

Paul opens this chapter of Ephesians by addressing the children.

This morning I'll scratch the surface of parenting

There are many scenarios today regarding parenting.

Each of us had a different upbringing, for some,

When and if we have children of our own,

- we have the opportunity to make a difference in their life

We have the opportunity to influence these young children,

This opening verse is a call to urgency. Children, obey your parents in the Lord,

It's a call to action.

The Lord has given many of us the task of raising children in the ways of the Lord.

And He has also given instruction to children.

With that said, I believe we are living in the last days.

Why?

2 Tim 3:1-4

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous (savage, violent, fierce) times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents (without natural affection meaning without family love), unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

To the Romans Paul said in chapter 1:

21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Rom 1:29-32

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

It shouldn't be of any surprise that "disobedient to parents" made this list of things we'd see in the last days.

Today there is a concerted effort in the world today to break down the family nucleus.

That's why Paul addressed the marriage relationship prior to any other. He said, wives, submit to your husbands.

There is stability in the home when

- the husband submits to the Lord,
- the wife submits to her husband and
- the children are submitting to their parents.

Satan is out to destroy families. Why? Because the family is a picture of Christ and the church.

Eph 6:1-4

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor (attitude) your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." 4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Prov 10:8

8 The wise in heart will receive commands,
But a prating (babbling) fool will fall.

The Hebrew verb for "will fall" speaks of something that "is ruined" and it comes from the verb "will rot."

Children are born rebels.

Proverbs 22:6 train a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

It's the responsibility of the parents to train the children.

A parallel verse to verse 1 is

Col 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Why should children to obey their parents? For it is right!

Solomon said in:

Prov 17:21

21 It is painful to be the parent of a fool;
there is no joy for the father of a rebel.

Prov 17:25

25 Foolish children bring grief to their father
and bitterness to the one who gave them birth.

"Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it - his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmates' toy, his uncle's watch. Deny him these once, and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness, which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He is, in fact, dirty. He has no morals, no knowledge, no skills. This means that all children-not just certain children-are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy, given free reign to his impulsive actions to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up to be a criminal- a thief, killer or a rapist." Minnesota Crime Commission harmlessonline.net 11/03

There are many factors which have contributed to the entitlement mentality.

Solomon said in:

Prov 29:15

15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom,
But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

Again, 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 "Honor (attitude, it's a state of high respect) your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:

Paul is quoting from Exo 20:12 and from Deut 5:16 which is the 5th commandment.

Deut 5:16

16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

The scribes and Pharisees made a big deal over the Gentiles not washing their hands prior to eating bread.

However, their complaint had nothing to do with hygiene, but a ceremonial cleansing to strip away defilement.

The real problem was that they valued the outward more than the inward.

And Jesus had some pretty harsh words for them.

Mark 7:6-13

6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

'This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
7 And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men – the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban" – ' (that is, a gift to God),

The Jews made up a tradition

- allowing them to escape the responsibility
- of honoring their father and mother.

They practiced what Jesus calls here in verse 11 "Corban."

In the OT "Corban" was a gift or an offering dedicated to God, Leviticus 2 speaks of such things.

In the WS NT Dictionary,

- this gift was used to excuse a person from doing
- his or her duty toward their parents.

Mark 7:12-13

12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Jesus said in Matt 15:

Matt 15:7-9

7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 "These people draw near to Me with their mouth,
And honor Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
9 And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

The Lord expects children to honor their parents.

I read something this week that said, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful to be as brilliant as our children thought we were when they were young and only half as stupid as they think we are when they’re teenagers.”

Why honor your parents?

3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

Eph 6:4

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Now Paul comes in and says, “hey, don’t provoke your children to wrath or anger.

To provoke is to exasperate them,

- don’t exercise your authority with harshness.

You can be a father and be absent.

Could it be that Paul addressed the “fathers” since it was an area of neglect in the Roman Greco world.

The Greek philosopher Socrates once wrote:

“Could I climb to the highest places in Athens, I would lift up my voice and proclaim; Fellow citizens, why do you turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth, and take so little care of the children to whom you must someday relinquish it all?”

Men have a lot of responsibility in raising children.

Our relationship with our children has two parameters, one negative and one positive. God outlined those parameters in two separate verses in the bible.

Col 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Eph 6:4b, “bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

Before I move on to the next section let me tell any of us in here that still have our parents. You owe them. Maybe you didn’t have the best of parents, but you owe them.

How can you pay, you pray!

Pray that they will love God with all of their heart, mind, soul and strength.

Your parents either are or were the security of your home.

Ps 127:1

1 Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.

ESV

Bondservants and Masters

5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Paul now address slaves.

He was saying, Slaves, be the best slave you can be.

Imagine the deep resentment slaves may have harbored in their heart. Imagine how some must have felt thinking that Christianity equated to slavery. Now Paul tells them, hey, be the best slave you can be.

I think the closest we come today to relating to the slave/master relationship is in the employee/employer relationship.

Regardless if you're an employee or an Employer:

- always remember to work as unto the Lord without complaining.

There is nothing worse than a complaining Christian

If you do want to complain

- then complain to the Lord because
- He's the one you're complaining to!

Be a light that shines bright in this darkening world.

We are to be obedient with fear and trembling. That fear we should have is being fearful of disobeying the Lord.

Paul says,
 6 ~~not with eyeservice~~, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

Eph 1:12

12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

When we work hard, and others see our efforts and they know we are a believer, that goes a long way.

Eph 6:7-8

7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

This is a reminder to us that the Lord sees in secret and will reward openly.

Eph 6:9

9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Slaves in Paul's day were not people in chains forced into labor and treated like property to be bought and sold. They were more of a social class than victims of racism, injustice or exploitation.

In fact, many were very intelligent people that were valuable to their owners.

We could summarize today and last week by saying,

- wives, submit to your husbands,
- husbands love your wives.
- Children obey your parents,
- fathers, don't provoke your children,
- slaves, obey your masters,
- and masters give up threatening.