

Gospel Obedience

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 11, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

~Ephesians 6:1 (ESV)

1) Why Should Children Be Added To Your Family?

- A) A “family” is established when a man and woman ‘leave and cleave,’ transitioning from singlehood (marked by parental provision/protection) to life with one another (marked by provision/protection in marriage). Where two independent “fleshes” (individuals, or better, two different families) once existed, a re-created “one flesh” family is established (Matthew 19:3-6, also Genesis 2:23-25).
- B) We often mistakenly believe children authenticate a move from ‘married’ to becoming ‘family.’ But in reality, a family is established and recognized by a wedding. A wedding properly recognizes, through ceremony and promises (covenants), the establishment of a family which properly reflects God’s glory (Ephesians 5:31-32).
- C) Every husband and wife (family) must grapple with expanding to include children. The pre-fall mandate to “be fruitful and multiply” in order to “subdue and have dominion” over all living things on the earth (Genesis 2:28-30, note not other humans) has certainly been accomplished. In fact, in our current cultural and global context, choosing to expand with children must be prudently explored for motive and purpose.
- D) Christian couples who can (!) should carefully discuss the pro’s & con’s of adding children to their family. Prayer, conversation with trusted mentors (by mutual agreement), and active exploration of Scripture are musts. Too many Christian couples have children for poorly explored, selfish, and/or transient reasons.
- E) In a global culture of war, crippling debt, hopelessness, anti-Christian politics, and intense poverty, every couple must answer the potential-parent question – “why us?” At a time when Christian adoption is urgently needed, every couple must answer the question, “why not us?” If you are already a family, why add more?

2) The Christian Household With Children

- A) Perhaps you have already answered these probing questions. Your household might already have children, or you have “a bun in the oven” and will be expanding your family very soon. In the same manner that a husband and wife reflect God’s creative glory (Ephesians 5:22-33) through their marriage as an example of the Gospel of Christ, the way children and parents treat one another likewise reflects the Gospel (6:1-4).
- B) While the commands to “children” (6:1) could include everyone (even adult children have responsibility to honor parents, cf. Mark 7:6-13), the focus is on children “being brought up” by parents, those still living as dependent children, probably in a home/apartment/dorm provided by a parent (cf. 6:4).
- C) Husbands and wives who reflect the Gospel fulfill God’s redemptive purposes in the world – especially showing off Christ’s love for His Church. Since children are produced from these same Gospel-centered marriages, children who obey and honor their parents (6:1-2) also reveal the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. The very best way children can promote the Gospel is to obey and honor their parents!
- D) Children (any age) who do not honor their parents are not interested in true Gospel living! If someone says they live for the Gospel while in rebellion (secretly, subtly, or openly) to a parent, they are living in rebellion to God. These children lack submission to God’s character (6:2-3; Exodus 20:3-17) and are Gospel enemies.
- E) Fathers, as “heads of households” (cf. 6:23), and are primarily responsible for “discipline and instruction” of their children (6:4). But, fathers are commanded to “not provoke” (exasperate, push to the limits) their children. Providing instruction and discipline “of the Lord” means that a father intentionally provides and protects, reflecting God in the home for his children. A father is prophet, priest, and king for his family!

