

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD: IN YOUR HOME

Text: 1 Corinthians 7:32-35, Ephesians 6:1-4

In our series “Seek first the kingdom of God” last week we dealt with God’s rule for marriage. This week I want to bring you a message about seeking God’s kingdom first in your home. Again, this means to come into alignment with God’s rule over every area of life. The first portion of scripture we read has to do with singleness. What to do if you’re a Christian and you’re not married. Being single offers you the unique advantage of having undivided devotion to the Lord. Marriage naturally divides one’s time and energy between serving God and managing the practical responsibilities required to care for a spouse. Paul acknowledges that the obligations of marriage are good and necessary. However, loving a spouse and maintaining a household inherently pull attention away from spiritual work.

The second portion of scripture we read in Ephesians 6:1-4 give the instructions for God’s rule in a home where there are children. All children should obey their parents because that’s the way God designed it. But if you are Christian child, you should obey your parents because it is an act of Christian faith and grounded in God’s will. It shows that respecting earthly authority mirrors a believer’s submission to God. If you are a Christian child and your parents are unbelievers, you should still obey if they are not instructing you to go against the rule of God. The phrase “in the Lord” means that children should obey their parents as unto Christ. Then verses 2 and 3 point back to law because when children honor their father and mother, it’s the first commandment that God attached a promise to. The fact that it is restated here in the New Testament means that it is still in effect. To honor your parents means to hold them in high esteem, respect their God-given role in your life, and treat them with ongoing dignity.

What it means practically:

- **Respect** – Speaking to and about them with dignity and graciously overlooking their minor faults.
- **Support** – Looking after their physical, emotional, and financial needs as they age.
- **Gratitude** – Acknowledge the sacrifices they made and the positive legacy they passed down to you.

The commands are given to fathers because men are charged with being the leader in their homes. But if there is no father in your home then the commands apply to mothers because she is the head of that home. The Bible is a book of balance. There are commands for parents in how they treat their children under God's rule. The first command is "provoke not your children to wrath" which means not to treat your children in a way that creates deep anger, bitterness, or resentment.

Behaviors that provoke children to wrath:

- **Unfair or excessive discipline** – punishing a child to an extreme degree or correcting them harshly for minor everyday mistakes rather than teaching them.
- **Favoritism** – Treating siblings differently or showing visible preference for one child over another.
- **Constant criticism** – Never acknowledging a child's accomplishments while continuously pointing out their flaws, which makes them feel inadequate or unlovable.
- **Overbearing control** – Using authority to humiliate, scream at, or belittle them rather than instructing them lovingly.
- **Neglect** – Failing to emotionally engage with children or being inconsistently present in their lives.

But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord – The positive command

- **Nurture** – training your children through loving boundaries, correction, and teaching them right from wrong. The word nurture means behavior that promotes growth
- **Admonition** – shaping their minds and hearts with God's word and guiding them toward maturity.

The responsibility to disciple your children is on the parents, not the pastor or their Sunday school teachers. One of the main reasons many children leave the church they grew up in is because they were never rooted in a relationship with Christ. Rules without relationships create resentment. Many twenty-somethings leave the church they grew up in because they said there was a major disconnect between what was taught at church and what was lived at home. Does God's word shape your home, your marriage, your parenting? If not, then it is time to bring your home under God's rule.

