

Relating to Parents, Part 2

By Patricia Ennis

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Define *wisdom* and *obedience* from a biblical perspective. Use Scripture to support your definitions. Explain how these words can be applied to your relationship with your parents.

Assignment Two

Study the book of Proverbs. Make a list of all of the statements that describe how a wise son or child should behave. Replace the word *son*, *child*, or *children* with *your name*. For example, Proverbs 3:1 would read, "My [name], do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments."

Assignment Three

Paul describes Timothy as having a "sincere" faith that his mother and grandmother modeled for him (2 Timothy 1:5). Prepare to share your answer to the following questions: If someone described you as having a sincere faith, what character qualities would they list? Use Scripture to support your answer.

Scripture to Memorize

"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." Colossians 3:20

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will develop strategies to relate to their parents as the Bible teaches.

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She is the author and coauthor of several books, including *Becoming a Young Woman Who Pleases God*. Pat's life's mission is to:

- Love her Lord with ALL of her heart (Matthew 22:37).
- Walk worthy of her calling (Ephesians 4:1–3).
- Train the younger women to fulfill the Titus 2 mandate so that God's Word will not be discredited (Titus 2:3–5).

It's In the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Most electronic devices come with instructions that easily are downloaded. These instructions allow you to achieve maximum performance from the device. God's Word is the best set of instructions to assist you in having a strong, positive relationship with your parents. How can you "download" these instructions into your daily interactions with them?

Read Matthew 5:17-20; 1 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 6:1-3; and Colossians 3:20 out loud.

Studying the Passage

A question teens often ask is, "Do I need to obey Old Testament laws since the New Testament exists?" Matthew 5:17-20 clearly answers that question. **Verse 17. Do not think . . . abolish the Law or the Prophets.** Jesus was neither giving a new law nor modifying the old. Instead He came to **fulfill** the Law by keeping it perfectly (Romans 5:19-21; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 5:8). The command to honor one's parents found in Exodus 20:12; 21:15-17; and Deuteronomy 5:16 is repeated in the New Testament (see Ephesians 6:1-3 and Colossians 3:20).

Ephesians 6:1. obey . . . in the Lord. Teens willingly submit to their parents because parents are assigned by God to train them in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). Regardless of the parent's spiritual life, children are to obey that parent as if they are obeying the Lord. The only limit on a child's obedience is if the parents demand an action contrary to God's Word. For example, a child may act contrary to their parent's wishes by receiving life through Jesus.

Verse 1 refers to actions, while Paul is concerned about the attitude behind the action in verses 2-3. **Verse 2. the first commandment with a promise.** When God gave His law in the Ten Commandments, the first one describing human relationships was Exodus 20:12. God is so good to us! Though obedience to parents should happen because we respect their position as parents and love God, He graciously added a bonus blessing for those who keep this command.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share a report.

On Your Own

In the space below describe some specific and practical ways you can apply wisdom and obedience in your relationship with your parents.

Wisdom is an Old Testament term relating to many topics. The meaning can range from the technical skill of an artisan (Exodus 36:8), the art of government (1 Kings 3:12, 28) and the skill of coping with life (see Proverbs 1; 5; 11; and 14). The book of Proverbs contains short, brief statements that express timeless truth and wisdom. It also clearly contrasts the difference between a wise person and a fool.

The terms *fool*, *foolishness*, and *folly* refer to a lack of wisdom. The fool referred to in the Bible lives life as if God and God's will are not important. "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

Studying the Passage

Proverbs 18:6–7. fool's lips. The fool lacks the ability to control his or her tongue.

2 Samuel 24:10. sinned greatly . . . done very foolishly. David acknowledged the terrible consequences of his willful rebellion against God. A fool is a person who intentionally sins against God's law (Jeremiah 29:23; Deuteronomy 22:21; 2 Samuel 13:11-14).

Proverbs 3:7. own eyes. Refuse to think you are wise in your own sight. Paul talks about this in Romans 12:16.

Proverbs 10:1. grief to his mother. The foolish child causes deep sorrow to that person's mother because of the intimate role she plays in raising her child.

Proverbs 13:20. walks . . . companion. Those children spend time with will shape their character and behavior.

Proverbs 23:15–16. son . . . wise. A child's wise choices will bring joy to their parents.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share a report.

On Your Own

If 1 Corinthians 13:11 were written specifically to you, how might it read? "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things." In the space below describe whether your relationship with your parents is more like a child or a mature disciple and why you think that.

Read 2 Timothy 1:1-2:26 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Timothy was a young disciple who accompanied Paul on many of his journeys. Several things are known about Timothy that can be helpful to you in your spiritual maturity and ultimately in your relationship with your parents.

