

**God's Blueprint for the Family**

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

*Memory Verse*

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’”  
(Ephesians 6:1–3)

<b>Knowledge of God's Will [God's Word]</b>	<b>Knowledge of God [God's Divine Nature]</b>	<b>Good Works [Behavior]</b>
The Bible contains blueprints for a successful Christian family, including each individual's roles and responsibilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. God is love.</li><li>2. God is a God of order.</li><li>3. God honors those who honor Him.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sincerely honor our parents.</li><li>2. Obey our parents from our hearts by learning to love them and fear God.</li></ol>

*Overview*

**Events and Spiritual Teachings**

- A. Family Roles According to the Bible
- B. Families in the Bible: Failures and Successes
- C. A Christian Household

**Life Application**

1. The Importance of Honoring Our Parents
2. The Foundation of Obedience

**Memory Verse**

**Conclusion:** We each play different roles in our family, and we may find it difficult to follow them according to God's will. But if we do choose to follow God's blueprint for our family lives, He will bless, protect, and care for us!

## **Introduction**

- What is a blueprint, and what is it used for?
- Who uses blueprints?
- What would their jobs be like without any blueprints?

Many people say that if the job of a parent or a child came with a manual or blueprint, life would be a lot easier. Everyone would know what they were supposed to do at any given moment, and life would be less chaotic. For most, this blueprint is simply a wish. For us, however, this blueprint exists. God has given us the Bible to serve as a blueprint for our lives as children, parents, and Christians!

### **A. Family Roles According to the Bible**

We each play many different roles in our lives. A father is also a son to their parents, a mother is also a wife, and you are not only a child to your parents, as you might also have the role of a sibling. Just as the Bible guides us on the structure of a family, God also teaches us how should act within each of our appointed roles. Paul summarized the Christian home in a few verses:

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

*Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*

*Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.*

*Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

(Col 3:18–21)

Let's go over each of these roles in a little bit more detail and see what else the Bible says about how each member within a family should act.

#### **1. Husband and Wife (Eph 5:22–28)**

Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies, just as Jesus Christ gave Himself up for the church. This means that a husband should love his wife unconditionally, as the husband fulfills God's role as husband in the family. Since God is the head of the household, wives also should submit to their husbands in the same way they submit to God with love.

#### **2. Father and Mother (Eph 6:4; 1 Tim 5:14; Tit 2:4–5)**

God commands fathers to bring their children up "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). He also teaches fathers not to provoke their children, as this will discourage them. Mothers are taught to guide the house so that their children will grow up learning the proper order of authority over them. By teaching them submission with love, their children can learn how to submit to God.

#### **3. Parent and Child (Deut 6:4–9; Ex 20:12; Eph 6:1–4)**

Parents as a unit have the primary responsibility and God-given authority to teach their children about God and His commands. Together, they should raise their children in the discipline of the Lord so that they will know Christ. They are to set an example by having a God-centered home, teaching good manners, demonstrating the daily life of a Christian, and bringing their children to church to keep the Sabbath and serve the Lord.

Children, for their part, are to honor and obey their parents in the Lord. This is the first command of God that comes with a promise attached! Children should learn and understand

that their parents do everything out of love, even when their parents discipline them.

#### **4. Siblings (1 Tim 5:1–2; Ps 133:1)**

Having siblings can be a great blessing of childhood but being a sibling can also be a challenging role. Siblings are there to look after and care for one another, and they should grow up learning how to get along with each other. Caring sibling relationships take time to build, but if the family is willing to put effort into teaching God’s ways, the relationship can, over time, become one of the closest bonds in the siblings’ lives.

These roles all seem rather restrictive on paper! What is the benefit of following these instructions? Let’s read Deuteronomy 6:3. “Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’” When we choose to obey God, we will be greatly blessed by Him, and we can remain confident of His protection, love, and promise of salvation.

