

Family & Finances (Part 2)

Ephesians 6:1-4

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”— which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Questions Asked Regarding Family & Inheritance

What is the priority between family stewardship vs. the Kingdom?

What does the Bible say about wills?

How compatible with Christianity is the Asian (and "old money" European) ideal that money should stay in the family? The point being that the money is to take care of family?

Many Families are destroyed by money. Should parents split inheritances evenly? Can it be fair?

Recap

Favouritism - Principles of Impartiality & Individuality/Uniqueness in dynamic tension

No Partiality but Each person is treated according to their situations and character.

Inheritance - Principles of Love vs. Utility in Relationships

Not merely material inheritance but values, character and spirituality.

And now we turn to a third issue of familial fiscal responsibility.

Fiscal Responsibility

How have you felt neglected or provided for by your family?

What expectations does your family place on you regarding finances and the future?

How do you intend to provide for your family whether immediate or extended?

There are verses of Scripture that provide perspective beyond Ephesians 6.

Mark 7:1-12

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus ² and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

⁶ He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

*"These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.*

⁷ *They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.'*

⁸ *You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."*

⁹ *And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' ¹¹ But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— ¹² then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."*

Jesus was taking the pharisees to task for not allowing people to care for their parents. For the word of God, as Jesus understands it requires the honouring and loving of ones parents.

1 Timothy 5:3-8

³ *Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. ⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. ⁵ The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. ⁶ But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. ⁸ Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

In regard to caring for widows, the obligation is upon the children and family.

There is always a mutuality to the Christian life where we are declared righteous first by the way we relate with God then with those around us.

Principle of Mutuality

With favouritism & inheritances, the onus is placed upon parents in their care for their children.

But there is also the matter of how children are to care for parents.

In the Asian culture things are based on deep roots of obligation.

You are to always honour and support your parents.

In more western cultures, it is more an aspect of independence and individuation.

Both have blessings and pitfalls.

People have expectations of one another and those who are in between generations and cultures get stuck.

Instead of pointing fingers and tsk tsking others, we need to seek to understand.

Maturity and individuation.

So inasmuch as parents are not to place burdens upon their children but provide proper care children are not to neglect thier parents and provide proper care for them!

But in this, it is according to the best of your ability.

In so you show the Kingdom of God.

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Conclusion

Not everyone comes from a family where we are blessed.

Often times it is a mixed blessing and curse.

But as far as you can, this is God's instruction.

Take care of your family.

Both your parents and your children.

In so doing, heaven comes here.

In neglect of this, it is a taste of hell.

We have relationships between spouses, parents, children, siblings, in-laws, extended family. How you treat your family is a direct reflection of your life in the Kingdom of God.