Timothy, now in his late teens or early twenties, was raised in a single-parent family. We know nothing of his father except that he **was a Greek** (Acts 16:1). The grammar of the verse suggests that he was not living. **My beloved child** (2 Timothy 1:2) suggests that Paul considered Timothy one of his spiritual children. This is a reminder that God provides our needs through a variety of ways. Though Timothy lacked a physical father, he possessed a wonderful spiritual father in Paul, who consistently challenged him to trust his heavenly Father (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

Verse 5. Paul's first words to Timothy focused on his **sincere faith**. *Sincere* means "genuine" and may have originally meant "tested by sunlight." In the ancient world, dishonest pottery dealers filled cracks in their inferior products with wax before glazing and painting them, making worthless pots difficult to distinguish from expensive ones. The only way to avoid being cheated was to hold the pot to the sun, making the wax-filled cracks obvious. Dealers marked their fine pottery that could withstand "sun testing" as *sine cera*—"without wax." Timothy's mother and grandmother modeled a sincere faith for Timothy. You are blessed if you have parents who model a sincere faith. If they don't, which individuals in your church live lives you are able to follow so you will be known as a person with a sincere faith?

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share a report.

On Your Own

In the space below describe some specific instructions Paul gave to Timothy. Include the verse references as you list the instructions.

Discussion Question

What are some practical ways you can apply Paul's teaching to Timothy to your life? If you choose to do so, how might that affect your relationship with your parents?

Studying and Applying the Passage

Children often fear that their parents will totally control their lives or they will not be allowed to have any fun if they follow biblical instructions. Paul's loving words to Timothy provide a solid foundation for you and your relationship with your parents. He reminds Timothy that "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." *Timidity* or *a spirit of fear* comes from a Greek word meaning "cowardly, shameful fear caused by a weak, selfish character." The fear that your parents will take advantage of your willingness to joyfully submit to their requests does not come from God.

Verse 7. power. God gives believers all the spiritual resources (power) they need for every trial and threat (see Ephesians 3:20). Are you using God's power or your own in your parental relationships? **Love.** This kind of love centers on pleasing God and looking out for the welfare of others rather than focusing on one's selfish desires (Ephesians 3:13-19).

Self-control. This word can mean "discipline." It refers to a mind that consistently is fed by the Word of God. Focusing on the sovereign nature and perfect purposes of our heavenly Father allows believers to live their lives with godly wisdom and the confidence that He will cause "for those who love God all things to work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your thoughts have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

If you are God's child, you are adopted into His forever family. Consider using the acrostic for the word **ADOPTED** to strengthen your relationship with your earthly parents.

If you are not God's **ADOPTED** child, I encourage you to read Romans 3:10; 3:23; 5:12; 6:23; 5:8; 10:13; 10:9-11. Talk with someone in your discipleship group and become a part of His family today. You will be eternally grateful!

A—ACKNOWLEDGE

Choose to acknowledge what your heavenly Father thinks of you as His adopted child. For example, He provides provision and protection (Psalm 84:11). Regardless of life's circumstances, His love remains unchanged (1 John 4:7-16). This truth will help you if you experience difficulty with your earthly parents.

D—DELIGHT

Choose to do those things which delight your heavenly Father (Psalm 37:4). Then apply this spiritual action to pleasing your earthly parents.

O—OBEDIENCE

Choose to obey your parents in all things (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20). The only limit on a child's obedience is when parents demand an action that is contrary to God's Word.

P—PRAY

Choose to pray for your parents. The command to pray is repeated throughout the Scriptures (Luke 18:1; 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; James 5:13-16). Prayer will most assuredly improve your relationship with your heavenly Father and, more than likely, improve any negative attitude toward your parents.

T—THANKFUL

Choose to cultivate a thankful spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Remember that giving thanks is generated from the will while being thankful is generated from the emotions.

E—ELIMINATE THE ELIJAH EFFECT

Choose to eliminate the "Elijah Effect." Read the account of Elijah recorded in 1 Kings 18:18-46. Choose to be a victor rather than a victim in difficult circumstances with your parents (Philippians 4:13).

D—DEVELOP A HEART OF FORGIVENESS

Choose to embrace a spirit of forgiveness. Though the actions of your parents will at times disappoint you, from a biblical perspective you are to forgive them unconditionally (Matthew 6:14-15).

Disciples who relate to their parents according to the teaching of Scripture are ready to join Christ in bringing His kingdom on earth for the glory of God.

Follow-up Question

Have them quote from memory Colossians 3:20.