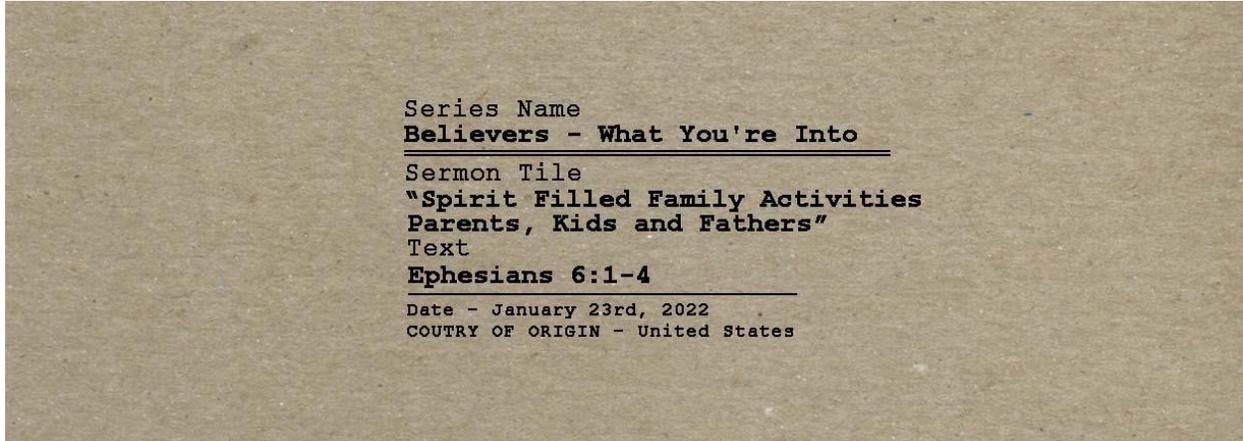


"Spirit Filled Family Activities - Parents, Kids and Fathers"



Ephesians 6:1-4

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), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Sermon PowerPoint is available [HERE](#).

Video of Sermon is available [HERE](#).

Sermon Transcription:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

Ephesians chapter six, turn there with me. As you're turning there, to Ephesians chapter six, I want to bring up these questions. How's it going? How ya doing? Those two questions have the notoriety of being the most used greetings around. They are the ones that I hear most frequently. And quite frankly, they're the ones that I use most frequently when talking with someone. How about you? Do you hear or say this? I remember, in interacting with a British guy, he used this greeting, Any joy? I've used that on occasion, intentionally. I've also use this, intentionally on occasion, So what are you doing with your life? And of course, I'm doing that to notch it up a little bit, so that we can talk about life going on. Interestingly enough, God provides for us a answer that we can have for ourselves and for our families, concerning it going well, and how you are doing, really living.

In Ephesians chapter six, God provides this for us. I want you to know specifically, that this is about being able to answer, So how's it going?, How ya doing?, How ya really living?. Look with me, verse three, statement of purpose, "that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth". That is the intent of what's being spoken about

here, that it goes well and that you live long on the earth. And this morning, we're going to be talking about Spirit filled family activities. And it gets specific here in verses 1-4, parents, kids, and fathers, with a special note to fathers in verse 4. Spirit filled, that's the intent. The whole of this goes like this, beginning in verse one through verse 4, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.' Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." In these four short verses, that are written to us about family activities, God provides the design and the direction for it to go well. How's does Spock say it? Live long and prosper. Yeah. Live long and prosper isn't a Vulcan thing. As a matter of fact, this statement, used here in Ephesians, was intended by God, to say that it goes well, that you prosper, and that you live long on the earth. So, Star Trek author, Gene Roddenberry, may have caused it to catch on, but this was intended by God.

