

# Ephesians 6: Children & Parents in the Church

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[ 0 : 00 ] Ephesians chapter 6 verses 1 to 4, children and parents. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Thank you very much.

Thanks, Ralph. Sorry, I'll just get myself adjusted here.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Okay, good morning, everyone. Today, I want us to look at the topic of, well, in particular children, but also parents in the church.

And many of us this morning fall into the category of being a parent, and so I want to speak to you especially. And some of us fall into the category of children. I want to speak to you especially as well.

[ 1 : 24 ] Some are children here legally, because, well, you're under 18, so you're a child. And some are here as children practically. So, okay, you've gotten over 18, but mom and dad are still paying most of the bills.

And you haven't quite reached full independence yet, have you? Okay, so whether you're a legal child or a functional child, listen up this morning. Now, if you're not a child or a parent, I know what you're already thinking.

Well, please don't think that you have a sermon-free Sunday ahead where the old lights can switch off and you can start staring at the ceiling. Because I want us all to see, and I hope this is what we see, that discussions around children and parents, what we're going to look at this morning, even though we're talking about children and parents in a physical family, we're doing so in the context of another family.

And the context of that other family is the church, a spiritual family, which we are all part of, regardless of our status as a parent or a child or anything like that.

So this sermon is for all of us as the church, as God's people. But let's come back to parents and children. Why are you here with family this morning?

[ 2 : 43 ] Have you ever sat down as a family and had that conversation? Why do we go to church? For parents, it might be as simple as this, and this is just one option.

You come to church. Your children are going to come to church. You see value in the church providing a stabilizing influence on your child's life, and that's going to equip them into the future and somehow help them in the long term to have a successful and a happy and a well-adjusted life. So you're here as parents. Your children are going to come, and you see benefit to that. And if you're here as a child, well, then, you know, it's very possible that you're only here because it's expected.

Maybe you're just here out of habit. It's grand, but really it's a bit samey each week. I've recounted the bricks behind the preacher's head a hundred times, and, you know, they haven't changed in all that time.

It's not something I look forward to. You know, none of my friends are here. It's just a bit of a, I don't know. I'm sure I'm here anyway. Now, don't misunderstand me when I say that about parents and motivation and children and motivation.

[ 3 : 52 ] It's great, and it's good that you are here this morning for whatever reason. There is genuinely no better place to be on a Sunday than gathering here as a church that is being built by Jesus.

But let's consider what it means to be here as children in the church, and let us consider what it means to be here as parents in the church. Is it possible that we can shape our understanding and

motivation this morning by using the Word of God, that sharp sword that divides to the very heart of the issue, so that we can take the Word of God and take children and parents and bring the Word to bear on it and learn from the Bible?

Then, as we come as a child or as we come as a parent, we're coming together, together in God's community, not just out of habit or expectation or compulsion, but we will want to come because of the irresistible call of God on our lives, to be in fellowship with Him and to be in fellowship with other believers.

And then that burden and guilt that comes from those faulty ideas of church attendance can be replaced by the big picture of God's kingdom.

And, you know, that's where I want to be, and I hope it's where you want to be this morning as well. The first thing is that I think our vision is really quite dull.

[ 5 : 31 ] For many reasons, you know, we like verses in the Bible like Ephesians chapter 6, verses 1 to 4, and we are going to focus on these verses this morning. The verses, as you look at them in your Bible, they're short, direct.

You know, here are some things for children. We move on. Verse 4, here are some things for fathers. Mr. Preacher, we say, just give me a few stories to help me understand.

Give me a few extra applications to think about. So I read these verses, help me understand, and give me a few stories, a few applications, and maybe even encourage me to practice them this week.

And that's often how we come to our Bibles and maybe come on a Sunday. We want the Bible to function like a kind of a look-up manual for life. So it kind of goes like this.

Well, career, career. I should look at my Bible. So we try and find some verses on work, and that's it. We dip in and find those verses about work. And we want to tune up our marriage. You know, we feel that tension.

[ 6 : 33 ] And, well, the Bible, it's a marriage manual. You know, I can find some verses. Actually, if I look back at the end of chapter 5, wives and husbands, some good verses, maybe they'll come in handy someday.