### **B. Families in the Bible: Failures and Successes**

Let’s now look at a few examples of families in the Bible. For each example, write down the following:

- What were the names of the people in each family?
- Did they follow God’s blueprint for a Christian family?
- What did they do to follow or disobey God?

*(Teachers: Split your class into groups to research each family, then have them share their findings for the rest of the class to write down. The paragraphs below are supplementary teachings that you can give them in addition to their findings.)*

#### **1. Abraham and Isaac (Gen 18:19; 24:1–8; 26:1–5, 15–22)**

Abraham obeyed God’s will and focused on the religious education of his children. He taught his son to respect and submit to God, and sought a wife for Isaac from their homeland rather than from the Gentiles they lived amongst. Isaac learned well from his father and dealt with people in a manner that was pleasing to God. God was truly the head of his household, just as Abraham had taught him: God later called Himself the “God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex 3:6).

#### **2. Eli and His Sons (1 Sam 2:12–17, 22–25, 27–36)**

Eli may have been a good person, but he failed to discipline his children or teach them in the way of God. He spoke to them briefly about their sins, but they ignored his words completely, showing contempt and disrespect for their father. Their failure to submit to Eli also shows their failure to submit to God; they lusted after wealth, power, women, and control, and had no regard for God or God’s house. As a result, they were cut off from God.

#### **3. Timothy and His Family (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim 1:5)**

Timothy was a second-generation Christian. His father wasn’t a believer, but his grandmother and mother both understood God’s command to teach their children the right path, and they both influenced Timothy’s beliefs. He not only followed Paul on his missionary journey, but also took up the work of God and boldly preached the message of salvation. From these actions, we can infer that Timothy obeyed his mother and grandmother and listened to their words.

These examples teach us what kind of family we should or shouldn’t be. If every member is a believer, then we need to help each other grow in the knowledge of Christ. If there are unbelieving members, or

members who begin to stray from the Lord, then it is our duty to bring them to know God and His love. Only then will the family be truly blessed by the Lord.

### **C. A Christian Household**

After studying everyone's roles and looking at biblical examples, has your idea of a Christian family changed at all? What should a Christian home look like according to the Bible?

#### **1. God-Centered**

Let's read Psalm 127:1. "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." Without God at the center of our family, we will struggle to find joy and peace. But what exactly is a God-centered home?

A God-centered home is a place where family members speak, act, and relate to one another in accordance with the Bible's teachings. Every family experiences ups and downs and struggles through hardships. But when God is in the center, each member submits to Him in all things, resulting in a family that is spiritually stronger, and therefore more peaceful and joyful.

#### **2. Full of God's Love**

A very important ingredient to a Christian household is God's love (1 Jn 4:8). Love is the glue that holds the family together! When a household is full of love, it becomes a refuge where hurt family members can find peace, comfort, and healing. The home becomes seasoned with sacrificial love, humility, and respect. When family members experience unconditional love for and from each other, the members understand God's love more, having experienced it at home. By personally experiencing such love, children will be able to grow in love themselves, resulting in a home that is blessed by God.

#### **3. Full of Godly Discipline and Order**

In 1 Corinthians 14:33, Paul teaches us that "God is not the author of confusion but of peace." One of the foundations of a Christian home is, therefore, discipline and order.

##### **a. Spiritual discipline**

We are constantly bombarded with the messages of the world and the temptations of society. When we are surrounded by so many lies and confusing messages about how we should live our lives, it is often difficult to find the truth of how we should live. But when a family takes up spiritual discipline and diligently searches out the truth of the Bible, they can measure themselves by standards that will never change: God's standards. Only then can we hold strong as a family, no matter what trials we face.

##### **b. Family discipline**

Proverbs 10:17 says, "He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray." Discipline feels harsh and unjust when we are on the receiving end! But the goal of discipline is to teach us right from wrong. It teaches us obedience, righteousness, servitude, and godly living. Without it, we cannot do well at home, school, work, or in life in general. Parents are in charge of teaching and guiding their children's behavior, and the primary motive behind their discipline is love. It may feel long and painful, but those who have been trained properly yield the fruit of righteousness (Heb 12:11).

