

## Small Group Guide: "The Unified Life"

**\*\*Ephesians 6:1-4 | Week 14 of The Prison Epistles\*\***

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### ## Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

**\*\*Icebreaker Question:\*\*** What is one family tradition or household rule from your childhood that shaped who you are today? Was it positive or challenging?

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### ## Sermon Summary

This week's message challenges the false division between "sacred" and "secular" life. Paul demonstrates that Spirit-filled living shows up most clearly in our everyday relationships—especially at home. The proof of redemption isn't in religious activities alone, but in how we treat people who have no power over us and offer us no benefit. Paul addresses children, fathers, and household relationships, showing that Christ's lordship transforms even the most ordinary moments of life.

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### ## Key Scripture

**\*\*Ephesians 6:1-4\*\***

\*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may turn out well for you, and that you may live long on the earth. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.\*

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## ## Discussion Questions

### ### Understanding the Text

1. **The Hinge Verse:** Read Ephesians 5:21 together. How does "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ" set the foundation for all the relationships Paul addresses in chapter 6?
2. **Revolutionary Teaching:** In Paul's Roman world, addressing children and servants as moral agents before God was radical. How does this reality change the way we should view people in "lower-power" positions today?
3. **Obedience "In the Lord":** What does the phrase "in the Lord" add to the command for children to obey? What are the boundaries of this obedience?

### ### Going Deeper

4. **Honor vs. Obey:** Paul uses both "obey" (verse 1) and "honor" (verse 2). What's the difference? How might honoring parents look different across various life stages (childhood, young adulthood, adult children with aging parents)?
5. **The Promise:** Ephesians 6:2-3 references "the first commandment with a promise." How does honoring the transfer of wisdom from generation to generation help societies and families flourish? What happens when we reject this principle?
6. **To Fathers:** Why do you think Paul specifically addresses fathers in verse 4 rather than both parents? What does "do not exasperate your children" look like in practical, everyday situations?

### ### Personal Application

7. **Sacred vs. Secular:** The sermon challenged the tendency to divide life into "sacred" (church, prayer) and "secular" (home, work) categories. Where do you most struggle to let Jesus cross that dotted line in your life?

8. **Provoking to Anger:** The sermon listed several things that provoke children: "Harshness without tenderness. Discipline without relationship. Rules without grace. Demanding they live what you've never modeled. Presence of body without presence of heart." Which of these resonates most with your own experience—either as a child or as a parent?

9. **Formation, Not Just Information:** Paul calls fathers to bring children up in the "discipline and instruction of the Lord." How is raising disciples different from raising successful, moral, or well-behaved children?

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### ## Key Takeaways

1. **Christ-likeness transforms ordinary relationships.** The proof of redemption shows up in how we treat people at home, at work, and everywhere else—especially those who cannot benefit us.

2. **Voluntary submission reflects Christ.** We submit to one another because Christ "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself" (Philippians 2:6-7).

3. **Honor means treating someone as weighty.** To honor is to give weight and significance to someone through our actions, words, and attention—not just our feelings.

4. **Christian parenting aims at Christlikeness.** The goal is not achievement or morality alone, but modeling Christ so children become Christ-like themselves.

5. **Obedience has boundaries.** We obey "in the Lord"—when human authority contradicts God's commands, we obey God (Acts 5:29).

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## ## Practical Applications

### ### For Everyone:

- **Speak Weight:** Take the Life Change Challenge from the sermon. Choose one person in your household this week and tell them specifically what you see in them that reflects Christ. Give them the gift of being treated as weighty and significant.

### ### For Children/Young Adults:

- Identify one area where you've been offering grudging compliance rather than joyful obedience. How might viewing obedience as "to the Lord" change your attitude?

- If you're an adult child, consider one practical way to honor your parents this week (a phone call, a note of gratitude, asking for their wisdom on a decision).

### ### For Parents:

- Examine your parenting: Are you providing "presence of body without presence of heart"? Schedule 15 minutes of undistracted time with each child this week.

- Reflect honestly: In what ways might you be exasperating your children? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal one pattern you need to change.

- Identify one truth about Christ you want to model this week, not just teach.

### ### For the Whole Group:

- Discuss how your small group can better honor the wisdom of older generations. Consider inviting an older believer to share their story or wisdom at an upcoming meeting.

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### ## Closing Reflection

#### \*\*Question for Silent Reflection:\*\*

Where is the biggest gap between your Sunday faith and your everyday relationships? What is one specific step you can take this week to close that gap?

#### \*\*Closing Prayer Focus:\*\*

- Thank God for the relationships He has placed in your life as opportunities to reflect Christ.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit's power to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- Pray for wisdom and grace for parents in the group.
- Pray for hearts willing to honor and obey "in the Lord."

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### ## For Next Week

Read Ephesians 6:5-9 in preparation for next week's discussion on work, service, and relating to authority in the workplace.

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**\*\*Memory Verse:\*\***

**\*"Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."\* - Ephesians 5:21**