And probably none of us need to be convinced about the importance and the foundational nature of family. Right? The foundation of any people is family, the foundation for any person, individual, is family. A people can't exist, literally, it can't exist without family. God intended us to live in families. Gods solution for loneliness amongst elderly people, is to be involved in family. It's his plan. And how's it going for the family? How's it doing nowadays? What would your response be to that? How's it going? How's ya doing? You know, over the years, having been in ministry for a while now. Yeah, over 45 years. Over the years, I've gotten a few books, by different authors with various backgrounds, on family. Here are a few (sets out a stack of books) "Your Family" by John MacArthur, "What is a Family" by Edith Schaeffer, "Marriage, Family, & Sexuality" by Kerby Anderson, "Building Strong Families" by Dennis Rainey, "Dare to Discipline" by James Dobson from Focus on the Family, "Growing Wise in Family Life" by Chuck Swindoll, "What The Bible Says About Parenting" by John MacArthur, "Growing up God's Way" by John Stormer, How to Keep Your Kids on Your Team" by Charles Stanley, "Prodigals (and Those Who Love Them)" by Ruth Bell Graham, "Missing From Action" by Weldon M. Hardenbrook, "Action Plan for Great Dads" by Gordon MacDonald. And here let me just grab this one from Chuck Swindoll, "I much prefer good news to bad news. I like smiles more than frowns, laughter more than tears, encouragement more than criticism...But since I find a closer kinship to truth than fiction or fantasy, I am forced to look the reality squarely in the eyes. The domestic scene today is somewhere between somber and tragic." He's talking about the disintegrating family. A study in tragedy, he says. John MacArthur, writing about family says, "We may be watching the death of the germ-cell", meaning the foundational cell, "of all civilization, the family. Signs of the family's demise are abundantly clear all around us. Numerous facts confirm the grim prognosis. There's almost no need to cite statistics. For the past forty years or more the signs of the family's collapse have been paraded before us continually: divorce, the sexual revolution, abortion, sterilization, delinquency, infidelity, homosexuality, radical feminism, the 'children's-rights movement...". And just last week we noted this. This is the podcast that's now available at biblicalcounseling.com, you can go online and hear the podcast concerning what this ordinance 31-21 is attempting to do. Which says that no one, who is not state licensed,

can speak to a child adversely about their choice on sexual orientation or gender change. That's the condition for the family, and this is breaking news.

So how's it going? What's happening? I think it's clear for us that this passage, Ephesians 6:1-4, is really needed. Spirit filled family activities going on there that are led by the Spirit of God, and that is all in the family, parents, kids, fathers. We're going to look at this in 3 parts. 1) For the parents, assurance, verse 1. This is so needed today, these four verses communicate God's design, God's direction, God's intent, not just for believers, oh, surely for believers, but God's prescription for everyone, everyone. 2) For the children, assistance, verses 1-3. A lot is written about family, a lot is put out of there in the world, a lot of it is adverse to the family. But in four short verses, God lays out for how it all goes well. And we can live long and prosper. 3) For the fathers, attendance, verse 4, that he attend to this and not be delinquent. One of the books I have here is Missing From Action, Vanishing Manhood. You know, it has frequently been cited from the Memminger Foundation that if the father is absent, the family suffers, even suffers to the point of ruin. And this is just four short verses. Of course, this is in accord with a lot of what the Bible has to say to us. But these four short verses put it in order. Yep, for the ancient Romans. Yep, all the way back to the Jewish civilization. Yes, from the dawn of creation, right up to ordinance 31-21. God has a design that it goes well and it prospers.

Let's talk first of all about parents assurance, verse 1. This is needed. This is needed in our time. It's interesting that we need to do this, but we do because of the impact on parental thinking, from what gets communicated popularly in the culture. We need to underscore this for parents so they are not undermined in this. You are to be obeyed by your children. You are to be obeyed by your children. This is in the Lord. And it's right. That is succinctly what God says in this verse, you are to be obeyed in the Lord, this is right. It may not appear that way in the world, but it's still the case, it's God's exact wording. So what this means is, you will not damage fragile psyches and egos, you will not damage them, by crossing them. And in having them submit to your direction, as you give it, they will not be damaged, psychologically. What it means is, you are not warping your child for life, when you do not allow them to do what they want, when they want it, as they want to do it. When you do not allow them to live according to their individual feelings of self expression, they are not being warped. What this means is that the answer to the continuously expressed... Why? Why? Why?...the answer is, because I say so. And that is sufficient. It's enough, because I say so. That's why. Now as time goes on and they grow, we need to adjust to their growing maturity and intellect and that's talked about here in this passage, but because I say so is sufficient, you are to be obeyed. We had earthly fathers, Hebrews 12 tells us, who disciplined us at seem best to them. That's how God understands it. That's how he understands it. This seems best. And I say so. And that's enough. As they grow, we adjust, the passage talks to us about that. We do this in the Lord, meaning this. It is in this realm that it happens. It's in the Lord. It's in the realm of the Lord that this takes place. Children obey your parents in the Lord. Does that mean a child who doesn't have a believing parent can disobey them? Children obey your parents in the Lord. Absolutely not. Because it's not talking about that. It's putting it as being in the realm of the Lord. A child or a parent who is a believer puts this in the realm of the Lord. And a child who's a believer is still to obey an unbelieving parent. And