The word "discipline" does not only mean punishment. It can also be defined as training ourselves to do something in a controlled or habitual way. This means that to live a disciplined family life requires teaching ourselves the habit of living according to God's word. It means

training ourselves to be orderly in our conduct. When such discipline is integrated into our character, we will live according to God’s good purpose (Phil 2:12–13).

### **What if family members do not follow God’s commandments?**

As children of God, our responsibility is to honor our parents. This means yielding to their authority, even if they lack godly wisdom. But what if you are told to do something that is against God’s will? The Bible’s stance is severe towards parents who sin and instruct their child in immoral or illegal deeds (Mt 18:6), and this is the only circumstance in which we should not honor our parent’s instruction.

What if we are told to do something that is against God’s commandment, such as lying, cheating, or stealing? Or if they purposefully hinder us from going to church? If this happens, the Bible teaches us that “we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). The highest form of obedience comes from honoring and following God’s words. He has preeminence.

#### ***Special note for teachers:***

*If your students come from single, divorced, or dysfunctional families, or if they have been exposed to physical harm, vengeance, violence, or abuse, talk to the ministers in your local church and seek help and counseling. The parent needs guidance with God’s words and prayers by the grace of God.*

*Your student will need a lot of love, compassion, mercy, affirmation, and intercessory prayers, especially if they have been neglected or abused either physically or emotionally. But be reminded that the Holy Spirit can cleanse, heal, and restore broken relationships. Invite your student to pour out their problems to God. The Lord uses anyone and anything – even non-believer or abusive parents – for the good for those who love Him (Rom 8:28).*

### ***Check for Understanding***

- 1. Explain how the Bible describes the role of the husband and wife in a family.** God commanded husbands to love their wives as their own bodies, just as Jesus Christ gave Himself up for the church. Wives also should submit to their husbands in the same way they submit to God with love.
- 2. Explain the roles of parent and child in a family according to the Bible.** Parents have the primary responsibility and God-given authority to teach their children about God and His commands. They should demonstrate the life of a Christian. Children should honor and obey their parents. If they do, God has promised to bless them.
- 3. Describe an example of a successful family unit in the Bible. Describe an example of a failed family unit in the Bible.** See *Section B*.
- 4. What three characteristics should a Christian home have, according to the Bible?** It should be God-centered, full of God’s love, and full of godly discipline and order.
- 5. How can a family maintain their spiritual discipline?** By diligently searching out the truth of the Bible, so that they can measure themselves by God’s standards, which never change.

### ***Life Application***

#### **1. The Importance of Honoring Our Parents**

Honoring our parents first appears in the Bible in Exodus 20:12. The fact that God made it one of the Ten Commandments shows that He values this command greatly. It is also repeated several times throughout the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments. The Lord Jesus used the command as an example of the Pharisees’ hypocrisy (Mt 15:3–6), and Paul also emphasized its importance several times.

## **Why do I need to honor my parents?**

To honor someone doesn't mean to flatter them, and honoring a person isn't about acting for show. It is an act of deep sincerity from the heart. But first, why is it so important that we honor our parents?

### **a. Rewards**

Let's read Ephesians 6:1–3. What rewards does the Bible promise to those who honor their parents? (*Things will be well with you, and you will have a long life.*) God has gone out of His way to tell us that He will bless us if we honor our parents. It is clearly an important matter to God!

### **b. Punishment**

The Bible severely condemns those who dishonor their parents. The Mosaic laws state that if a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear" (Deut 21:21). They also state, "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death" (Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9). The severe punishments show us how important it is that we never rebel against or curse our parents.

