

**06/20/21 “Parenthood-part 2”
Ephesians 6:1-4**

Welcome...

There was a group of fathers at the hospital in the waiting room while their wives delivered their babies, and a nurse came in and announced to one man that his wife had given birth to twins. He said “That’s quite a coincidence, I play baseball for the Minnesota Twins. A few minutes later another nurse came in announced to another man that he was now the father of triplets. He said, “That’s amazing I work for the 3M company!” At that point a third man fell to the floor in a dead faint. He was a manager for Big 5 Sporting Goods.

Parenting is never easy. Biblical parenting is even tougher because of the world we live in. Many parents are paralyzed by fear of losing their children to the culture and have a greater fear of the future. But God has a plan for the family that will give us hope and direction.

Our main text is Ephesians 6:1-4...

It is important that faithfulness, not perfection, is rewarded by the Lord. That’s because we can no more live a sinless life than we can make our children do the same thing. Only our Lord Jesus is sinless and He knows that we need His help and encouragement to raise our children faithfully as He desires. So this morning we will look at how God commands children to obey and honor their parents and He commands parents to bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord so that God is glorified and the family is a blessing to the church and the world.

I. The Command to Children: 3 aspects that all begin with word A – Action, Attitude and Assurance

“Children” - Tekna is a general term for children and is not limited to a specific age group. We are all children in the strictest sense of this word. But the idea here is that anyone who is still living under the roof of his parents and under the responsibility of his parents. As long as you're under their care, and they accept the responsibility to care for you, you must obey them.

Verse 1...

A. Action: “Obey your parents in the Lord” v. 1

Obey” – the Greek word for “be obedient” is a present active imperative, meaning it is a command that demands immediate and continuous obedience.

Obedience is the willing submission of one person to the authority of the other. It means more than a child doing what he is told. It means doing what you are told Without Challenge, Without Excuse, and Without Delay. Often it means doing things that you don’t want to do, at least at the moment.

If you wake a child and announce that you are taking them to Disneyland for the day, what do you think their response will be? They are excited because they are doing what they want. They may like your idea, but I wouldn’t necessarily call that obedience.

But if you wake them up and said, “Children I have some exciting news! Today is chore day at our house, and I want you to get out of bed and meet me in the kitchen for your assignments!” – now they are going to have to submit to something they rather not do.

Obedience means to what do what you are asked, without challenge, without excuse, and without delay.

Parents that means you need to be consistent in training your child. Often parents train their children to obey only after the parents have counted, or have yelled, or have threatened, or have pleaded, or ...perhaps we don't even train them to obey at all. Even not training them is a type of training – by not training your child you are actually training them to believe that they are in the position of authority. God has given us tools to train our children, but we will discuss these a little later.

Ephesians 6 continues in verse 2...

B. Attitude: “Honor your father and mother” v. 2

The right attitude behind the right act of obedience is honor - which means to value highly, to hold in the highest regard and respect. Rather than just focus on how to shape and constrain a child's behavior, we see here how God is concerned with a child's heart attitude

When God first introduced His written law in the form of the Ten Commandments, the first law relating to human relationships was, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you” Exodus20:12—and that is the law Paul reiterates in this text. It is the only commandment of the ten that relates to the family, because that one principle alone, when obeyed, is enough to secure the right relationship of children to their parents.

Not only that, but it is the key principle behind all right human relationships in society. A person who grows up with a sense of respect for and obedience to his parents will have the foundation for respecting the authority of other leaders and the rights of other people in general.

Consider the consequences of disrespect for parents graphically portrayed in Proverbs 30:17: “The eye that mocks a father, and scorns a mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it.”

2 Timothy 3:2 says that one of the signs of the last days is that children will be “disobedient to parents.”

Ephesians 6:3 continues with a promise...

C. Assurance: “That it may be well with you, and you may live long” v. 3

The Christian child who honors his parents can expect two blessings. Quality of life: “It will be well with you,” and quantity of life: “and he will live long on the earth.” This does not mean that everyone who died young dishonored his parents. Paul was stating a principle: when children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives.

But life is not measured only by quantity of time. It is also measured by quality of experience. God enriches the life of the obedient child no matter how long he may live on the earth. Sin always robs us; obedience always enriches us.

So, the child must learn early to obey father and mother, not only because they are his parents, but also because God has commanded it to be so. Disobedience to parents is rebellion against God. By nature, a child is selfish, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, a child can learn to obey his parents and glorify God.

II. The Command to Parents: 3 parts all start with C- Caution, Counsel, Condition

As you engage your children in rich, full communication you not only nurture them, but over time you develop a relationship of unity and trust. You provide instruction and counsel that will help your child see life from a biblical perspective and develop their own convictions. That is what Paul is talking about in Ephesians 6:4...

In verse 1, Paul tells the children to obey their parents, using a word that refers to both parents. But in verse 4, he does not use that word, but rather he directly speaks to the fathers.

