

Review: Our salvation includes forgiveness as well as a new life in Christ in which we can and should pursue righteousness, even in regard to how we function in our social relationships. The three primary social relationships of NT times are found today as well, although we can apply principles of the master-slave relationship to that of employer and employee. It is important to consider these relationships in pairs to remember that they affect one another but also not to push blame off one to the other.

Because God created marriage and gave children to that union, we can expect a spiritual dimension to the parent-child relationship. This relationship is so important, it is the standard by which to measure commitment to Jesus (Mt 10:37). Its disruption marks the decay in society which will increase towards the end (Romans 1:28-32; 2 Timothy 3:1-2).

The relationship of parents and children

Colossians 3:20-21; Ephesians 6:1-4; cf. 1 Timothy 5:4; Deuteronomy 6:6-9

I. *The responsibility of children*

1. The primary responsibility of children who are at home and dependent upon their parents is to obey in everything. Their eventual marriage will clearly change their focus of responsibility. The obedience they learn at home will often affect how they view obedience to God.
2. The primary responsibility of all children, regardless of age, is to honor their parents. This affects how a child obeys as well as how adult children relate to their parents.
 - a. The attitude is expressed by words and actions (non-verbal). Cf. Proverbs 30:17.
 - b. Respect can be shown in many ways such as how children address parents, by not interrupting, by listening attentively, by table manners.
3. The reasons for compliance:
 - a. It pleases the Lord (Col 3:20).
 - b. It is right (Eph 6:1).
 - c. It is to the child's own benefit since God promises that it will go well with such children (Eph 6:3).

II. *The responsibility of parents*

1. Ultimately responsibility rests in the hands of the fathers, since that is the specific term which Paul uses. Tasks can be delegated but responsibility rests upon the father.
2. In child-raising the primary responsibility is to bring up the children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4), the sense of which is explained in part in Deuteronomy 6. It is important that the Word of God affects our lives, how we train and what we communicate.
3. Paul's cautionary warning in Colossians 3:21 and Ephesians 6:4 is not to embitter or exasperate your children. Some guidelines include the following:
 - a. Avoid favoritism.
 - b. Do not demand more than is appropriate for the age or ability of a child.
 - c. Be consistent in what you say and do.
 - d. Do not wrongly blame a child. Cf. Proverbs 18:13, 17.
 - e. Be appropriate in your responses.

In all relationships our love for God is primary, followed closely by our love for others. We pursue God's righteousness and His kingdom and think of others more highly than ourselves. "... whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col 3:17 NIV)