

YOUR LINK IN THE CHAIN

By

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LifeWord Broadcast Ministries
Conway, Arkansas
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Prisoners Bible Crusade
2212 Stonecypher Road
Lucedale, MS 39452

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GOD MADE MAN TO BE SUBJECT TO AUTHORITY

Ours is a day of uncertainty and seeking. The rapid progress of technical advancement and the explosion of knowledge have left man in a vacuum as to what he is to do with all he knows. That uncertainty has spread to include the vital areas of the home, the governments, the school, the church and every other department of daily life.

Young people have expressed their uncertainty by questioning, and sometimes even rebelling against what they call "the establishment." Older people have had the same frustrations but have expressed them in different ways.

The very truth is that we are each a part of the "establishment." "The establishment" is simply that which is established. We live in an established society. We live in a society, which is governed by laws. Such an established society is needed. Anarchy is the only alternative, and that has been condemned in Holy

Scripture and rejected through human experience. “The establishment” in which we live is not ideal, for we are not ideal. Our society can be improved, for we can be improved. Even so, we are part of it and must live in it.

“I could have made a better world,” a sinner to a saint once cried. “Then that is why God put you here; go forth and do it,” he replied. God made man capable of governing all things except himself. He needs an authority outside himself to evaluate his acts and guide him in the right way. That means every person, young and old must live under authority.

Who established human society? Who gave the basic laws, which determine right from wrong? To whom must society answer if it goes astray? The answer to those three questions can be expressed in one word: “God!” God established human society when He created man and woman and brought them together. God set laws governing their actions when He gave instructions about keeping the garden and refraining from eating the forbidden fruit, being fruitful, subduing the earth, exercising dominion over man responsible to answer back to God.

Why did God set us a system in which man would be governed by laws of right and wrong? Jeremiah replies in two statements: “*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps . . . The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” 10:23; 17:9. God set laws to govern man because man is not able to govern himself.

There have been three periods in man’s lifespan, in view of authority over him and relationships with him.

Perfect Relationships under God

Perfect human relationships existed under the direct rule of God. A brief review of the ideal state of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1,2) indicates their harmony with one another and with God.

Adam and Eve lived together in the bliss of original human love. Adam was assigned the blessed productive work of dressing and keeping the Garden of Eden. Eve must have shared with him the joy of that employment. There was nothing to mar the joy and peace they shared.

Adam and Eve lived in perfect harmony with God. One gets the impression that God would come at times to the garden where the man and woman would meet Him in joy. God provided manual labor in man’s dressing the garden. God provided mental exercise in man’s naming the animals.

God provided social fulfillment in placing the man and woman together. God provided spiritual inspiration by His personal visits with the human pair.

Harmony and peace marked all nature in those ancient times. Man was at peace with himself, with his companion, with his work and with his God. That was the age of perfect human relationships under the direct rule of God.

Disrupted Relationships after Sin

Human relationships were disrupted with the entrance of sin into human experience. Genesis, chapter three, recounts the tragic events. God had told Adam, *“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”* Genesis 2:16,17. Adam passed that information on to Eve, perhaps adding the further precaution, *“Neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die”* Genesis 3:3. You remember the familiar yet tragic story of the fall of man through disobedience to the law of God.

Satan said to Eve, *“Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil”* Genesis 3:4,5.

The woman yielded to the temptation. It appealed to the lust of her flesh: *“The tree was good for food.”* It appealed to the lust of her eyes, *It was pleasant to the eyes.”* It appealed to the pride of life: *“A tree to be desired to make one wise.”* The three-fold temptation was too much. The woman took of the fruit of the forbidden tree, ate of it, and gave to her husband who ate of it also.

Sin disrupted human relations immediately. Adam and Eve suddenly were aware that they had no clothing on their bodies. They had always been naked before one another with shame, but suddenly they were ashamed. They fashioned fig-leaf clothing to cover their bodies. They were no longer at peace with one another.

Sin disrupted the humans’ relationship with God. They hid from His presence when He came to the Garden. They were expelled from His presence in that Garden. Sin wrought havoc in the total of man’s life. Work became a burden. His mind became depraved so he became capable of murder of his own kind. Fellowship with God was broken. Man was changed from what God created him to be

Human Relationships Need Authority System

Authority was established to govern human relationships. As a result of his depravity and sin, man lost the capacity to govern himself. It was necessary that a system of authority be established. It was necessary that he be made responsible to answer to established authority.