the parent who's a believer, who has an unbelieving child, is still to have that child obey, because we are in the realm of the Lord. And succinctly, he says, this is right. This is equitable. This is just. This is fitting. This is correct. This is right. This is right. He says, it's right. It's upright and forward as God himself is because God is saying it.

It's right and to demonstrate this, he begins to quote from the Old Testament here. I want to have highlight some illustrations from the Old Testament where this was not engaged in by some rather prominent people who were in the realm of the Lord. And God has a consequence that he talks about. First of all, King David. It is pointed out, concerning King David, concerning his children. His first three children, Amnon, Chilian Absalom and Adonijah. David never crossed his child, he never crossed him, meaning he never displeased him. He never brought correction to him, "Why have you done thus and so?", 1 Kings 1:6. And the results of that for Absalom and Adonijah were tragic. They were tragic, not only for them, but for the people. Be assured, as God demonstrates from people's lives, that this is in the realm of the Lord, and this is right. This is right. And contrary to the idea that we are warping them or damaging fragile egos by quenching this self expression, God says otherwise. And that it's in the realm of the Lord. This is right. This is equitable. This is fitting. This is correct. Even if a law gets passed, that you cannot speak to your child relative to their sexual orientation, or their views on gender. We can understand that if we do like David and don't do this, that's not right. It won't be right. Eli, have you ever heard of the priest named Eli? He had two sons named Hophni and Phinehas. And in 1 Samuel 2:29, you can read the whole thing. Hophni and Phinehas were not disciplined, they were not crossed, they were not corrected by Eli. And the impact, God says it like this, "you are honoring your sons above me". That's what God says, You are honoring them, you are putting a value on them more than me. And God shows the consequence. And by the way, what the consequence was for Eli is that both of his sons died on the same day, in disgrace, because he did not do this. It's right. In the Lord. It's directed, contrary to a culture and a time.

The wisdom of Proverbs confirms this. Now we're going to talk about the idea of maturity. And we're going to talk about the idea of adjusting as they grow. We're going to because the passage brings it up. But to confirm the reality of this for your assurance. By the way, Proverbs 1:3 was written so that you will know it goes well, it says it this way, "to have instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, in justice, and equity". Equity, that's why Proverbs was written, so that you will have instruction in wise dealing, in what's right, what's just, what's equitable. And then Solomon immediately says, Proverbs 1:8, "Listen, my son, to the instruction of your father, forsake not the law of your mother". Have you ever noticed that mom's kind of give the rules around the house? You ever notice that? It's called the law of your mother. And it's approved by God here, it's approved, that this needs to be happening. The father needs to give instruction to them. And the mother has these laws: this time is bedtime, this is what you cannot do, this is what you will do with your time. And these rules have assurance. This is wise dealing. It's just, it's right, it's equitable. Proverbs 29:15, "a child left to himself" does what? He "brings shame". It brings shame. If they are being warped by having their own internal creativity stemmed by being corrected, that's being left to themselves. And they bring shame. It brings shame. It brings shame to them and to mom and dad, if it's and

he who loves his son disciplines him diligently. Meaning he has a very important attitude towards doing this and doing it well. It's diligent about it. As a matter of fact, he says, If you spare this rod of correction, you hate your son. But he who loves him, disciplines him diligently, diligently. Now, I know having been exposed that this is viewed as hard on the kid, you're depriving them. I want you to know this. God says, in the Lord. It's right. Be assured. It's right. It's dealing wisely. It's righteous. It's just it's equitable. That you say, because I say so. Now, as they grow, we adjust. But that's sufficient.