I must remember that, Ephesians 5, marriage. Children and how to raise them. Well, there are verses for that, aren't they? We have some in front of us. But instead of doing that, if we take the time, like we're doing now, and we read the Bible as it is, as the Word of God to us as believers, I think we quickly find out that it's not really a parenting manual after all.

It's not really functioning as a marriage manual after all. You see the Bible. The Bible, if it's a manual at all, it's a manual on how to know God.

That's what the Bible is primarily. So as we open it up and look for verses about children, if we want to think about children and parenting, I want us to remember two things. And the first thing is that, actually there aren't that many verses directly about children at all.

In the New Testament letters, there are just two passages, I think, and I'm open to correction, that are directed to children. So there's the one that we've read in Ephesians, these couple of verses here, in Ephesians chapter 6, and there's nearly identical words in Colossians chapter 3, also written by the Apostle Paul, so the same author.

[ 7 : 59 ] And he has similar things to say in both places. So the Bible has very little, in terms of direct commands, about living as Christian children.

So the Bible has very little direct commands, directed to Christian children. There's maybe less than five in total in the New Testament. And the second thing I want us to notice, as we go about trying to look at children and parenting the Bible, is that if we take that approach of just looking at those verses, we're going to really miss what God is saying to children, if we just focus on those verses. In our eagerness to want to make life simple and easy, we just miss the point. You see, the most amazing thing about Ephesians chapter 6, and these verses 1 to 4, is the context in which Paul is addressing children.

You see, Paul's letter is written to believers in the church, and we see that right from the beginning. Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 1. If you turn back to the start of Ephesians, you'll see that.

Paul is very good at introducing himself, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.

[ 9 : 21 ] Saints, or holy ones, or those that have been called out of darkness and called into the light. That's who Paul is writing to. So when Paul turns then, if we get to chapter 6 and verse 1, and he says, children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right, the children that he's speaking to

here are part of that group.

From chapter 1 and verse 1, it's the same group. It's the saints in Ephesus. Believers. Children are part of the church.

Children are there as believers, as those who have been born again, as those that are able to sit in the congregation and have a letter from the apostle Paul read out to them, a letter that applies to them from chapter 1, verse 1, all the way through to chapter 6 and verse 24.

And then when we hit 6, 1, and he speaks to children, it's in that big context. It's not that everything else that's gone before and everything else that goes after doesn't apply to children in the church. Not at all. All of it applies. You see, as I said, I think our hearts are quite dull at times, and our vision is quite dull. We want this book to function like a rule book, to sort our lives out.

[10:37] That's our tendency, isn't it, in our hearts. We like the law. We like the rules that we can measure ourselves against. And the Lord instead offers us this amazing book, a book that's full of poetry, a book that's full of history and prophecy, music, proverbs, and instruction, so that we can know God in ways that we would never know Him if it was just a manual.

Imagine if it was just a book of things to do. Would we know the Lord? No, but it's the way all those passages interact and the richness and the depth of what God has given us.

So let's expand some of our horizons this morning and consider children by seeing what the church is.

And there's a number of things I just want to look at from Ephesians. Believing children are included in God's new people. There's lots of images to describe the church, and there's no one image that captures everything.

But one of the images that Paul uses to help us understand the church is that of a new people of God or a new person of God. He tells us that those who were previously outside of God's plan, they are the Gentiles, those who were uncircumcised.

[11:55] And to be a Gentile basically meant that you weren't a Jew. So there was one national group called the Jews who were circumcised. And in every other nation in the world, I assume all of us here, and nations all over the world, all of those other people were considered Gentiles.

And they were, in a sense, outside of God's plan, or it looked like they were outside of God's plan. But those who were previously outside, because of the coming of Jesus, have been included in God's people.

And that means some radical changes for the people of God in the New Testament. And we see that in chapter 2. So if you could turn to chapter 2 in your Bibles, I think it'll be a help.

Chapter 2, and reading verse 11. Therefore, remember that formally, you who were Gentiles by birth and called uncircumcised by those who call themselves a circumcision, that done in the body by the hands of men, remember that that time you were separate from Israel, separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise without hope and without God in the world.