As a divine commandment, honoring our parents comes with great reward or devastating punishment if we obey or disobey. But to honor them, there are a few fundamental concepts that we need to learn:

### **a. Obedience**

Though it is one of the foundations to honoring our parents, obedience is, of course, difficult for us to do, especially when we disagree with them! But by learning to obey our parents, we are also learning to obey the Lord. Even though the Lord Jesus was God Himself, He still obeyed His parents without ignoring them. The only circumstance in which it may be acceptable to disobey our parents is if they ask us to do something contradictory to God's teachings.

### **b. Humility**

One of the reasons we resent our parents is because we have pride. It is important that we fill our hearts with humility, so that we become more willing to accept our parents' discipline. Let's read Hebrews 12:11. "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." If we understand the reason our parents discipline us, then it becomes easier to accept it with a humble heart, knowing that they discipline us out of love and righteousness.

### **c. Respect**

The Bible teaches us to rise for the elderly as a form of respect (Lev 19:32). Of course, this applies to our parents as well! As they grow older, they may seem more and more unreasonable to us, but this is not an excuse for us to disrespect them or to talk back to them. When situations are tough and unpleasant, it is easy to lash back with harsh words, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to respect our parents with submission.

Let's take a moment to read a testimony about a brother who realized later in life how much his parents played a role in his faith, and how blessed he felt to have such parents.

## **Testimony**

*I would like to share with you how growing up in a Christian home is a blessing. I have been given godly parents and grandparents, religious education, loving brethren at church, and support from a church family. My parents faithfully served the Lord, and served as a model for what a strong*

*marriage looks like. Throughout my childhood leading up to my college years, I had been repeatedly taught about the love of God, His salvation, and ways to resist sin and live for Christ.*

*Aside from my many blessings, I have also been very protected. My parents did not only wisely limit my entertainment choices, they also carefully monitored my friendships and my exposure to the world. During high school, I was driven by a desire to be more popular, rather than live according to God's values. For a period of time, I believed the lies of the world. But I saw my parents praying for me every day, and they taught me how to search my heart and trust in God. Without these teachings, I could easily have continued believing the lies of the world, which may have led to serious consequences.*

*I have witnessed friends who appeared to be strong believers at church, but later walked away from their faith. But God gave me parents who guided me on how to live out my own faith, keep God in the center of my life, and walk with God while growing up. Because of their help, my spiritual life remained disciplined, and as I enter college, I can now say that I have been trained to evaluate my life according to the standards of the Bible.*

*One of the greatest blessings this training has resulted in, is that I don't have to break bad habits, or regret years of godless living. Even though I have been surrounded by the things of God, I can still be drawn to sin, or be tempted to live a double lifestyle, one that is seemingly faithful at church, but faithless outside of church. But I can always turn to my parents' unfailing guidance for advice and for their prayers when I am in need. Thinking of the first twenty years of my life, I am so thankful to my parents and to God's love and kindness towards me. It truly is a blessing to be raised in a Christian home, and I am determined to continue the tradition of godliness in my future family.*

– Anonymous

While growing up, this brother very likely experienced the same resentment, frustration, and annoyance that we do when dealing with our parents. But over time, he understood how much they affected his life, both physical and spiritual, and learned to give thanks for them. Let's now try and appreciate our own parents or guardians in the same way! Take a moment to write a letter to them. Recall the good that they have done for you, express your gratitude and love, and recognize the sacrifices that they have made to raise you. *(Teachers: The following is an example letter that you can read to your students.)*

Dear Mom and Dad,

Please forgive me for failing to do what I should do as your child. I have not honored you to the best of my abilities, and I have not been the child that I could or should be. Please pray for me and continue to encourage and teach me. I understand that even if we disagree, you are doing the best that you can for me, and I will try to seize every opportunity to honor you as the Bible teaches. You're the best parents despite all of my flaws! Thank you!