Now for the children, assistance, verses 1-3. God tells this for the child's good. He says this, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord". This obedience is an action. This is, they start to do what you say or they stop doing what you say. And I want you to know that you must win here and you must win decisively. What this means is that it will be challenged, you can anticipate it being challenged. And as it is challenged, the idea needs to be communicated to them that you win, you're in charge of this. They get the picture. You win. It is obedience in action. And this is an imperative to the child. Children, obey your parents in the Lord. As a matter of fact, this is the only command in all of scripture that God gives specifically to a child, to obey. It's the only one. And it's an imperative. And this action is to be accompanied by attitude. It's attitude here. The attitude is that they hold this in high regard. This, too, is imperative, that they hold this in high regard. In other words, fathers and mothers, you make it completely unacceptable that they dishonor you. This is unacceptable. This will not be accepted. Now, doesn't have to be mean. But it needs to be decisive. This will not be accepted. For the child, this holds promise. He says in verse 2, Children, "Honor your father and mother". Specifically he says, father and mother, this is the parents, the two of them. Honor your father and your mother. The father underscores that the mother will not be dishonored and disregarded. The mother builds them up, so that they will see the father in a respectable position. They, the children are directed, because this has promise he says.

Honor your father and mother is an Old Testament quote, It is quoted from the very first giving of the law. It was recorded initially in Exodus chapter 20, when God brought his people up on Mount Sinai, and he thundered, and he earthquaked, and he trumpeted and he did everything he could to create a scene where this strikes the heart of his people. God talks first of all, in this law giving, about four things relative to himself. That's called the first part of the Decalogue. It is the first table, it is the giving of this, relative to God. And then at the top of the second table, the first statement is about your parents. And the direction is, you will honor them. You will hold them in high esteem and high regard and having great value. And then he gives promise, this is the divine assurance of what comes from this, that it goes well, and that you live long in the land. Now, Moses, in Deuteronomy 5:16, repeats this. And he puts on the emphasis, the promise. Because Moses in Deuteronomy is handing it off to them to go into the land. And the promises is, as you obey your parents, it goes well, and you live long in the land. When Paul talks to us, he pens that out to all generations on the earth. Verse three, "that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth". Live long, prosper, goes well, refers to that you fare well, you prosper. And you live long, live long and prosper. It

is so that the child is assisted here. That's the aim of it. That's the purpose. That it a statement of purpose that it may go well, and you live long on the earth.

Final point, interesting, God then directs to fathers in particular, to the fathers. Fathers are important you know. And this thing of honoring, it needs to come from the heart. Children need to be trained that they can't dishonor, they can't disrespect, disregard their parents, in facial expressions and eye movements, and things that are said in reactions. This needs to be trained, that this can't be allowed, this is not acceptable. It needs to be trained by the father underscoring that there is no disregard for mom, you will not disregard her. And the mother building up in their eyes, the respectability, place in position, but it is a matter of the heart. And you know that this was so important amongst God's people, Old Testament Israel, I want you to hear this. God says concerning this grave importance, Moses gave the command, "He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death", Exodus 21:15. "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death", Exodus 21:17. God is saying, this is of grave significance because of the impact and the place that this honor has. God said those kinds of things so that the attitudes would not become predominant. And the idea of honor isn't just for kids during their immaturity. It is for every person throughout their whole life, that they honor their parents, give them high regard, the value. There comes at time as they mature, that the parent must relinquish that position of expecting it and let them leave and cleave, adhere, to their spouse. They relinquish that, but the honor continues. Jesus, in Mark seven, was talking to some people who had come up with an ingenious way for kids, after they had left the house, to be able to say Corban. You know what that is? That is a thing where you have something that may help your parents. But in order to get out from under the obligation of having to highly regard and value your parents by giving it to them, all you have to do is say, It's dedicated to the Lord so I can't give it to you. It is Corban. So therefore you are relieved. And Jesus says, quoting this honor your father and your mother, you by your traditions and your teaching have disregarded the Word of God. I know. We're dealing with a matter where there's lots of teachings about damaging a fragile psyche and ego and warping a child for life. But to honor their parents, for their life, caused by a father not allowing the dishonor, talking back, disrespect, to the mother and the mother building up within them to hold the father in high regard, those things are causing God to be honored and not dishonouring God because of our tradition, our teachings. In Mark 7:9-13, Jesus says this very clearly. This is a lifetime thing. It's a lifetime thing. It's for us who are parents and for us who still have parents, a lifetime thing.