And this is the big but. But now, in Christ Jesus, you who once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace who has made the two one.

[13:16] You see that? Who has made the two one and destroyed the barrier, the dividing line of, dividing wall of hostility by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.

And this is the key bit. His purpose was to create himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross by which he put to death their hostility.

So you see, we have Jews who believed in Jesus and we have Gentiles who believed in Jesus. And they've come together and they are God's new one man or God's new people.

And we need to remember that so when we come to Ephesians chapter 6 verse 1 and we read children, obey your parents and the Lord for this is right, that Paul is writing to believe in children. And Paul sees children in the church as part of this new man. It is a new humanity that's made up of young and old who have been reconciled together regardless of age if they believe through Jesus' death.

[14:22] So as we gather, as we gather as adults, as we gather as children, as children, we're gathering as God's new people. You see, Jesus in his death has torn down all kinds of barriers.

We see here that he's torn down barriers between the Jews and the Gentiles, those who are on the inside and those who are on the outside. Jesus' death tears down barriers between men and

women, between races, between gender, between status and community.

Tears down barriers, I believe, of age as well between an adult and a child. This is not a community that you were born physically into. You don't inherit traits.

We don't inherit the name Christian because of our parents. You know, we named our son, our eldest son, Christopher. And that means one who carries Christ in his heart.

So, you know, that sounds great. But in naming him Christopher, it didn't make him carry Christ in his heart. You understand that. It doesn't, just because we gave him the name, doesn't mean that changed him fundamentally.

[ 15 : 30 ] But it is our hope for our son that as he grows and as he learns he puts his trust in Jesus so his name would become true eventually that he would be one who carries Christ. But it doesn't function like that.

We don't bequeath our belief to our children. No, this is a community, the church, that you are born spiritually into. The new people of God means that children are here as believers in their own right. Children are here as believers on the same footing as adults because of their trust in Jesus. The second thing we want to see from Ephesians is that of the growing in the body of Christ.

Children are part of the body of Christ. Our connection to Christ is such that Paul can talk about us being the body of Christ and we need to be careful here in our heads the kind of image we have. It doesn't mean that Christ needs us in order in some way to be complete that apart from his body Christ is somehow less than God. If it wasn't for us well then Christ would be going around like a disembodied head with no limbs and no torso.

[ 16 : 41 ] Rather to say that we are his body is that we are united by faith to Jesus and we become like Jesus. And another way that we are his body is the idea of growing together.

So we are united to Christ we are like Christ and therefore are his body. But I think one of the most helpful things again an image of the church is that we are growing together children and adults alike.

There is one body and we see that in Ephesians chapter 4 and we are going to move a bit around Ephesians so it is good if you can keep your Bibles open. Ephesians chapter 4 you see there at the start of chapter 4 verse 4 there is one body and one spirit.

And as you go down through those verses Paul goes on to speak of the gifts that God has given to the church so that if we come down let's see to Ephesians chapter 4 verse 12 and he talks about the gifts.

The gifts are given to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

[ 17 : 55 ] And down to verse 15 chapter 4 instead speaking the truth in love we will in all things grow up into him who is the head that is Christ and from him the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love so as each part does its work.

It's a beautiful picture of the church as a living organism full of life as it grows towards maturity. Each member of the body has an important part in supporting the others. Children that love Jesus I don't know if you've thought about this children that love Jesus and know Jesus have the spirit of Christ living in them as much as you as an adult as the spirit of Christ which means that they display the fruit of the spirit and I believe have gifts from the spirit gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit to children so they can help build the body they are part of this body building work so we need to consider how children can serve and minister in this church in the church and in this church in particular and that's I don't have time to expound that but it's a thought I want us to take away this morning and consider further how can we actively include our children in this body work because these verses it's important now finally in this part believing children need to keep coming back to the gospel message believing children and adults you see the reason why we're part of the body and the reason why we're growing into

