

Living in a Healthy Household
Study 13 - Ephesians - Living in Christ and the World
Ephesians 6:1-9

Message Mate

- In the Roman Empire, fathers held absolute legal authority over their children, including the power of life, death, and slavery. Paul transformed this dynamic by addressing children directly as valuable individuals and elevating mothers to equal status in parental authority. While children are commanded to obey their parents as a service to God, this obedience is bounded by God's moral law and naturally expires when they reach adulthood.
- The biblical command to honour parents serves as a foundational bridge for all human relationships by instructing individuals to treat their parents' position with weight, value, and lasting respect. For adult children, this honour translates into practical care, respectful dialogue, and the protection of their parents' legacy while maintaining healthy household boundaries. When dealing with toxic or abusive parents, honouring them means prioritising spiritual safety by separating forgiveness from automatic trust and establishing firm, protective boundaries.
- Parents are advised to guide children through loving instruction rather than provoking anger through inconsistency, perfectionism, or harsh treatment. In complex families, such as blended or foster families, building trust through patience is essential for nurturing. Effective biblical discipline focuses on future oriented, restorative training rather than punishment driven by anger.
- Paul addresses the ancient dynamic of slaves and masters by giving socially explosive instructions that reset the structure under Christ, commanding slaves to work with sincerity and masters to treat them with respect. These principles apply to the modern workplace, urging employees to view daily labour as an offering to Jesus, while holding leaders accountable for treating staff with humility and fairness.
- God's blueprint for relationships relies on a delicate balance, and when one side demands too much, the community suffers from pain and trauma. Human willpower alone cannot fix these deep-seated relational imbalances or heal past emotional wounds. True restoration requires the Holy Spirit to renew our minds, allowing Jesus to align our actions so we can live in perfect harmony.

Some Questions to Consider

1. How do you usually react when you wake up and realise your muscles are sore and your body is out of alignment? What is your go to treatment for a sore muscle?
2. Paul explains that obedience to parents or human authority must be 'in the Lord.'

What are some practical challenges believers face today when trying to balance honouring human authority while keeping God as their ultimate priority?

3. The Hebrew word for honour (*kabad*) means to give 'weight' or 'importance' to someone. How does the way we give weight to our parents' wisdom and sacrifices change as we move from young children into independent adulthood?
4. The Greek word for instruction (*nouthesia*) mean 'to place in mind' or gently guide a child's thinking. How can we shift our parenting interactions from reactive punishment (focusing on the past mistake) to proactive biblical discipline (focusing on future maturity)?
5. Paul warns parents not to exasperate or provoke their children to anger through behaviours like hypocrisy, perfectionism, or inconsistency. Which of these traps is easiest for a parent to slip into when they are tired or stressed, and how can we guard against it?
6. Paul tells slaves that their daily work is ultimately an offering to Jesus. How does shifting your mindset from 'working for human approval or a paycheck' to 'working directly for Christ' change how you approach your current job, boss, or tasks?
7. We all carry unique wounds or 'scar tissue' from childhood or workplace trauma. What does it look like practically to step into the 'clinic' of the Holy Spirit and allow Jesus to heal those past injuries, so they don't throw your current relationships out of alignment?
8. What is one piece of good advice about relationships you learned growing up in your home?

Pray

Use Romans 12:2 as a guide to pray for each other. Ask God to break old, toxic family or workplace patterns and heal relational 'scar tissue'.