

OBEDIENCE AND OUR CHILDREN

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”—COLOSSIANS 3:20

The above verse would be a great one to stick on the walls of our kids’ rooms, wouldn’t it? “Children, obey your parents in everything.” The most that would probably do is prompt a chuckle or two, but as parents, the onus is on us to teach our children obedience.

There are three basic reasons why learning to obey is crucial. Firstly, the main goal of obedience is to instill self-control, which, in turn, develops self-esteem. Children need structure, routine, direction and discipline. Every family has its own dynamics in this area, but the principle is simple in that children need boundaries – boundaries that are clearly defined, reasonable and enforceable. Children need to know what is allowed and what isn’t, and it’s within these boundaries they find security. They will test them, of course, and when they step out of them, there needs to be appropriate consequences. Teaching obedience is indispensable to our children becoming young adults who are self-controlled and behave with integrity.

Secondly, learning to obey develops our children’s lives personally as well as socially. It’s in a loving home they learn that life is not all about them, but about sharing and caring for others. Children can be rebellious, especially young teens, but we need to be a step ahead in teaching them obedience while they are young. One of the worst things we can do is to give them everything they want as that creates a sense of entitlement, which can be very damaging as they grow older. Obedience in our children prepares them for becoming conscientious people in the

work force, in rearing their own children and in enjoying lasting relationships.

Thirdly, and of utmost importance, teaching our children obedience will develop their spiritual lives. When the time is right it will be easier for them to bring their lives under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Proverbs 14:26 says, “He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress and for his children it will be a refuge.” We have a sovereign God who loves us, and our children need to learn to place their hope in Him. It’s in relationship with Christ they discover life-long security and a peace and strength that will sustain them through any circumstance.

Parents want their children to be happy. Happiness, however, is one of those things that if we chase after it, it always seems to elude us. In the Christian life, holiness is the goal and happiness the consequence. It is out of love, we teach our children obedience, and that is a profound step towards happiness.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, grant me the patience and discipline to teach my children obedience, but most of all, that your Holy Spirit draws them into relationship with You. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: How important do I think teaching obedience is in raising a child?