God's new people is because we believe the same message the same unique message of Jesus Christ so our growth together as the body of Christ into the people of God is only because we have been made alive in Christ in the first place children you are not saved and I have to reinforce this again you are not saved by your parents faith children you are not saved by how well you obey them in the home children you are not saved by your ability not to fight with your brother and sister okay they are not the things that save you children you come into the family of God and the body of

Christ because of grace because of grace undeserved love that's been shown to you by your heavenly father I want to read a slightly longer section Ephesians chapter 2 from verse 1 if you'd like to turn there just the 10 verses there and just for us to take in the sweep of what it means to be born again it's an old fashioned phrase in some ways and one that drops out of usage sometimes in Christian circles but it's a good one to be born again for those that know the reality of what it is to be alive in Christ

I want you this morning adult and child alike to be reminded of these words to live again in the truth that you have been shown and if these words do not resonate with your heart then I think you need to ask am I still dead in my own sins now this is serious we're either alive or we're dead this morning to these words so I ask that as the word of God peels back the layers of your life ask yourself do these words of scripture do they do they do they do they penetrate and rest in my heart or do they cause a stabbing of my conscience Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 1 as for you you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient all of us also lived among them at one time gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts like the rest we were by nature objects of wrath but because of his great love for us

God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions it is by grace you have been saved and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus for it is by grace you have been saved through faith and it's not from yourselves it is the gift of God not by works so that no one can boast for we were God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do finally I want us to come back to

[ 23 : 10 ] Ephesians chapter 6 it might seem like a big detour but I think it's absolutely critical if we're going to look at verses like the ones in Ephesians chapter 6 that we look at that those ideas of the church and what it means firstly I want to come back again to those that don't consider themselves children or don't consider themselves parents or think they're past that stage please listen I think one application one thing to take on board is that you have a role to play you have a role to play as part of the new people of God to be a spiritual parent to others and I hope you see that being part of the community of God being a parent and being a child and those things are secondary we have a primary role and we can consider ourselves as spiritual parents to others and I believe especially you can be a spiritual parent to children in the church whether that's in direct service of something like creche or Sunday school like what's happening outside now or just by being here each

Sunday and offering a kind word of encouragement to our children to our kids in the church I hope that you see from Ephesians that your role in the body in the family of God absolutely matters okay so as we look now just the children and parents in particular don't don't think it's not for me it is all of it is in that context I trust it's plain and as we come to chapter six and verse one and read children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right that Paul is speaking directly to children in the church body he expects them to be there he expects the children to be in church in Ephesus hearing this letter read out and these children are believers and these children are part of the church in their own right all of this sections about section about relationships so starting from the middle of chapter five wives and husbands children and parents slaves and masters all of this section is about relationships within and transform because of the church that's the primary context so yes as I've said

Christ has made us all one the new people of God his body the church but that doesn't mean that the structures outside the church have somehow disbanded and there's no longer children or parents and that all are left are identical Lego versions of people in the church we're all the same that's not right no husbands and wives are still husbands and wives in the church children and parents are still children and parents in the church and slaves and masters or I guess more applicable to most of us the idea of employers and employees are still employers and employees in the church and you know are still slaves and masters in the church so I want to see that Paul is addressing children and parents as children and parents within the context of this body the church community so Paul can say then in chapter 6 and verse 1 children obey your parents in the Lord you see obedience is to be powered in children that know Jesus not by sheer will but they're to

