

## **Making a Difference in the Family**

God gave each member of the family a role to play. Each one playing his or her part will make a difference in the family, as can be seen in Paul's instructions to the saints in Ephesus.

Christian wives are to place themselves under the control of their husbands as one means of showing that they are yielding to the Lord (5:22). God made man the head of the family, foreshadowing the relationship of Christ to the church. Jesus demonstrated His love for the church by giving His life for her. Husbands should be ready to sacrifice their lives for their wives (5:23-25). The self-sacrificing nature of the Savior is a perfect example for each husband to follow. Wives whose husbands are willing to die for them have little trouble with submission.

Children are instructed to keep on obeying their parents (6:1-3). The only limitation to this is the expression "in the Lord," which means a child may refuse to obey his or her parents if asked to do something wrong in the sight of God. The fifth of the Ten Commandments reads, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:5). Paul described it as the "first commandment with promise" because obeying and honoring one's parents is well-suited to developing a character that will cause one to live a long life on earth. Obedience requires one to grow in self-control, self-discipline, recognition of authority and a teachable spirit, all of which are necessary ingredients for a good life.

Fathers can facilitate the obedience of their children by not provoking them to wrath (6:4). Discipline is an important part of the parent and child relationship, but harsh discipline can cause a child to strike back. Inconsistency in discipline can lead to outbursts of anger. Fathers do not need to laugh about things a little child does and then spank for the same action when the child is a little older.

You can make a difference in your family! Godly parents can make a positive difference in their family.

*By Gary C. Hampton*