

My Imperfect Family - Sermon 4

The Role of the Child - Eph. 5

Our own culture seems to follow two extremes when it comes to Parenting Children.

1. Devalue Children

- 1/3 of all children that are conceived are aborted
- 1/3 of all births do not have anyone listed as father.
- 40% of kids will go to bed tonight without a dad at home.

2. Worship Children

- Worship – is to consider them and their desires more valuable than Jesus and what He wants.
- Where do the kids want to go to Church? Do they want to go at all?
- Do you know what one of the leading factors is when parents are deciding where their family will go to church? Where their son or daughter's boyfriend or girlfriend go.
- These parents who worship their kids have no concept of saying, "no". You don't say, "no" to your god - you sacrifice for your god, you give to your god, you serve your god.

Well whether you struggle with Devaluing or Worshipping your kids or grandkids...today's text will speak to you.

TEXT: Ephesians 6:1-3 ¹Children.

Note that the fact that Paul speaks directly to the children in the congregation he was allowing to them a measure of unprecedented respect. Biblically speaking kids are a big deal.

As a matter of fact Jesus said that if we want to get to Heaven, we have to become like a child, he doesn't say the child need to become like us.

ILLUSTRATION: *The story goes that Spurgeon was returning to London after speaking at an event at a near by town. One of the locals asked him, "Mr. Spurgeon – how many did you see converted last night" to which Spurgeon replied, "**Two and a half**". "Oh" said the man, "You mean two adults and a child"? "No" said Spurgeon, "I mean to children and an adult". The man look bewildered so Spurgeon explained, "If you went to a candle shop and they had two types of candles for sell, one half burned and one fresh and never lit which would you choose"? "Well", said the man, "I would choose the fresh candle that*

has never been burned". "Exactly", said Spurgeon, "A child has his or her whole life in front of them, the Adult is half way to the grave".

So what are children to do???

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

Immediately, Paul strikes a tone that contradicts our tendency to Worship AND Devalue.

- The **child** is called to resign his or her place as a demigod in the home - and to become obedient.
- The **parent** is called to resign their tendency to devalue the child by becoming a guarding of their encouragement. We will deal with that part next week...

A few things we can learn from the text:

Most theologians agree that the children Paul is referring to were under the age of 15 - at 15 they would "graduate torah school" and be able to marry.

In our context it would refer to children and young adults who are living under the auspices of the family. So mom and dad are providing, mom and dad are protecting... this is speaking to you.

The command "obey" is significant for two reasons. First, it is a different word than that used in verse 18 where wives are told to "submit" to their husbands. The word there suggests a voluntary submission, a choice; here the command is more absolute.

The other reason this word is significant is that it really consists of two words ("listen" and "under") and can be read literally, "listen under your parents," or "really listen to your parents and do it!" So the command to **OBEY** also is a command for you to intentionally **LISTEN**.

You see often, rebellion is not primarily a failure to **DO** what is said - but a failure to really **HEAR** what is said.

OVER AND OVER in Proverbs, Solomon - the wisest man who ever lived would say things like -

- Hear the instruction of your father!
- Listen to the words of your mother!

I think this is significant because sometimes rebellion is wrapped up in a tendency to not listen - if we don't mentally engage we believe it gives us an out.

- Well I didn't hear you.

- Or I didn't understand you.

Here Paul is calling you to LISTEN UNDER...

If you are unclear - ask for clarity. If you don't understand engage in conversation.

But do so with the heart attitude of obedience. That is what it means to listen....
UNDER.

ILLUSTRATION: One of the things we employed early in our home was that anything can be questioned, but only after an obedient heart was clearly demonstrated. So if mom said, "Take out the trash" and the response was, "why??? it's his job... it's her job.... why?... that isn't an obedient attitude... but if the response was - YES MAM... can we discuss later an idea I have regarding the trash... of course we can... as a matter of fact what is your idea?

Now, Paul gives two reasons that a child should obey...

1. Children Obey Because it is Right

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, (WHY?) for this is right.

Paul's first argument as to why a child should obey his or her parents is simply it is right

Every culture, every language, every religion holds to the fact that children are to obey their parents – this is one thing that ***practically EVERYONE agrees on except children.***

Why? You have a sin nature that makes authority a difficult thing to deal with and some of you will never grow out of it.

Now think with me – If obedience is right, what is disobedience? It is wrong! Sin!

Failure to obey your Parents is sin.