have the help of the

Holy Spirit because they know Jesus themselves because these children have been born again they can obey their parents now in the Lord children do you know Jesus as your Lord then you should obey your parents in the Lord for this is right and that phrase at the end I think it gives us a sense that it's obvious it's obvious it's right the world over even apart from the Bible even if you didn't have the Bible even if you didn't know Jesus we simply know that being part of this creation part of this world that it is right and proper to obey our parents but now now you can do it as a believer in the life of the church as children and parents that are growing together in the body do you see that your obedience to your parents is transformed you grow together in the same body and the joy of that is someday that you're going to stand maybe near your parents before the Lord and at that point your identity is not going to be as children and parents but it's going to be as brothers and sisters in Christ isn't that amazing and I think of that as parents you know we stand with our children and they're our children but imagine standing with them that day and there are brothers or fellow brothers and sisters in Christ part of the body that have grown up in the body of Christ the new people of God that's the kind of vision that we need to keep in our minds now children you might ask this question this may be more practical how long do I have to obey for what are the limits well I think that's something that's going to depend on culture and context in Ireland 18 21 legally it's 18 so when you're 18 parents can kick you out your parents are legally responsible for you and you live under their rule at least until 18 and even after that time as I said you may remain dependent on your parents so as you go through college or maybe you're just trying to start to find your feet after school and work and you're still living at home things like that so it's open and [ 28 : 48 ] I think you need wisdom as to how you obey and particularly after 18 but and this is partly directed towards parents there should be an increasing sense of freedom as you grow up okay parents we need to be aware of that they're not for under 14 okay but the basic call on your life as a believer in the church as a child who believes towards your parents is to obey them okay I'm not going to fudge that or ignore that that's that's what the word says to you this morning but you are equal with your parents in Christ and you are equal in the church yet God in his wisdom has your parents in a role of authority that provides protection provides comfort and provides nurture for you that is why Paul also says that you're to honor your parents and that is something that stretches beyond 18 there's I don't think there's an end in sight there in doing so he says that it will go well with you and you may enjoy long life on the earth and there's a there's a general promise there and I think an indication that it's right for children to honor their parents for a long time and that that has a benefit to those children to those parents and I believe society as a whole one of the signs of the end times Paul says is that children will reject their parents and not be under their authority and that's a sign of things collapsing and being wrong so I think there is a benefit to children to parents and to society as a whole to see children honor their parents throughout their lives now to parents first for children

I'm off the hook now you can relax to parents and especially fathers now it does say fathers but I don't think it excludes mothers there's some argument that the word fathers here functions similarly to brothers in the Bible sometimes you see brothers and actually means brothers and sisters so this is this I think can be more generally addressed to parents but especially fathers and I think that's fair firstly what it doesn't say it doesn't say that you are to assert your authority over your children and make sure that they obey you I've looked I can't find it in these verses the command is to children to obey not fathers to make them and this is the same idea throughout this section for wives and husbands and for slaves and masters those that are in the position and I use this word carefully and don't misunderstand me those in the position of submission to good authority are commanded to live under that authority but husbands are not commanded to lord it over their wives parents are not told to rule over their children and masters are not told to dominate their slaves it's quite the opposite in all three cases the exercise of authority is to serve and to love and to care and to nurture there's no sense in any of this wives and husbands children and parents slaves and masters of of domination and forcing your will upon another so fathers what does it say if that's not what it's not what it doesn't say what does it say well I think possibly the wisest few words that could be written on this subject fathers do not exasperate your children do not exasperate do not embitter your children I hope you have a sense of what that means in exasperation and bitter in all your dealings with them when they push you right to the edge to anger when they disappoint you when they when they hurt you and when when things flare up you're not to respond with bitterness and