Certainly, the command applies to mothers as well, but he addresses fathers to emphasize that they must not be passive in the rearing of children. As we have seen in this series on biblical manhood and womanhood, husbands and fathers are directly accountable to God for headship and leadership in the home.

1 Timothy 5:8 says the husband is responsible to provide for the family financially. So, a husband is away from the house will no doubt delegate much of the training responsibility to his wife. But delegating does not equal dumping. Delegation requires oversight, communication, close cooperation and full participation when you are home. So, fathers you cannot be passive in training your children.

Ephesians 6:4 commands you to bring your children up in the training and instruction of the Lord. This is a command to provide the training and instruction of the Lord; to function on God’s behalf. Understanding this simple principle enables you to think clearly about your task. If you are God’s agent in this task of providing essential training and instruction in the Lord, then you, too, are a person under authority. You and your child are in the same boat. You are both under God’s authority. You have differing roles, but the same Master. Verse 4 begins with a caution.

A. Caution: “Do not provoke your children to anger” v. 4a

The word “provoke” means “to irritate” or “to make mad or angry.” Sometimes it refers to open rebellion, and sometimes it refers to an internal smoldering. The parallel passage is Colossians 3:21, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.”

How do you exasperate your child so that they lose heart? How do you make your children angry? How do you provoke a child to become unruly, rebellious, or smoldering? How does a parent provoke a child to anger? Let me share with you three ways:

1. One way to is to have a child-centered home instead of a God-centered home.

Proverbs 29:15 says, “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.”

What does a child centered home look like? Now you won’t be able to copy everything in this chart, but there is a half sheet handout available at the counter that has this chart and parenting book recommendations.

Child-Centered Home	God-Centered Home
<p>Where children learn to: Interrupt adults talking Use manipulation and rebellion to get their way Have equal or overriding vote Demand excessive time or attention</p>	<p>Where children learn to: Know the joy of serving others They learn to cheerfully obey the first time Not interrupt parents Not manipulate others</p>

<p>Escape the consequences of sinful and irresponsible behavior Speak to parents as though peers Be entertained or coddled out of a bad mood</p> <p>The child perceives that the entire family exists to please him and make him happy.</p>	<p>Know that they will not always get their way Have input into decisions but not an equal vote Understand parents have other God-given responsibilities Suffer natural consequences for sinful and irresponsible behavior Honor parents as authorities Fulfill household duties (chores) Not divide parents on disciplinary issues The child perceives that the husband is the head of the family and the wife is submissive to her husband. Theirs is the primary relationship.</p>
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2. A second way to provoke a child to anger is by the parents being inconsistent with discipline

Proverbs 13:24 says, “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.”

Parents commonly discipline inconsistently in two ways. First, they are inconsistent in that each parent has a different standard of discipline. For example, Mommy means what she says and says what she means. If a child is rebellious and disobedient, then Mommy is going to spank. But Daddy doesn’t spank, he just talks.

Or father sees a certain behavior as wrong, but mother sees nothing wrong with that behavior. So, as parents you have to communicate and get on the same page. As a rule, it is better for one parent to tighten up a bit and the other to loosen up a little to unify their approach to discipline. Otherwise, children get confused by their parents’ different philosophies or methodologies of child rearing.

If you would take the time to sit down and agree on a biblical philosophy of parenting, it will save you hours and hours of frustrating and ineffective discipline in years to come.

Funnel Illustration –the first stage of development from birth to six years old.

The most important lesson for your child to learn from birth to about six years old, is that your child is an individual under authority. He has been made by God and has a responsibility to obey God in all things.

Obedience is a response to God. Your children need understand this truth. They will be self-absorbed, living only for the moment, unless you teach them God put a mother and father over them to teach your child to obey.

These lessons, firmly established in early years, will yield fruit throughout childhood. Establish your God given authority and teach your children to obey and you will find that you will not have repeated contests over authority.

3.. Parents reversing God given roles

Ephesians 5:23 “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”

When the roles of husband and wife are reversed, then frustration will set in. Children may resent their mother for usurping her husband's authority, or they resent their father for not leading in the family. In addition, children get confused about their own gender roles. They may not want to model their parents behavior but have no other first hand examples to follow. All of these consequences of reversing the roles of husband and wife can frustrate children and provoke them to anger.

If left to themselves, children will be rebels, so it is necessary for the parents to train their children. Years ago, the then Duke of Windsor said, "The thing that impresses me most about America is the way parents obey their children."

B. Counsel: "But bring them up in the discipline and instruction" v. 4b

Two key words in Eph. 6:4 we must understand in order to fulfill God's directions are discipline and instruction.

"Discipline" is the Greek word *paideia* and means "training, learning, instruction." This word is used in Hebrews 12:5, 7-8, 11 and is translated "discipline."

Proverbs 19:18 says, "Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death."

Proverbs 23:13-14 says, "Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul from Sheol."

There must be instruction, that includes encouragement, praise, and blessing for obedience and discipline when there is disobedience. You are training your child, you must be intentional and need to always be in a context of love.

Parents are to systematically train their children. The methods or tools used to fulfill the intent of this term include rules, guidelines, restrictions, rewards, correction, and structure.

