

Parents and Children “*in the Lord,*” Eph.6:1-4

The context for our text can be traced back generally to the Christian’s “*walk in love*” and *careful, wise, and circumspect* “*walk*” of 5:1ff,15-17; and specifically to being “*filled with the Spirit*” (and thus *walking by* the Spirit) of v.18, which produces the notable effects of:

- *Speaking/singing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” with/from the heart to one another and the Lord, v.19;*
- Perpetual “*giving thanks*” for *all things “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God our Father,” v.20;* and,
- Being “**subject to one another in the fear of Christ,**” v.21.

Which thus leads to an extended treatment of **subjection**:

- **In marriage, vv.22-32;** of *wives to husbands, vv.22-24* as per the example of the *church to Christ;* of the *husband’s love (of self) to his wife* as per the example of Christ, *vv.25-33;*
- **Of children to parents, 6:1-3;** and,
- **Of slaves (or employees) to masters (or employers), 6:5-9.**

But let us limit our attention focus on **Parents** and **Children** and their *singular duties* to one another “*in the Lord*” from **6:1-4** for a few moments....

Firstly, **Parents** generally and **fathers** specifically are given the **singular duty of bringing up their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” v.4.**

There are a few implications from this that demand some notice and attention:

1. It is the **responsibility of the father/parents to bring up their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”** rather than the **Local Congregation generally or its Elders, Bible Class Teachers, Preacher(s), or Members specifically.**

While *local churches* should be *interested in* and *helpful with* “*bringing up (our) children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,*” it is NOT their job or primary responsibility. While all Elders, Bible Class Teachers, Preachers, and Church Members (including ours here) are concerned with and should do what they can to **assist** parents in the limited ways, means, and time they have with/for our children, **none of these are specifically mentioned or charged with the responsibility of “bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Parents are.** Such was the case even under the Old Law, cf. Deut.6:4-10,20-25.

Therefore, the *spiritual growth* and *maturity* of our children is not the job or responsibility of the local congregation, its officers, or its members. This duty is **singularly given to parents.** Assuredly, there is nothing wrong with and parents certainly may avail themselves of whatever assistance the local church and its officers and members may provide in these regards, but where is the Book, Chapter, and Verse that mentions the local church and its officers and members in connection with “*bringing up children in the discipline and instruction of the*

Lord” even as a shared duty/obligation with the parents? If find none. What I do find is passages such our text.

2. It is the **responsibility of the father/parents to bring up their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” rather than the Local School System, Christian Secular Education Organizations** (public or private), **Christian/Bible Camps, and Christian Bible Colleges**. Much like the local church and its officers and members, parents are certainly free to engage and utilize any or all of these to **assist** in whatever ways they deem appropriate and helpful in *bringing up (their) children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*, but we would do well to note or remember that none of the entities or organizations are even mentioned in the NT, let alone provided with the prerogative of *bringing up our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*. **Parents are.**

Secondly, **children** are specifically given a singular duty in our text of **honoring** and **obeying your/their parents “in the Lord.”** Again, a couple points demand some notice and attention:

1. The **subjection**, for this section is still under that heading from 5:21ff, is to be, as all other areas of subjection to other humans is, **“in the Lord.”** The phrase means and implies that *unless* and *until* requirements are placed upon the one *subjecting themselves* to which obedience would require disobedience to God (cf. Acts 5:29), it is to be other complete, cp. Eph.5:24.
2. Furthermore, this **subjection** is said to **“right”** (v.1), and has good and beneficial profit to the child(ren) thus subjecting themselves, v.3. Proper, biblical subjection:
 - a. *Voluntary* rather than *forced/compelled*, for otherwise such becomes *slavery* (and *tyranny*) rather than subjection; additionally, one does not have to “agree” to be in subjection; in fact, unless there is *disagreement*, it’s not really subjection- we’re just doing what “we” think is best and they (the one/ones to whom “subjection” is rendered) just happened to agree;
 - b. Is to be rendered with *honor*, rather than begrudgingly, reluctantly, or partially, cf. Eph.5:24, provided that the “subjection” required is **“in the Lord”** as defined and discussed previously.

So, what have we learned? Simply that:

- ✓ **Parents have the duty/responsibility/privilege of bringing up THEIR children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”**
- ✓ **Children have the duty/responsibility/privilege of subjecting themselves to their parents in right and honorable ways “in the Lord.”**
- ✓ **That these duties/responsibilities/privileges can be assisted by other entities/organizations, but we cannot and should not expect them assume them.**