God established an authority to govern mankind. The woman was made subject to the man (Genesis 3:16). Man was made responsible for his actions. Human government was established to govern society. Parental authority was designated to govern children. Yes, it was because of man’s sin that authority was set in human society.

Romans 13:1,2 reads, *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”*

Identify your place. Find your link in the chain of authority God has

established. Then live in the light of the authority and responsibility that is appropriate to your position. That is how you can please God.

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OVER ALL

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods” Psalm 24:1,2

God lays claim to all that He has created, *“The land is mine,”* He affirms in Leviticus 25:23. *“Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills,”* He states in Psalms 50:10. *“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,”* He claims through the prophet Haggai 2:8. He caused the prophet Ezekiel to express His ownership of persons as well as property, saying, *“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine”* Ezekiel 18:4. God declares, *“All the earth is mine”* Exodus 19:5.

The sovereignty of God is written into the consciousness of men in all generations and all geographical areas. An ancient pagan king named Nebuchadnezzar gave this testimony: *“I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation... and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”* Daniel 4:34,35. All things that exist were made by His creative power (John 1:3), and the presence of His power is written in all of creation (Romans 1:20).

The sovereign God has vested the authority to govern the world to His only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ. Jesus said, *“ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”* Matthew 28:18. He taught that the Father has surrendered the power of judgment unto the Son (John 5:22,23); He taught that the source of life is in the Son, and the power to give life to men is His by virtue of the Father’s conferral of power (John 5: 26,27). His teaching was that of one who has authority behind His words (Matthew 7:29). Even demonic spirits recognized the authority and power of Jesus Christ by obeying His word implicitly (Mark 1:27). Jesus is Lord of the living and the dead (Romans 14:9). Yes, Jesus is Lord of all.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ should be no surprise to a student of the Bible. God announced His exaltation and coronation following his incarnate ministry here on earth. You may read of it in Philippians 2:9-11, *“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

The Lordship of Jesus Christ extends to every created thing (whether persons or

things) in all the universe. God has “*put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things*” Ephesians 1:22 “*That in all things he might have the preeminence*” Colossians 1:18.

Head of Man

Jesus is the head over mankind. That is the basis upon which He is declared to be judge of mankind. God has “*commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he, which was ordained of God to be the Judge*” of men living and dead Acts 10:42. God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus (Acts 17:31). There is coming a day in which Go shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Romans 2:16). Christians should refrain, therefore, from any act of judging one another, “*for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ Romans 14:10*. When will it happen? The Bible replies that the Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom (II Timothy 4:1). “*So the every one of us shall give account of himself to God*” Romans 14:12. As head over all mankind, Jesus Christ is governor of Christians and non-Christians alike. Even those who reject Him will stand before Him to be judged.

Head of Church

Jesus is the head of the church. Over and over again that fact is affirmed in Holy Scripture. Ephesians 1:22) announces that God gave Him to be head over all things to the church. Ephesians 5:23 reads, “*The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.*” Colossians 1:18 describes Him as “*the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*”

Not only is Jesus the head of the church, the church is also the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23). The implications of that analogy are fascinating. As the physical body is under the control of the nerve impulses sent from the head, so in the spiritual body the church is under the control of the spiritual impressions sent from her head.

Headship indicates authority. As head of the church, Jesus is the final authority over each of His churches. God has set Him in that position and in that place. That was included in Jesus far-reaching statement, “*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*” Matthew 28:18.

Head of Spirits

Jesus is the head of all spiritual forces. The visible and tangible things of this world are not all there is to reality. There are personages and powers which are as real but which cannot be seen by the human eye. In that world of spirits, unknown and unseen by man, the Lord Jesus is head.

Jesus is greater than any of the angels, good or bad (Hebrews 1:4). He has a position ordained of God which is *“far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come”* Ephesians 1:21. All things have been put under His feet, and He is head over all things (Ephesians 1:22). It is God’s purpose that *“in all things he might have the preeminence”* Colossians 1:19.

Jesus Christ was active in the creation of all things. *“that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist”* Colossians 1:16-17.

Did you catch the order of authority set forth in the Bible? It is clearly stated in I Corinthians 11:3, *“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”* In descending order, authority is vested in God, Christ, man, woman and child, That is the “chain of command” set forth in Holy Scripture. Where is your place in that chain?

“The head of every man is Christ.” Are you subject to Him who is your head? Have you turned to Him from sin? Is your faith settled in Him alone? *“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: there by good shall come unto thee “* Job 22:21.