It is this training that establishes a framework upon which good habits of wise living can be built. Parents must examine areas of a child's life such as his daily routine, use of time, relationships, and responsibilities in order to help their child learn what are wise choices of behavior.

A very important point to remember: Discipline is not only for the purpose of shaping a child's behavior. It is also a means by which a parent points a child to his need for Christ. When a child fails to live up to the standards which he is taught, it is an opportunity to explain his need for a savior.

Times of correction and discipline are some of the most important gospel moments we have. When a child disobeys, their sin should be dealt with quickly by administering loving correction and discipline. When our children were young Paula and I repeatedly used an illustration from the book *Shepherding Your Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp.

Illustration 1, circle: In Ephesians 6:1-3, God has drawn a circle of great blessing. Children are to live within the circle of obedience, the circle of safety, so that things go well and they will enjoy long lives.

Obedience is a response to God. Your child will be self-absorbed, living only for the moment, unless you teach them God put a mother and father over them to teach your child to obey.

Illustration 2, two circles: The disobedient child has moved outside the circle of blessing. So parents have to obey God and restore the disobedient one to the proper relationship with God and with us, his parents.

We used this illustrations at the dinner table, literally drawing it out on a whiteboard. But we also referred to it when alone with a child who was to receive a spanking. In our master bedroom closet the time of discipline went like this...

Father, "Son, who did you sin against your sister?"

Son, "I pulled her hair."

Father, "We have asked you not to do that, but because you disobeyed you are going to get a spanking. Ephesians 6:1-3 says... Mom and Dad love you too much to leave you outside the circle of safety. God has put us over you to help rescue you and bring you back in the circle."

Son, pulls down his pants. Spanking administered. Crying and hugging.

Parent: "What do you say?"

Son, "Papa will you please forgive me for disobeying and pulling Sissy's hair."

Father, "Yes, I totally forgive you. I love you." More hugs. "Son, Papa needs to be rescued from my sin too. In fact, we all do and that is why Jesus came...Let's pray..."

The problem with a "Time out" is it places a child who is raging in his heart into a seat. Then he plays over and over in his mind the circumstances that made him angry. Ultimately, the child will likely calm down, but it is not good for him to have all that time to brood in his heart.

The amount of discipline and structured control is necessary when your child is young. But as they grow it changes more from discipline to instruction, counsel and walking in wisdom.

Graph Illustration of Ephesians 6:4: Parent – Child relationship.

When our children were 2, 4, 5 and 6 years old, and I was an associate pastor, a man in our church said, "I feel sorry for you when they are all teenagers. I only have one child and I can't get him to listen to me."

But I thought if we are faithful to shepherd our children, to lovingly instruct them and correct them when they are young, then Lord willing we will enjoy their teenage years. And by God's grace that became reality.

Parents, don't wait until your children are teenagers to try to train them. Respectful teenagers are developed when they are 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 years old, not at 13, 14, 15 or 16.

The second key word in Ephesians 6:4 is Instruction (nouthesia) Unlike the general term discipline, this word is more specific. Literally, it carries the idea of "putting into the mind," and is sometimes translated admonition.

The Apostle Paul chose this term under the Holy Spirit's inspiration to convey the importance of teaching our children. Through verbal admonition, encouragement, advice, and warning we instruct our children from the Scriptures about the character and deeds of God and what He requires of them.

C. Condition: Of the Lord

Ephesians 6:4...

Proverbs 1:7 ... The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

God's Word is the tool He gives us to teach our children, and with it we appeal to them when they stray from what is right. This is what makes our parenting "of the Lord." As our children mature in understanding, we teach them God's great attributes and what our response to Him should be. We also must bring the truth of His Word to bear in their trials, difficulties, and disobedience. Scripture is a powerful sword which convicts a person at the deepest level. Hebrews 4:12 says it "judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

As we bring up our children, there must be an appropriate balance between our discipline and instruction. The balance will shift depending upon the age and responsibility of the child. The younger the child, the more guidance and structure he needs. The older the child, the more a parent can teach the truths of Scripture. If by God's grace a child comes to the place of expressing saving faith, the teaching he has received from his parents can then become his own inner convictions which will help him make responsible choices himself.

Our discipline and instruction are not merely for the purpose of conforming our children to certain external standards of behavior. In other words, our desire as Christian parents is not to simply see our children behave correctly. And we should not put our confidence in our child's behavior or assume that wise behavior equates to a relationship with Christ.

And as Christians, we should have a biblically accurate perspective of our priorities. Raising our children is part of a grander scheme. As important as parenting is, it cannot be the "hub" around which the "wheel of our lives" turns. It is one priority among many – it is not the only priority. We exist to glorify God in all that we do.

As we keep this "eternal perspective" in mind, our role as parents will be kept in balance with every other important duty God has given us (i.e. worship, evangelism, ministry to others, spiritual disciplines, etc.). Never let parenting consume you to the point where all of life revolves around it.

Let's pray...