

RESPECT FOR PARENTS

(Part 1 of 5)

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A child from the time of earliest recollection should be taught the scriptures on the subject of respect for his parents. Good memory work is contained in Ephesians 6:1-4: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

The grandmother and mother of Timothy, Lois and Eunice, are credited with teaching this outstanding evangelist and traveling companion of the inimitable apostle Paul the scriptures from a very young age: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 3:14-15). “Respect for parents” starts at home by having respectable parents who love the Lord and his word and find the time and energy to teach their children and grandchildren.

The Patriarchal Age

The Bible begins with the demand of “respect for parents” with the 2,500 years of the “father ruled” or Patriarchal Age of world history where personal, religious, and social duties were formed in the cradle of civilization at the dawn of time. The first man, Adam, was in a very crucial role for many good reasons: (1) He was the first man (I Cor. 15:45-47); (2) he was the first husband (Gen. 2:24); (3) he was the first human father (Gen. 4:1); (4) he was the first national leader (Gen. 1:26-28; 5:1-5); (5) he was the first type of Christ (I Cor. 15:45-47). Of all the organizations, institutions, and establishments in the world only three owe their origins to Deity. They are the church, the government, and the home; order in reverse of their creation with the home being the oldest.

God began the creation by setting the solitary into families and warning against rebellion to his objectives: “God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land” (Psa.

68:6). The Bible tells of the manner in which God directed man from the beginning. The writer of Hebrews said, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1). The prophet Moses wrote about that first communication of God to man in the dim dawn of time, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:16-18). The original intention of God for that first family was stated by Jesus Christ as Matthew recorded, "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:4-6). The ideal will of God is pictured in all these passages. God provided every need of man whom he created: The beauty of the heavens and the earth, the wonders of the plant and animal kingdom, activity and industry, companionship, hope for the future, fellowship with God through the communication and challenge of his commandments, and a paradise for a home environment. The Devil's deception debased the human family and denied their descendents the delights of an earthly paradise.

The theme of the book of Genesis may be traced by studying its six main characters: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. If you know the lives of these six men, then you know the overview of the book of Genesis and correspondingly the substance of the first 2,500 years of the world's history, the Patriarchal Age. The respect for the patriarch Noah his children had must have been enormous because Noah stood above the world around him in favor before the God of heaven. A reminder of the setting appears in Genesis 6:5-7: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." Were it not for Noah the world faced certain doom, but Moses added, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 8). How close to the brink of destruction had mankind come? The Bible says, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the

earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth” (vv. 11-13). Because Noah had found grace in the eyes of the Lord mankind was spared extinction. Noah was both a man and a parent who had made himself worthy of respect. Moses said of him, “These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (v. 9). God made high demands of Noah particularly involving the construction of a huge vessel containing 1,518,750 cubic feet of space called an ark, but from this and other duties Noah shrank not, for Moses added, “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (v. 22; cf. also Gen. 7:1, 5). An even deeper insight into the man is afforded by a comment the Hebrews writer gave, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7). Beyond owing their identity and physical existence to Noah, his children owed him their lives, and not theirs only but that also of their wives and children by whom the world was later populated (Gen. 9:18-19). Often preachers and teachers rightly emphasize Noah’s love of God and obedience to God, and with equal weight when considered from the standpoint of his children Noah brings greater understanding of what it takes for children to have “respect for parents.”