MAN IS HEAD OVER THE WOMAN

God has constituted human society in an orderly arrangement. (First Corinthians 11:3) sets out the distinct hierarchy of authority. God is first, Jesus Christ is second, man is third and woman is fourth. That order must be followed for human society to function in harmony. That order is called “the chain of command” in human relationships.

In previous studies we have found the Bible to teach that mankind needs an authority to which to be accountable. Sin disrupted human relationships so that man is unable to govern himself as an individual in society and needs an authority to govern him. That was the basis of God’s establishment of human government. We also found that Jesus Christ has been designated of God as ruler over all men and angels and is the Judge before whom all will be required to give account. Those studies established the need for supreme authority in the government of mankind.

The present study will drop down one link in the chain of command. We will investigate the order of authority in human relationships as it relates to husband and wife, male and female. We will seek an answer to this question, “Is there true equality between the man and the woman?”

Created Equal

Consider first, the original relationship between male and female. The Bible makes it quite clear that both male and female originated at the creative hand of God.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” Genesis 1:26, 28, 31.

The creation account, recorded in Genesis 1, infers absolute equality between male and female of the human species. And yet, there were some areas in which the man was head of the woman.

Man was ahead of the woman from the standpoint of time. He was created some time before she was created, though the time period is not specified in Holy Scripture. (2) Man was ahead of the woman from the standpoint of experience. He had already seen all the animals and had named them before the woman was created. (3) Man was ahead of the woman from the standpoint of the revelation of God. God had placed man in the beautiful Garden of Eden and given him personal warning about eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil before the woman was created. Man received the warning (2:16,17) and passed it on to the woman (3:). (4) Man was ahead of the woman in that she was created from a part of his own body—a rib that God took from his side (2:18,21-23).

That does not mean that woman was or is inferior to man as a person. It does indicate that man was superior to the woman in some aspects of position, experience and authority.

Sin Enters

Remember that the inequality of the male and the female was magnified by sin. The real distinction of authority and position became apparent when Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Sin entered into human experience through the woman. (Genesis 3) makes that quite clear. Why did Satan approach the woman rather than the man with his temptations? There is no indication in the Bible, but one supposes he considered the woman the more susceptible of the two. She seems to have had less dealing with God to that point and had not received the personal command of God concerning the forbidden tree. The Bible states the matter quite distinctly: *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat,”* Genesis 3:6. Man was not excused from his sin in eating the forbidden fruit, nor was woman excused from initiating his eating. Satan tempted the woman; the woman tempted the man. Thus sin entered human experience through the woman.

God made the pronouncement of woman’s subjection to the man as part of the punishment for bringing sin into human experience. Genesis 3:16 reads, *“Unto the*

woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” That same theme is taken up and dealt with in the New Testament. I Timothy 2:11-15 reads “*Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*” The statement is so clear that it is beyond successful denial.

Woman Subject to Man

The subjection of the woman to the man has been expressed by divine decree. Consider these selected verses of Scripture:

“Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” Genesis 3:16

“But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God,” I Corinthians 11:13.

“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” I Corinthians 14:34,35.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wife be to their own husbands in everything... Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Ephesians 5:22-24,33).

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands...Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord” I Peter 3:1,6.

The Biblical order is established. The husband is subject to Christ. The wife is subject to her husband. Christ loves all humans. The husband is to love his wife, honor her and treat her with great and tender respect. The wife is to submit to her husband, love, respect and obey him. When human society keeps that divinely-ordained relationship, harmony will prevail. To break that relationship invites chaos.

Let us conclude with this observation. God loves you, whether you are male or female. Christ has died for you, whether you are male or female. You are of great value to God made in the image and likeness of God-whether you are male or female. The distinctions of male and female pertain to human society and relationships, but they make no difference with God. *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus...There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”* Galatians 3:26,28.

PARENTS ARE HEAD OVER THE CHILDREN

God's "chain of command" extends through all the extremes of human society. (I Corinthians 11:3) sets forth the scope of authority. God is supreme. Jesus is second in authority. The man is third in authority. The woman is fourth. At last come the minor children who have not reached responsible adulthood. It is essential to the functioning of human relations that such an order be maintained. God has decreed it so.

There are several proofs evident from human reason and biblical principles that indicate the wisdom of children being subject to their parents. Here are some, which are worthy of consideration.

Care

God made parents to be over their children because of the helplessness of the human infant. There is hardly another newborn in all of creation that is as helpless for so long a time as the human infant. Baby ducks can swim. Baby alligators can find their own way to the water. But a baby human is totally helpless. A human infant cannot walk, talk or even feed itself. All those needs must be met by the supervision of a human parent.

