



HERE'S THE
DEAL

Small Group Discussion Guide



PREPARATION

■ **STUDY**

Spend the week studying Ephesians 6:1–3. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

■ **DETERMINE**

Determine which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group.

■ **PRAY**

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their openness to God's Word.

■ **LANDING POINT**

Honoring your parents is a command from God that promises to bring blessing to your life.



GROUP DISCUSSION

■ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

■ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

■ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

■ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

A HIGH CALLING

Motherhood is a high calling to bring children closer to God by showing them what He is like. In the home, a mother has great influence in helping her children understand the heart of God. Through a mom, a child can see His love, kindness, discipline and care in practical, everyday ways.

This kind of parenting isn't easy. It requires intentionality and sacrifice. It requires a self-giving love that may (or may not) be acknowledged with gratitude. This week your group will celebrate the significant role mothers play in our lives and learn how we can honor God by honoring them.

Q: *What's one special thing someone did for you or gave you for Mother's Day? Or what's something you did for or gave your mother on Mother's Day?*

Q: *Why is Mother's Day special? Why can it be a hard day for some?*



LEARN

Select 2–3 questions to discuss as a group.

HONOR IN OBEDIENCE

Previously in Ephesians, Paul has been addressing submission and what it means to submit to one another in the fear of the Lord (5:21). Becoming a Christian is about learning to live in harmony within your community, especially in the home. That's why Paul encourages wives to submit to their husbands (5:22–24), husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church (5:25–30) and for children to obey their parents in the Lord (6:1–3).

Paul says that a child's obedience is right. What makes it right (or just)? It conforms to God's holy standard established in His Law. God has given parents authority over their children, and it is right, according to God's design, that children should honor their parents with obedience. Honoring your father and mother is one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:12).

While Christians are no longer under the Law (Galatians 3:13, 5:1), they are under obligation to see it as righteous and good and a reflection of God's holy character. In daily life, the Christian is enabled to live by the principles of the Law through the help of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1–4).¹

🗣️: *How can a parent practically help his or her child learn obedience? What are some harmful or unproductive ways of doing this?*

🗣️: *What does it mean to keep the principles of the Law?*

BLESSING IN OBEDIENCE

Paul says the command to obey your parents is one that comes with a promise—blessing. He is giving his readers a principle to live by. Warren Wiersbe puts it this way:

When children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger, and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives. But life is not measured only by quantity of time. It is also measured by quality of experience. God enriches the life of the obedient child no matter how long he may live on the earth. Sin always robs us; obedience always enriches us.²

Children should be obedient to their parents because it is commanded by God. If a child is obedient, they will experience blessing in their lives and avoid many of the painful consequences that come out of disobedience. If a child is disobedient, they are choosing to rebel against their parents and, ultimately, against God.

Q: How would you explain the Wiersbe quote above to a young child?

Q: Recall a time when you experienced the blessings of obedience.



LIVE

Select 2–3 questions from this section to answer.

A MOTHER'S PLACE

Overall, God calls mothers everywhere to reflect His character. This can be done in countless ways, both big and small. The following are some ways a mother can show her children what God is like:

- *Influence.* Discipleship begins in the home. There a child learns what it looks like to live in a relationship with God. A mother is a witness to her children of what it looks like to follow Jesus, to obey Him and to honor Him.
- *Instruction.* A child first learns to love and seek God's wisdom from his or her parents. A mother should be intentional about instructing her children to walk in the wisdom that God gives us in His Word.
- *Discipline.* The Lord lovingly disciplines His children because He knows what's best for them. In the same way, a mother can discipline to correct sinful, foolish behavior, and lead a child to learn and grow.
- *Encouragement.* God is also tender and patient with us. He encourages us to grow and mature so that we can experience the joys and blessings of following Him. A mother can encourage her children as they go through the different stages of their development.
- *Awe.* We should all be filled with awe of our God, who is both the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and is also intimately acquainted with the depths of our hearts. To fear the Lord is to stand in awe of who He is (and who we aren't, by comparison). A mother can help point her children to just how awesome God is and how the right response to that is fear (or reverence) and obedience.

🔗: See the list above. In which of these areas do you feel strong? Where do you need to grow? If you're not a mother, apply this to your relationships with others.

🔗: What's one thing you can do this week to be more in awe of God?

HOW TO HONOR YOUR MOTHER

Here's the deal. God commands you to obey your parents. He wants you to honor them because it honors Him. What does obedience and honor look like? How can you live it out? Let's highlight five ways you can honor your mother (or anyone):

- *Empathy.* Understand the difficult task that your mother has (or had) in raising you. Empathy goes a long way to helping you understand the enormous challenge that comes with raising children.
- *Grace and Forgiveness.* Like you, your parents are not perfect. They make mistakes. They try and fail often as we do. Learn to forgive and extend grace where your mother or father hasn't been perfect.
- *Words.* A mother can go a long time without receiving thanks or gratitude from her children. Give your mother the gift of words. Thank her for the part she has played in your life. Gratitude is a beautiful thing that makes a mother feel loved and valued.
- *Care and Support.* Mothers and fathers have needs just like the rest of us. Be intentional about seeing where those needs are. You can even ask, "What do you need from me?" Find out ways you can serve your mother's needs.
- *Provision.* Many children find themselves in a place where they now have to care for their aging parents. The Bible makes it clear that children should take responsibility for providing for their family members, including parents (1 Timothy 5:3, 8).

🔗: What would it look like to show more empathy towards your mother?

🔗: Is there anything holding you back from extending grace and forgiveness to your mother? If yes, what is it?



LEAD

Select 1 question from this section to ask your group.

SEE THE SACRIFICE

On Mother's Day we celebrate the countless sacrifices a mother makes in her life. Her example of self-giving, sacrificial love should point us to One who sacrificed His life to bring us ultimate blessing—eternal life in a relationship with God. What a mother does in the home and in the lives of her children should be a reflection of Jesus. In Him, we see the character of God lived out in human flesh, in the normal, everyday challenges of life. He experienced those difficulties and was obedient to the end. In Jesus we see what it truly means to honor God, our Heavenly Father.

Q: *How is sacrifice such a powerful reflection of God's loving character?*

Q: *What are some practical ways that you can honor one another in your group?*



PRAY

Thank God for the gift of motherhood. Thank Him that, through a mother, you can experience aspects of His character that bring you closer to Him. Pray for healing in your heart and in a relationship with your mom who might be harsh or estranged.



FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- Read Ephesians 5 and consider how Paul's instructions to walk in love and submit to one another in marriage can create harmony in a community or home.
- Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their lives.



COMMENTARY

WILLINGNESS TO SUBMIT The kind of submission God calls us to is one that is voluntary rather than forced. This is more than mere duty. It's a submission that comes from the heart. It models Jesus, who willingly submitted to the Father's purposes for His life. We also should be responsive and willing to submit to God and to others in Christian community out of love.³

DRAWING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT Paul quotes Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 to show that obedience to parents is a command established in God's Law.

LIMITS IN OBEDIENCE We must acknowledge that there are limits to a child's obedience. Child abuse—whether verbal, emotional or physical—is an issue in our culture, even in the church. “When children are asked to do something unethical, illegal or immoral, or when they are harmed or in danger of being harmed, the command to obey would be superseded by higher biblical principles of ‘obeying God rather than man.’”⁴

ENDNOTES:

1. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 53.
2. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 53.
3. Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 927.
4. Max Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, vol. 8, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 189.