Pastor, why is it sin to disobey your parents? Because God said to obey them and to disobey them is to disobey God.

Think of what you are doing when you disobey –

Disobedience to authority is calling God's power and/or integrity into question

SCENERIO: Mom gives you direction, instruction (Stop playing video games and make your bed).

You hear it, you consider it and you as a willful act choose to disobey. God told you to

obey mom, but you choose not to do so. – Why would you make a choice not to obey mom unless:

- a. You don't believe God has your best interest at heart
- b. You don't believe God is big enough to direct the heart of your mom.

ILLUSTRATION:

A Friend of mine in college had the opportunity to go hear Audio Adrenaline record what turned out to be one of their most popular albums. Her dad said, "No". She went on anyway and killed a man in the process.

Think about it -

- A. God had her best interest at heart
- B. God had information that she did not have
- C. God had power over her authorities

With her actions my friend said, "God I don't trust you" and she suffered the consequences.

That is why 1 Samuel 15:23 (NASB95) says,

²³ "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.

Witchcraft or divination is when you turn away from God's power and authority and seek power from a different source. That is exactly what you are doing when you reject God given authority and seek a different way.

2 Timothy 3:1-2 (NASB95) speaks of a generation that is full of this sort of rebellion.

¹ But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, ***disobedient to parents***, ungrateful, unholy.

So, children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right...

**That is why, in the 10 commandment
Before God says,**

- Do not murder
- Do not commit adultery
- Do not steal or lie

God says, "Honor your Father and Mother"

If you persistently disobey and dishonor your parents, you will enrage and incur the wrath of God.

Proverbs 30:17 (NASB95)

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.

You say Pastor I don't believe that will happen – call me when you get on Springer and let's talk about it.

*You ought to fear God and obey, but not only should you obey because it is **right**...*

2. Children Obey Because it is Rewarded

² HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

Generally it is true that if you make a habit of honoring the instructions of your parents your life will improve in

- **Quality** – SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU and
- **Quantity** – THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH

Proverbs 3:1-4 (NASB95)

¹ My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; ² For **length of days** and years of life **And peace** they will add to you.

How can that be? If I obey my parents my life will be better and longer?

a. God guides through authorities

EXAMPLE: Isaac and Rebecca

Abraham at 140 years old initiated the search for his son's bride. Can you imagine trusting your dad to pick your soul mate? Imagine if your dad was 140!

ILLUSTRATION: Often God speaks through authorities – Young lady wanting to hear from God about a boy she's dating. Her dad knocks on the door, but rather than hear her father's wisdom she turns him away because she wants to hear from God.

***Authorities can be God's megaphone.**

Proverbs 21:1 (NASB95)

¹ The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Not only does God guide through authorities...

b. God guards through authorities

Hebrews 11:23 (NASB95)

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

It was the earthly parents of Jesus that took him to Africa to protect him from Herod.

ILLUSTRATION: Umbrella Principal**ILLUSTRATION:**

One hour before our plane touched down in H'ville when we returned from Israel – Cole fell off of my recliner and busted his chin and had to get 5 stitches. Why? He disobeyed God, he disobeyed my rules – and he suffered the consequences.

Not only does God guide and guard through authorities...

c. God grants power through authorities**Matthew 8:5-13 (NASB95)**

⁵ And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, ⁶ and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented." ⁷ Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." ⁸ But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ "For I also am a man **under authority**, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*." ¹⁰ Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel...."

It would have made sense to us if he said, "I am a man with authority" But he realized that he had authority because he operated under authority.

¹³ And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that *very* moment.

This centurion knew that he had authority when and only when he was under authority.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**1. Is it ever "ok" to rebel against authority?**

- a. Yes, when an authority asks you to disobey God. It is better to obey God rather than men. But when and only when the authority is asking you to violate a CLEAR biblical truth.

2. How to challenge authority

- a. Communicate your Support up front – Example: "Yes, dad. Why?"
- b. Offer a creative alternative – EXAMPLE:

Daniel 1:8-13 (NASB95)

⁸ But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. ⁹ Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, ¹⁰ and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths

who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king.”¹¹ But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah,¹² “Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.¹³ “Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king’s choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see.”

3. What about when authority is abusive? Appeal to high authority, report the abuse.

4. Do you need to repent of rebellion?

ILLUSTRATION: Friend who had a chance to go to a concert, snuck out of the house and ran over and killed a man in Athens, AL.