With love, (Name)

*(Teachers: What should a student do if their parents are deceased, separated, or divorced? Tell your students that it is still good to write down some things to the best of their ability, to acknowledge all their parents have done, and maybe share their letter with other family members. If their parents are separated, then teach them to ask God to give them the opportunity to share it with them.)*

## 2. The Foundation of Obedience

We just learned that one of the key building blocks to honoring our parents is obedience! To obey can be a difficult thing to do, especially when we disagree with our parents. Even if we obey them physically, we may be filled with resentment or anger in our hearts as we do. Disobedience, even if only in our hearts, is likely one of the biggest obstacles between us and honoring our parents. To help us overcome this barrier in our spiritual lives, let's go over the concept of obedience in a bit more detail.

In a passage where Paul describes the end times, he says, "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, [and] unholy [...]. And from such people turn away!" (2 Tim 3:2–5; cf. Rom 1:30–32). Those who disobey their parents are listed right along with those who are unholy! This means that every time you didn't do your homework, stayed up after curfew, spent their money without their permission, or perhaps got into a fight with them, you sinned against God Himself. With this in mind, how can we learn to be obedient?

### a. Learn to Love

Let's read John 14:15, 21. From these verses, we can see that a key ingredient to obedience is love. Those who love God are more willing to follow His commands. The same is true of children who love their parents.

### b. Learn to Fear God

A true, genuine fear of God helps us develop and cultivate behavior that honors our parents. If we truly fear God, then we will obey our parents in order to obey God. Colossians 3:20 says, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord." If we truly fear God, then we will do our best to please Him by obeying our parents.

*(Teachers: See last page of lesson for a printable survey for this section.)*

Even if it is difficult for us to obey our parents, by cultivating our relationship with God and learning to love and fear Him, obedience towards our parents will come as a natural result of our developing faith. With the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we can start to change ourselves and become children who honor their parents, and then we will be blessed by God! To start this change, let's first evaluate where we are as obedient children. Fill out the following survey as honestly as you can, then add up your total at the end and see where you are.

### Memory Verse

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"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'" (Ephesians 6:1–3)

### Meaning

See Life Application section.

### Conclusion

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God wants us to pursue a God-centered family. He wants us to develop a home of love, discipline, and order, where everyone can speak, act, and relate to one another in accordance with the Bible's teachings. We each play different roles in our family, and we may find it difficult to follow them according to God's will. But if we do choose to follow God's blueprint for our family lives, He will bless, protect, and care for us!



## Lesson 10 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Explain what it means to honor our parents.  
*It isn't about flattery, and it isn't about acting for show. It is an act of deep sincerity from the heart. To honor our parents requires a foundation of obedience, humility, and respect.*
2. "Now no \_\_\_\_\_ seems to be \_\_\_\_\_ for the present, but \_\_\_\_\_; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ to those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11)  
*chastening, joyful, painful, fruit, righteousness.*
3. Name one example of a godly family from the Bible and explain why they are a good example.
  - a. *Abraham obeyed God's will and focused on the religious education of his children. We can see this in the fact that he didn't allow Isaac to marry a Gentile, knowing it was against God's command. Isaac, for his part, was submissive to God and dealt with people in a manner that was pleasing to God.*
  - b. *Timothy's father wasn't a believer, but his grandmother and mother both understood God's command to teach their children the right path, and they both influenced Timothy's beliefs. We can see his obedience to God in his decision to follow Paul on his missionary journey, and his work for God.*
4. What are three characteristics of a Christian household, according to the Bible?  
*God-centered, full of God's love, and full of godly discipline and order.*
5. What are two important prerequisites to learning obedience? Briefly explain why for each.  
*Learn to love: Those who love God are more willing to follow His commands. The same is true of children who love their parents.*  
*Learn to fear God: A true, genuine fear of God helps us develop and cultivate behavior that honors our parents. If we truly fear Him, then we will do our best to please Him by obeying our parents.*
6. In what specific ways do I fail to honor and respect my parents? Write down how you will try to change this behavior from now on.  
*Personal answers.*

