

# The Old Paths

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## “Children, Obey Your Parents”

Jarrod Jacobs

A well-known Bible passage is to be found in Ephesians 6:1. There, Paul wrote the Christians at Ephesus and said, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*” A parallel passage is found in Colossians 3:20 where Paul wrote, “*Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*” Such passages as these are powerful for several reasons. However, I am afraid that since we “know” Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20 so well, they actually escape our notice. Folks have become so familiar with the wording, that we fail to notice the meaning.

Usually, when such passages as Ephesians 6:1 or Colossians 3:20 are read, we direct our focus on to children, telling them that God expects them to obey Him as well as us (the parents). We might then turn to other passages which stress God’s expectation of a child’s obedience to his parents, as well as the example of Christ’s obedience to His parents (Lk. 2:51). We make the point that children must obey parents “in the Lord,” i.e., in connection with the teachings of Christ. While we certainly understand the need for obedient children, is there not another point which needs to be stressed? Remember, a child cannot “obey” what he

has not been “told” to do! Therefore, when we read “*children, obey your parents...*” it is also a command to parents that we must be instructing our children so that they CAN obey the Lord and us! Parents, what instruction and guidance are you providing for your children?

Let us be honest and evaluate just who it is that is instructing and training our children on a daily basis. From Old to New Testament days, God expected parents to do it (Deut. 6:6-9; Eph. 6:4). Are we doing this, or are we allowing someone or something else to do our job? Are we allowing the TV to train our children? Are we allowing their friends, or other outside influences to infiltrate our children’s minds? Yes, I recognize that as children get older, they will choose to be around their peers more than their parents, but who is it that had that daily contact during the “formative” years?

Yes, Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20 teach children to obey their parents “in the Lord,” but this passage also places a great responsibility upon parents. How can untaught children “obey” the Lord? It is high time that parents recognize that they cannot go on “cruise control” or “auto-pilot” when it comes to parenting. Remember, “...*A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame*” (Prov. 29:15). Parents must be vigilant, realizing that God has blessed them with a precious soul (Ps. 127:3-5). Obedient children are the result of training parents!

## What Does The Bible Teach About Dating?

Don Martin, Denver, CO

Since dating is a precursor to marriage and the family, it is of the utmost importance. However, as far as the Bible and plain teaching about dating, the Bible does not really speak. There are, though, applicable biblical principles.

**Courtship in Bible days.** There is no question about America having one of the most permissive and unusual courtship and marriage practices known in history. During Bible times, the choice of a bride was usually made by the relatives or a friend appointed by the bridegroom. Sometimes consent of the maiden was sought, but even then, it appears to have been subordinate to the previous consent of the father and adult brothers (Gen. 24:51, 34:11). In America, it is not uncommon that dating starts when the girl is fourteen to sixteen, she makes all her decisions, and is often married at sixteen to eighteen. There is too often no advice or supervision from parents requested or offered. How tragic!

**Biblical principles to guide during dating.** As suggested, modern dating has many attendant problems, especially for the young. Dating is often a time of sexual danger and temptation. Virginity should be valued, but it is often lost during dating. Great care should be taken in being alone, surroundings, and general influences. The boy/girl or man/woman should be

primarily aware of substantive, spiritual qualities. Such as, will the boy or man make a good father and provider? Petting should be avoided, as it is lasciviousness and often ends in fornication (Gal. 5:19, I Cor. 6:18). Care should be taken to avoid dating a "put away" person and even the one who has scripturally put away a mate is at greater risk (Matt. 5:32, 19:9).

Being young should be a time of joy. Too often, though, youth, innocence, and purity are robbed because of our modern dating practice (Eccl. 11:9-12:7). Remember that the person you marry will be the person you date!

**[Editor's Note:** *Seeing as we are studying about marriage and the home in this quarter, I thought that the above article, and the one following would be good for inclusion at this time. We have several in this congregation who are dating, and I hope they will pay special attention to what brother Martin said. In thinking about dating and marriage, I suggest that you buy a little workbook written by brother L.A. Stauffer that is very good. It is entitled, Family Life: A Biblical Perspective. This book can be ordered through the Truth Bookstore in Bowling Green, KY (1-800-428-0121). Brethren, we only have one opportunity to raise our children. Let us do the best we can, and not waste a minute!!]*

## 10 Rules For Picking A Godly Mate

L.A. Stauffer, St. Louis, MO

*[The following is a brief outline and excerpts from lesson # 13 in brother Stauffer's book, Family Life: A Biblical Perspective.]*

1. **Pick a mate who respects God's word.** The ways of the world have nothing good to offer marriage and young people better believe it now — before they take those vows (Eph. 5:22-33, 6:1-4; I Tim. 5:14; Tit. 2:3-4).
2. **Pick a mate who has spiritual goals and values.** Husbands, wives, and children must be viewed as persons ... who shine with spiritual beauty.... Couples who think marriage can survive the materialistic values and goals of greed, lust, pleasure, and power are ignoring both the wisdom of God and the experience of man.
3. **Pick a mate who can adjust and compromise.** Adjustments and compromises are vital to happy marriages.
4. **Pick a mate who willingly corrects major flaws.** Major character defects easily degenerate into intolerable living conditions.

5. **Pick a mate who shows signs of maturity.** Marriage is not for kids.... Successful marriage calls for duty above whim and personal pleasure.

6. **Pick a mate who can and will communicate.** Husbands and wives cannot read one another's minds.... Communication is ... necessary to solve problems.

7. **Pick a mate who can offer more than physical attractiveness.** No direct relationship exists between physical attractiveness and qualities for a successful marriage.

8. **Pick a mate who knows the difference between sex and love.** Sex is essential and vital to marriage. But only when it is perceived as one of many avenues of love can it be properly used to show tender affection for a mate....

9. **Pick a mate who is a good friend.** The key question for newlyweds and "oldlyweds" is whether they are good friends ... enjoy each other's company ... are close companions.

10. **Pick a mate who views marriage as permanent.** Newlyweds who enter marriage with divorce as an option are not committed to the loving care that preserves relationships unto death.

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