The parent provides food, sanitation, protection and training for the infant. The child is taught to talk, to feed itself and otherwise become sufficient in meeting its daily needs. Knowing such helplessness of the infant, God commissions each parent, "*Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages*" Exodus 2:9. Blessed is the parent whose joy is serving as God's agent in the rearing of a child.

Discipline

God made parents to be over their children in order to exercise discipline. Every person needs the discipline of loving authority. The Bible says, "*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him*" Proverbs 22:15. Again, it says, "*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame*" Proverbs 29:15.

God disciplines His spiritual children and requires parents to discipline their natural children. Proverbs 3:11,12 reads, "*My son despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*" Hebrews 12:5-11 develops that theme, pointing out that the proper exercise of discipline is proof of sonship, evidence of love, for God's glory and our good, Parents can do no better than to discipline their children as God disciplines His.

Conduct

God made parents to be over their children and holds them responsible for the conduct of their children. Eli was a high priest of God in ancient Israel. His two sons followed him into the priesthood and served under his administration. They were scoundrels. They perverted the offerings of the Lord and led the worshipers in acts of immorality. God warned Eli to correct them, but he did not. Finally, judgment was announced in these words: *“I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not”* I Samuel 4:10-22. Lack of control of one’s children can disqualify a man from being the pastor or deacon of a church (I Timothy 3:4,12). Responsibility and accountability go hand in hand. God gave parents authority over their children because He holds them responsible for the conduct of their children.

Blessing

God made parents to be over their children and promised special blessings to those who live by that order. The fifth of the Ten Commandments is expressed in Exodus 20:12 with these words, *“Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”* Deuteronomy 5:16 expands the wording somewhat: *“Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”* The New Testament takes up those statements and refers to the command to honor and obey parents as *“the first commandment with promise”* Ephesians 6:2,3.

Why honor to one’s parents essential? Why is obedience to that command accompanied by a promise of long life and security? Obedience to parents is an indication that one has learned to live in submission to duly constituted authority. (That is essential to a stable society.) It also indicates a deep reverence toward God and willingness to obey Him. Proverbs 10:27 reads, *“The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.”*

Decree

God made parents to be over their children by His divine decree. It is that way because God said it should be that way, not because human society concluded it to be preferable.

Consider the specific commands of God. *“Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my Sabbath: I am the Lord your God”* Leviticus 19:3. Respect for parents is established on the basis of the sovereignty of God. *“Honor thy father and thy mother”* Exodus 20:12. Respect for parents is commanded as one of ten laws, which govern the whole society of mankind. *“Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother”* Deuteronomy 27:16 Disrespect for parents merits the

condemnation and judgment of God. The word of God makes it quite clear that to respect parents is to obey God, and to disrespect them is to merit the judgment of God.

Penalty

God made parents to be over their children and pronounced a severe penalty for disobedience to His ordinance. How severe a penalty was executed on one who disobeyed God's law concerning the child's submission to the parent? God commanded the death penalty for dishonor to one's parents.

(Deuteronomy 27:16) announced that a disobedient child was under the curse (which means the judgment) of God. Exodus 21:15 decrees death for one who strikes his parent. (Leviticus 20:9) decrees death for one who curses his parent. Deuteronomy 21:18-21 decrees death for one who lives in rebellion against his parents. Jesus lent His personal authority to that severe sentence, saying, "*God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*" Certain people were explaining away the seriousness of such offense, so Jesus continued, "*Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition*" Matthew 15:3-6. The ordinance of God still stands.

A day of parental neglect and youth rebellion needs to heed the message of Holy Scripture at this point. It is wrong for a man to rebel against Christ. It is wrong for a woman to rebel against man. It is wrong for children to rebel against their parents. It is wrong because God has established the order of authority: God, Christ, man, woman and then children.

In this generation, as in every other generation, parents are responsible to train their children, and children are responsible to submit to their parents. God has decreed it so with an eternal decree.

CHILDREN ARE SUBJECT TO PARENTS

God has decreed that man should live under the government of principles of right and wrong. Submission to authority is expressed in; the spiritual realm by man's humility and obedience before God. Submission to authority is expressed in the civic realm by man's obedience to the government under which he lives. Submission is expressed in the educational realm by the student's submission to the faculty and administrators of the school. Submission is expressed in the marital realm by the wife's submission to her husband. Submission is expressed in the family realm by the child's submission to his parents. All of life is lived under authority, for God has ordained it that way.