impatience you're not to make their hearts hard are your children displaying a hard heart that that could be down to you in which case you're failing to heed the word of God you're failing to heed the wisdom that is here you want to discipline your children and that is good and it's loving to care for your children in that way to discipline them but how can you demonstrate discipline to your son or daughter daughter when you lose the plot when you fly off the handle at the very moment that you say that you were doing it for their discipline have you thought about that that's that's hard stop think pray breathe does your child really need to be shouted at because they spilt that drink even if 30 seconds ago you told them just just just push it in a bit from the edge of the table love and then it spills and and you know the reaction are you showing any level of discipline yourself when you let loose with that barrage of shouts and commands and I lay bare like this for my own sake this morning I am often harsh and often hard with my own three precious children oh lord forgive me if I if I should ever embitter my children fathers and mothers do not exasperate your children for their hard hearts will will start to turn away from you as a parent and even turn away from the lord they might do their duty till they're 18 they might stick stick until then but believe me if you have embittered their hearts then they will be gone in an instant and it may be the hardest thing in the world to mend that bridge that has been destroyed over years of harshness but there is hope even if you are in that situation today thank god that even in our failures that he is the god of the impossible because it's about new birth which is something that the lord does the lord does in people's hearts so how then should you parent do not exasperate your children instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the lord you do it with the same love and grace that the lord has shown you as he has brought you into fellowship with jesus and with his church you are to to be a demonstration of the fruit of the spirit and that fruit that comes from growing together with other believers in the church in community teach your children by your words teach your children by your deeds what it means to be a follower of jesus and a faithful part of a church community it's tender tender training and instruction that's called to here and as your children begin to follow jesus help them to see that their sin goes right down deep into their hearts we want to correct the behavior and that is that is right to correct the behavior but as they grow show them the depth of their sin you see jesus has caused them if they are believers to be born anew and they can become more like jesus every day they can deal with the issue of sin in their hearts and god willing with her helpless parents and if your children don't follow jesus pray on your knees for them that the lord would save and keep them and if they continue not to follow through those early years i think we need to try and hold these verses and ensure that when they hit 18 that they're not embittered they're not bitter towards us and bitter towards the lord but that they will keep honoring their mother and father because they've seen gentleness and they've seen sacrifice each each and every day it's hard we can't change our children that's ultimately the lord's work but but we can seek to raise them so that past 18 they we have a relationship with them that they're not so hardened i'm conscious reading a section like this it kind of maybe portrays a particular ideal family you know mom dad children in the church isn't that wonderful and that's that's often not the case in church life i know for for many people here it's not that simple and not that straightforward and there are lots of things to think about and applications and i can't cover them all this morning i wish i could but there's one that i do want to come back to um in relation to children what if my parents don't believe and that's that situation i i found myself in growing up through the life of the church here and i know some people are in that situation say if my parents don't believe do i still need to obey what are the limits of that obedience if they tell me that i can't be baptized as a believer they say you can't go to church even can i disobey in those cases well i think obedience to parents even those that don't believe even if your parents don't believe that your obedience as a believer it is the right thing to do the end of verse one as we said for this is right it almost in a sense apart from our identity in christ it's just true in in the whole of creation so it should be the rare exception to disobey that's what i'm ultimately saying it should be a rare thing of course jesus taught us didn't he that our our ultimate loyalty is to the kingdom of god and that there are times where we'll be in conflict with family and parents so if your parents forbid you from following jesus in your heart and confessing jesus christ as lord and savior then yes yes at that point you you must disobey and you must proclaim that you follow jesus but baptism can wait until you're 18 being able to take part fully in the life of the church it might just need to take more time to develop over a longer period the lord knows your heart keep your respect for your parents and show them obedience and honesty as a forgiven sinner the lord sees your struggle the lord sees your struggle and more than that he knew jesus knew what it was like to be on this earth and at

different times to be estranged from his own mother and brothers and family jesus knew that he experienced that that tension between the call of god and the kingdom of god and the call of family and the kind of pressures he was under in his society so so so the lord knows the lord sees but i believe the lord still calls us to obey with those rare and few exceptions so just to conclude let us let us all welcome our believing children as part of the church let us together disciple and encourage them as people who who know the lord and love the lord and for those children sit among us that haven't yet expressed faith to see them as people in need to see and hear the gospel each and every week so that one day those children as well may join us together in the great multitude of forgiven sinners that will worship the lamb let's pray for that right now our father we we we we confess that our our view of of you our view of the bible is so low at times our vision is so dull and lord jesus i just want to thank you for the church and for the greatness of the church your your great plan of redemption through your body the church that there's no one word that can describe it we we thank you that that we can grow together as believers into the body of christ and be this new people of god and i thank you that our children the children in the church are as equal members of that as as anyone else and father i pray for my own children as they grow as they express faith in different ways that i would continue i pray for for for the other children in the church for the parents here who have children who are maybe older who have who have left that that don't follow christ now lord jesus in your great mercy grant them repentance and salvation that they would they would bow their knee and that they would remember the gospel that they have heard through many years and come back and confess and come to you and father there is no greater desire for a parent and then to want to stand with their children on that day before you as brothers and sisters in the lord worshiping together and lord in your mercy be gracious make that real in the life of this church for the children who are with us now and for those that have that have gone on lord that that don't follow you today lord be merciful for your glory in jesus name amen amen