibility.*

Help in the Home

While parents are expected to provide for their children, children can share in the work of the home. This is one of the most important aspects of a child's training—the opportunity for work tasks of which he is capable. At times a parent would far rather do a task himself than to go through the tedious, and sometimes painful process, of teaching a child to do it. But very often children who have grown up rebelling against authority are those who have had too much free time, and were not taught in the home to take responsibility. A young child requires more play time, but an increasing proportion of his time should be given to work as he grows older and moves into adulthood.



It will be far easier for a person to assume responsibilities as an adult, if he has learned to do so as a member of a family. Young people who have jobs outside the home to earn extra money can also help their parents by sharing some of the expenses. Some young people are able to buy their own clothes and school supplies, helping in this way to relieve the financial burden of their parents.



For You To Do

- 7 Circle the letter in front of the one best statement about children's work in the home.
- a) If parents do not train their children to help in the home, it simply means they have to do more work themselves.
 - b) Children who grow up learning to work as well as play are learning to use free time wisely, and will better know how to assume responsibility in an adult world.
 - c) So as not to show more love for one child than another, parents must allow all of their children to have the same amount of playtime and work time.

Care for Aged Parents

When, because of their age or serious illness, parents are no longer able to care for themselves, children are responsible to see that they receive proper care. Whether they are able to take their parents into their own home, or it is necessary to make other provision for them, they can show love and appreciation for their parents by assuming this responsibility.



Jesus, even in His suffering when He was dying on the cross, remembered His mother. He entrusted her into the care of John, one of His disciples:

John 19:26-27. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there; so he said to his mother, "He is your son. Then he said to the disciple, "She is your mother." From that time the disciple took her to live in his home.



For You To Do

- 8 What did you learn from Jesus' example in the way He treated His mother? Write your answer in your notebook.

TO LOVE, HONOR, AND OBEY GOD

Objective 4. *List the spiritual benefits that come from the godly nurturing in the Christian home.*

Accept Jesus as Savior

Children should learn to love, honor, and obey God at a very early age. They need not wait until they are adults to repent of their sins and accept Jesus as their Savior, as the following verses affirm.

Ecclesiastes 12:1. Remember your Creator while you are still young.

Mark 10:14. Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

When a child is old enough to understand that he has sinned, he is old enough to be saved. If older children show definite evidence of repentance, they should be baptized. The earlier in life a person makes a decision for Christ, the better, for it becomes more and more difficult as a person grows older for him to turn from his past and accept Christ.



For You To Do

9 When is the best time for a person to accept Jesus as his Savior?

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Worship God

Worship means “the expression of one’s love for God.” People express their love for God by telling Him they love Him, by praising Him in song, by thanking Him for His blessings, and by talking with Him in prayer. Going to God’s house, learning together from God’s Word, being sensitive to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to the heart, are all acts of worship. Worship also includes giving one’s money, time, and effort that others may come to know Christ also.



God wants children to have a part in worshipping Him in family worship in the home and in God’s house with their parents and brothers and sisters. Several of the outstanding men of the Bible learned to worship and serve God when they were children. Among them were Moses, Daniel, Samuel, and Timothy. Children were expected to accompany their parents to God’s house.

2 Chronicles 20:13. All the men of Judah, with their wives and children, were standing there at the Temple.

The religious leaders became angry when they heard children in the temple shouting, “Praise to David’s Son!” So they asked Jesus if He had heard what the children were saying. “Indeed I do,” answered Jesus. “Haven’t you ever read this Scripture? ‘You have trained children and babies to offer perfect praise’” (Matthew 21:16).



For You To Do

10 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.

- a The expression of our love for God through worship takes place in God’s house alone.
- b We worship in various ways; such as, in praise, in song, in giving, in studying God’s Word.
- c Worship is simply praising and thanking God—expressing in words—what He has done for us.

Put God First

God expects to have first place in the lives of His children for whom He has given everything. The Bible teaches us:

Matthew 6:33. Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you.

There comes a time in the life of every Christian when to put God first as one must do causes a struggle with other loyalties. Difficulties arise in some homes because a child is a Christian and the parents are not. Yet children are commanded to obey their parents. God has given parents authority over their children, and has charged parents with the responsibility of teaching, disciplining, and loving them.

Whatever opposition may arise when parents are not Christians, their child must manifest a true Christian spirit, continuing to respect and honor his parents. As in other relationships in which a Christian finds his convictions at variance with an authority over him, the answer must be found by earnestly seeking God in prayer. God can resolve problems satisfactorily, when humanly speaking, there is no solution.

Following are two of the many wonderful promises of God to direct a child of His in every circumstance of his life, if he will trust and obey Him.

1 Corinthians 10:13. Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out.

Proverbs 3:5-6. Trust in the Lord with all your heart Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way.

11 What is a problem that confronts every Christian at some time in his life?
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.....

12 What must he do to resolve the problem?
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13 Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13.



Check Your Answers

- 7 b) Children who grow up learning . . .
- 1 After committing Ephesians 6:1-3 to memory, repeat it to another person.
 - 8 Your answer. I would say: If Jesus, when He was dying, felt such love and concern for His mother that she be cared for properly, we are never relieved of this responsibility for our parents.
 - 2 Your answer may be similar to mine. It is a commandment from God; it is referred to at least three times in the Bible; it is the only commandment accompanied by a promise; disobedience to parents was severely punished in Old Testament times.
 - 9 Early in life.
 - 3 Statements **a** and **c** are true.
 - 10 Statement **b** is true.
 - 4 He must manage his family, and train his children to respect and obey him.
 - 11 He finds that his Christian convictions are at variance with someone in authority over him.
 - 5 Your answer. I would say: It grieves or hurts God who loves them; it hurts their parents who love them; and children hurt themselves.
 - 12 Seek God earnestly in prayer for His guidance.
 - 6 Statement **a** is true.
 - 13 Recite the verse you have memorized to another person.