We have come to the fifth of a series of studies under the general theme "Your Link in the Chain." We are concerned with tracing God's chain of command (the hierarchy of authority, which He has established) in human society. (1) We have seen that God made man to be subject to authority in all areas of life, for fallen man is able

to govern everything except himself. (2) We have seen that God is sovereign over all and that Jesus Christ is the Master of man. (3) We have seen that God set man to be head over the woman in all home relationships. (4) We have seen that God set parents to be head over their children in all areas of life. (5) Now, let us look at the other side of that fourth principle and investigate the requirement that children are to be subject to the parents God has set over them. This fifth study will conclude the series of God's chain of command.

Children's Place

Think about the place of the child in the home, according to God's purpose. God has designated a place for the child; He set up the first home and is concerned about the relationships that exist between family members.

A child is the gift of God to his parents. Jacob recognized that and presented his family to his brother as "*the children which God hath graciously given thy servant*" Genesis 33:5. The birth of children is always attributed to God in the Biblical record and is looked upon as the special favor of God to a family. Psalm 113:9 reads, "*He maketh thee barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.*" Psalm 127:3 testifies, "*Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*"

Our technical age has brought such understanding of conception, development of the fetus and the process of birth that we have lost some of the wonder of childbirth. It is still a marvel, however, and children are still a gift of God to their parents.

A child is intended of God to be a delight to his parents. The psalmist wrote of the happiness of the father with a house full of children Psalm 127:4,5. The wish, "*May your 'wife be as fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; and thy children like olive plants round thy table,'*" was common and appropriate in ancient Israel (Psalm 128:3). Grandchildren are said to be the crown of old men (Proverbs 17:6). Even Jesus said, "*Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven*" Matthew 19:14. The birth of a child has always been considered an occasion of joy, and we still extend glad congratulations to the parents of a new baby. God designed it to be so.

A child is intended of God to be the responsibility of his parents. (Deuteronomy 6:7) says it is the responsibility of parents to teach the things of God diligently unto the children. Proverbs 22:6 admonishes the parents to train up the child in the way he should go. (Ephesians 6:4) instructs parents to rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (II Corinthians 12:14) teaches that the parents are to provide for the physical necessities of their children.

It is a glad privilege to be a parent. It is an equally solemn responsibility. Children and parents alike should consider the plan of God for the home, and each should fill his place in that plan.

God's Requirements

Consider the requirements God has placed upon a child in relation to his parents. Two primary things are required.

The child is required to have the right attitude toward his parents. It is summarized in the commandment: "*Honor thy father and thy mother*" Exodus 20:12. Filial honor is a child's act of respect toward his parents and obedience toward God. Even when a person has grown to be an adult, and his parents are aged, he is to hearken to their counsel and respect their person (Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 23:22). There never comes a time when a child is free from the divinely imposed obligation to honor his parents by his respectful attitude.

The child is required to have the right actions toward his parents. He is to obey them. The Bible says, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right*" Ephesians 6:1. It urges, "*Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord*" Colossians 3:20. Finally obedience is a child's act of respect toward his parents and obedience toward God. The child never becomes so old, nor so wise that he is free from the divinely imposed obligation to honor his parents by his obedient actions.

Practical Suggestions

Consider these practical suggestions regarding a child's relation to his parents. I will list them without particular comment. Think on them.

Show respect for parental authority by obedience without complaint and without hesitation. Delay obedience is disobedience. Obey with the will as well as with the body, giving honor to parental authority.

Cultivate a sense of appreciation for what your parents do for you, things you may have been taking for granted. Thank them for food, clothing, financial security, home, etc.

Earn your independence. Don't demand it. Deserve trust before you demand it. Show your maturity by your dependability.

Expect God to speak to you through your parents, and be teachable by what He says. Expect to hear, "Wrong action," or "Right action, wrong time," or "Right action, wrong attitude," or "Right action, right attitude, right time." God will chip and polish you, using your parents as His agents, to help you become what He wants you to be.

Love and honor your parents because of WHO they are, not because of WHAT they are. You are accountable to them; they are accountable to God. And their accountability is much more serious than yours.

Such demands can be met successfully only in a sincere commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust Him as your Savior. Yield to Him as your Lord. He will enable you to live your life as His willing servant, and true happiness will be your temporal and eternal reward.

You can and will experience true happiness as you find and fill your link in God's chain of command.