Special attention to the father now here in verse 4. Be alert, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger", be alert. Here we're gonna go to the adjustment that comes along with their maturity and their age and their increased understanding and sensibility, as we reinforced this in their heart and their life. Be alert fathers not to provoke. Now this applies to mothers too. But it seems to be as he directs this here, the issue for fathers, don't provoke them to anger. What that word provoke means, it's two words, it's to come alongside with anger. There's another greek word that's similarly composed. It's parakletos, it's to come alongside to infuse strength, that's called encourage, parakletos. Parraklet is the Holy Spirit and parakletos is this idea of coming alongside, encouraging and infusing strength into a person. It's what David and

Jonathan were doing, when Jonathan came alongside David and he encouraged his hand in God, he infused strength. And in verse 4, here it is to come alongside and infuse an attitude of anger, that it fans the kid into anger. Fathers don't do this.

Now there are going to be times, and it's going to be times because we're sinful, that it's you fathers who mess up, it surely was for me with every one of my kids. Sometimes it was me messing up. The idea is the father is alert to this, being careful that he is not consistently doing that. What kind of things does that? You know, very interestingly, there are lots of stuff written about it. Some of these things are: saying one thing and doing another, inconsistency with discipline, disproportional discipline, "Man I said this and I got my mouth smacked and I went like that and nothing happened", disproportional punishment in consistently, showing favoritism, not keeping promises, making light of their problems, over protection, over disciplining, excessive permissiveness, unrealistic goals, discouragement, neglect, being over indulgent with the kid. That's what we saw with David, what we saw with Eli that can provoke, infuse anger. There were times that my wife had to tell me, Do you know you're doing this? Do you know this kid is this way, and you do it because you don't see any physical response. And when they go away from you, they cry and you are overdoing it. And I needed her to tell me that, every one of us will do things. But it doesn't mean we don't cross them, we have to cross them, we have two cross them. David got in trouble because he never crossed them. Eli didn't discipline them. And it led to tragedy.

Instead fathers, intentionally do this, verse 4b, "but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." The idea is from the same word in 5:29, that you nourish, which means this, you bring up out of them, getting to their heart, you bring up out of them, a way that they can go in life, it's in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord, bring them up, bringing up out of them, nurture, structured control in their life. When they're little nurture is real big. The structured control of their life, when they get up, when they have their meals, when they go to bed, how much rest they need, what time they need to be awake, all of that is very large. As they get older, this becomes much smaller and smaller, the structured control, until they get to the age where they're about ready to leave the home and you don't have much structured control any more. You have to intentionally relinquish this from them. You do, because soon they're going to leave and they need to leave, and they're going to cleave and they need to cleave and they need to leave and cleave without your structured control, it's given up. But this too, in the admonishment, which means the putting it into their minds, it is that you are putting it into their minds. Your kids get older, they come to seek out you putting it into their minds. Just before they leave home, you having adjusted to their development and maturity, are only now able to put it into their minds. No longer any bed time, no longer any get up time, no longer any study time, you can still put it into their minds, but you don't structure it any more. Bring them up so it comes out from within them, that you draw it up. This idea of bringing it up is like this, if you have a bouquet of flowers here and you go there and you say Oh, well look at this rose and you reach in and you bring it up out. That's what you're doing here. That's the way this word is used. You bring it up out of them, in structured control and putting it into their minds, in the discipline, structured control and admonition of the Lord.

And here's the thing. You go with them in this trek through life. You go with them. Just this week, I was talking with my son. You know, he's a lot bigger than me. You ever notice that? He's a lot stronger than me too, we have done things that he is definitely stronger. I'm still faster, I think. But nevertheless, that's a good thing. He's a lot bigger than me. But he said that he was out doing something and while he was doing this, he said he heard my voice saying to him....And that's how you go with them. Go with them as you go to their heart. Outward obedience without the honor is not commendable, it's condemnable because it's hypocrisy. It's needed to reach the heart and that this line doesn't get crossed. You will not disregard your mother, you will not. This is unacceptable. We need, we need, we need to go with them through this. We need to be in prayer. We need to hold our families up, we need to show honor. We need to demonstrate this to our parents, to our kids. We need to, we need to because He is God and we are His people. Amen. Amen.

Father in heaven. Thank you, that in four short verses, with the other supplements in Scripture, you've showed us how it can go well. You are God. In Jesus name. Amen.