

Colossians 3:20-21

December 3, 2023



MAIN POINT

The gospel has a profound effect on how we live with and treat those closest to us.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Which of the following words best describes your role at home when you were a teenager? Give an example that proves this to be true. Prankster? Agitator? Subservient? Argumentative? Rebellious? Other?

Who was the most well-respected person in your home when you were growing up—your mom, your dad, one of your siblings, or you? Why?

What house rule caused you to be punished most often when you were a teenager? What led you to break that rule often?

When every member of a household chooses to live in relationship with one another in the way God intended, a gospel-centered family emerges. When a home is inhabited by a gospel-centered family, there's less tension and more laughter, less isolation and more interaction, less instability and more consistency, and fewer rules and more freedom.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ COLOSSIANS 3:20-21.

According to verse 20, why should children obey their parents?

Why do you think many children, especially teenagers, are more apt to follow the lead of their peers than the expectations of their parents? Obedience is the simple process of hearing, understanding, and responding.



How can we as parents speak in such a way that we gain a hearing and are clearer in our spoken expectations so that our children understand and are more likely to respond as requested?

What warning is given to fathers in this text? How can we discipline in the home without being authoritarian?

What does this imply about being a father? How can we see all fatherhood through God's eyes?

To exasperate means to provoke or irritate. What kinds of things do fathers do to exasperate their children? Why do fathers do this?

Paul's instructions are for children of all ages. The tense of the verb "obey" in Greek emphasizes habitual, constant obedience. The goal of Christian parenting is distinct from secular parenting in that its goal is to "please the Lord." Paul also challenged fathers to avoid actions and words that drive children to resentment. Fathers must not abuse the authority God has given them in raising their children. Christian fathers must discipline their children in love out of a desire to honor the Lord. The goal is not to get our children to fear us but to point them to Christ and nurture them toward spiritual growth.

How can children of all ages and family situations give their parents the respect God commands?

Why are godly fathers worthy of honor from their children?

Why do you think Paul referred to Timothy and Titus as his true children in the faith? How can we encourage the men we know to be good fathers and godly men?

If children are to honor their parents, then parents have a reciprocal responsibility to meet their needs in ways that will lead them to maturity. True fathers always reflect the glory of Christ in their parenting. Growing up in a Christian home is to be a positive, encouraging experience for both fathers and children, but the clear onus to make this happen is on fathers not children. To overwhelm fatherlessness, we need a generation of Christian men who will take responsibility for their children and their families.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some ways Christian parents can establish in their children the importance of pleasing the Lord?



What steps can a father take when frustrated or angry with a son or daughter so that he doesn't create tension that leads to exasperation?

How can we as a group support one another in our efforts to become biblical spouses and parents?

PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Father, when your expectations become our actions, our households will become what you long for them to be. Please help us be proactive to do what you expect of us so that our homes become gospel-centered and bring glory to You. Amen.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage:

December 10, 2023 --- Colossians 3:22-4:1

COMMENTARY

3:20. "Children" are charged to "obey [their] parents." Obedience is the simple process of hearing, understanding, and responding. Once more, Christ provides the example (see John 6:38; 15:10). God is the one who commanded obedience to parents (Exod. 20:12), so naturally obedience "pleases the Lord."

3:21. Just as the authority of the husband is not to lead to harshness with the wife, the authority of "fathers" is not to lead to the kind of behavior that will "embitter [their] children." "Embitter" means "to provoke or irritate." The Christian father is not to overcorrect or harass his children, "or they will become discouraged," which refers to "a listless, sullen resignation—a broken spirit." To be discouraged as a child means to think things like, "I'll never get it right", or, "All he does is criticize", or, "He'll never love me". John Newton is reported to have said, "I know that my father loved me—but he did not seem to wish me to see it." Christian fathers should be sure their children are as sure of their love as they are of their authority.

