

PARENTS, HOLD FAST! (EPH. 6:1-4)

Introduction:

1. Read **Eph. 6:1-4**. Parents must hold fast in fulfilling the duty to teach our children to love & obey God!
2. In order to hold fast, parents must learn the following truths.

I. God Ordained Parental Duty & Authority as a Blessing.

- A. God Ordained the Husband-Wife Relationship & the Authority of Parents Over Children.
 1. This arrangement is based on true love—it requires sacrifice in seeking the welfare of others
 2. This arrangement is designed by God to bless the husband, wife, child, & all humanity.
- B. **Eph. 6:1-4** Addresses Our Duties in the Home.
 1. Children must be taught to obey (outward conformity) & to honor their parents (inward submission).
 2. This teaching is first & foremost in importance, laying a good foundation for all of life.
 3. Learning proper attitudes & conduct promotes the child's well-being & protects him from dangers.
 4. Fathers bear the first & greatest responsibility—they create the atmosphere & set the tone of the home.
 5. Anger, resentment, & rebellion may be provoked in the child by the father's sinful, abusive conduct.
 6. A child is brought up or nurtured by *discipline* (instruction as correction, chastening) & *admonition* (instruction as affectionate rebuke).
- C. **Col. 3:18-21** Addresses Our Duties in the Home.
 1. A godly wife learns submission to her husband's leadership because it pleases God.
 2. A godly husband manifests unselfish love for his wife—bitterness undermines his love & leadership.
 3. A godly child learns to submit to his parents because it is proper & pleasing to God.
 4. A father's sinful, abusive conduct fills the child with volatile anger.
- D. The Divine Order of All Things Blesses All Who Learn & Respect It.
 1. The divine order of the universe is a blessing—if we learn & respect it.
 2. The divine order of the home is a blessing—if we learn & respect it:
 - a. God ordained the husband to love & to lead his family, & to avoid all sinful, abusive conduct.
 - b. God ordained the wife to submit to the husband's leadership.
 - c. God ordained children to honor & obey their parents.

II. God Ordained the Duty of Discipline.

- A. Parents Must Assert Their God-Given Authority to Rule, Guide, & Discipline Children (**Eph. 6:4**).
 1. God did not ordain children to rule parents nor parents to obey children.
 2. Children do not have the "right" to defy their parents.
 3. Asserting parental authority requires corrective discipline of children, but not abuse.
- B. Liberal-minded Psychologists Are Wrong & the Bible Is Right.
 1. Dr. Benjamin Spock in the 1950s-60s advocated a loose, liberal philosophy of raising children.
 2. The result was a generation in the 1960s-70s that despised all authority.
 3. In the 1980s when it was too late, Dr. Spock admitted he was wrong!
- C. The Bible Was Right All Along about the Duty & Benefits of Firm, Consistent, Loving Discipline.
 1. Proverbs is an inspired handbook for raising children to walk in wisdom (**Prov. 1:7; 22:6**).
 - a. It lays the foundation for a good life (**1:7**; cf. **Eph. 6:2**, "the first commandment with promise").
 2. **"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes"** (**Prov. 13:24**). Proper discipline demonstrates love, failure to discipline brings harm.
 3. **"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying"** (**Prov. 19:18**). Discipline must be given "while there is hope."
 4. **"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him"** (**Prov. 22:15**). Firm, loving discipline sets the limits of safety. The child will push the limits, parents must push back in a test of wills. Stubbornness must be turned into strength under control, strength of character.

5. **“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die” (Prov. 23:13).** It is cruel to withhold what a child needs, including discipline.
6. **“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.” “Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (Prov. 29:15, 17).** Consistent discipline is necessary for the success of the child in life.
7. When children disobey & defy their parents, parents must hold fast by showing them such conduct has unpleasant consequences. The child tries to make the disciplinary process unpleasant for the parent by crying, screaming, & pitching a fit—the parent must make it *more unpleasant* for the child!
- D. **A Child Who Defies Parental Authority Will Encroach More & More Unless Stopped (Eccl. 8:11).**
 1. The parents suffer the agony of having an ungrateful, rebellious child.
 2. The church suffers in every way (rebellious souls lost, others influenced, loss of elders & deacons).
 3. Society suffers the effects of such conduct in failed homes, more rebels, & self-destructive lives.
 4. **“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it” (Prov. 30:17).**

III. Parents Must Lead in Practical Ways.

- A. All Through the Ages God Has Taught Parents the Duty of Practical Leadership.
 1. **Deut. 6:4-9** provides an inspired commentary on the duties outlined in **Eph. 6:4** in this sequence: recognize one true God, total love for God, learn & live His Word, *then teach it to the children.*
- B. Young People Yearn for the Leadership which Only Parents Can Give.
- C. Here Are Some Things Parents Can Do to Lead in Practical Ways:
 1. Obey the gospel, read the Bible & pray at home, & be faithful in the church (**2 Tim. 3:15**).
 2. To “bring them up” is to invest our time & lives in them—spend time with them (**Eph. 6:4**).
 3. Parents must insist children prepare school lessons & Bible class lessons (**2 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 6:33**).
 4. We can open our homes to our children & their friends (**1 Cor. 11:34**).
 5. Parents must exert leadership regarding moral standards & decisions: Say **no** to intoxication; fornication; abortion; pornography; profanity; temper tantrums; gambling (casino, lottery, raffle, wager on sports events, etc.); immodest dress; dress & demeanor showing disrespect & irreverence toward worship (dress down, sleep, inattention, play with baby, courting, passing notes, etc.); dances (including the prom); all forms of disrespectful language & conduct; tobacco addiction; TV programs, movies, & videos filled with vile language & glorifying ungodly conduct.
 6. Parental authority means parents rather than children have the final say in specific decisions.
 7. In matters of judgment, wise parents consider the child’s input, but right & wrong do not change.
 8. Parents should help children distinguish between harmless fads & harmful fads.
- D. Patsy G. Lovell Learned to Hold Fast When Her Daughter Wanted a Miniskirt.
 1. Her daughter pressed for a miniskirt until she saw Patsy held fast, then she thanked her for her firm decision! “Deep down, teens know they need guidance & leadership. Parents, it’s up to us to give it to them” (Patsy G. Lovell, “Hold Fast,” *Focus on the Family*, Oct. 1993, p.14).

IV. We Must Hold Fast Whether or Not Children Cooperate.

- A. Our Duty Does Not Change with the Whims of a Child (**Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4**).
- B. Our Reaction to This Duty Reveals Our Character (**Gen. 18:19**).
- C. Eli Failed His Duty When His Children Rebelled (**1 Sam. 3:11-13**).
- D. Parents May Fulfill This Duty & Yet Children Rebel (**Deut. 21:18-21**).
- E. God Is Looking for True Leaders in the Home, Like Joshua (**Josh. 24:15**).

Conclusion:

p. 3 Parents, Hold Fast

1. If we need to make changes in our home, *now* is the time to do it while there is still hope.
2. If we need to repent of sins known to God & to others, *now* is the time to confess & pray (**Ja. 5:16**).
3. If we have never obeyed the gospel, *now* is the time to put our faith in Christ by repenting of our sins, confessing him as God's Son, & being baptized in water for the remission of sins (**Acts 22:16**).