

The Revolutionary Family

Ephesians 6:1-4

CONTEXT: When the Gospel came to a revolution came with it. It was said of the Apostles, “These men are turning the world upside down” well in fact they were turning it right side up, but this is the nature of the Gospel. It is a revolutionary notion.

MARRIAGE WAS REVOLUTIONIZED

Marriage in the Ephesian culture was a very flippant thing.

- Wives were treated like a combination of **concubine** and **household slave**.
- Even in a Jewish home men were permitted to divorce their wives for the slightest infraction. If she **lost her attractiveness, divorce**. If she **burnt dinner**, divorce. But God called His men to nourish and cherish their wives.

PARENTING WAS REVOLUTIONIZED

In Roman society *pa-tria po-test-as*, that is, the authority of the head of the house, gave the father virtual life and death power over not only his slaves but over his entire household. He could cast any of them out of the house, sell them as slaves, or even kill them—and be accountable to no one.

A newborn child was placed at its father’s feet to determine its fate. If the father picked it up, the child was allowed to stay in the home; if the father walked away, it was simply disposed of—much as aborted babies are in our own day.

Many times Christians would come along and adopt these abandoned Children.

The Roman culture had the idea that children were only good as far as they could be of some good to the parents. Children were your *free labor* and they were your *retirement plan*.

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

Devalue Children

- 1/3 of all children that are conceive 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.

The other extreme is that the Worship Children

- Worship – Worth/ship to worship your child is to consider them and their desires more valuable than Jesus and what He wants.
- These are parents that make decisions first by what the kids want rather than what Jesus wants.
- Where do the kids want to go to Church?

- They have practically no boundaries and no concept of saying, “no”.

Well whether you are like the Ephesians that devalued children or whether you are like many Americans that worship your children our text today has much to say.

TEXT: Ephesians 6:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

1. A Sobering Instruction -

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

- **CHILDREN** - The word translated, “Children” is the Greek word - **τέκνον** [*teknon / tek-non/*] It has reference to boy or girls from birth to adolescence. It is different that word used by Luke of the, “Prodigal Son”. That word is **υἱός** (*wheeos*)
- **OBEY** - These Teknons or children are commanded by God through Paul to OBEY. The Greek word translated, “obey” is **ὑπακούω** - *hupa-kouō*. It literally means to
 - HEAR (akouo from which we get our words acoustic)
 - UNDER (the prefix hypo meaning under)
 - This is a different word than the one used to refer to wives submitting to husbands. The word Paul used for wives mean to voluntarily, willingly, with full consideration place one’s self under your husband (Hypo Tasso, meaning to place under).
 - Hypakouo means you are accountable to God to LISTEN to your parents. No objections, no attitude, no push back, willing obedience to mom and dad.

So let’s put it together, young children under the age of 12 or 13, as expected to obey the words of their mother and their father.

*This is something taught by practically every civilization, anywhere on the planet at any time in human history. This is something that everybody agrees on, except children.

NOW - while the meaning is pretty straightforward and clear, let’s draw out a few implications.

- For a culture to flourish it must recognize and honor the authority of the parent** - We live in a day when it seems normative for this to be up for debate.
 - School teachers taking the liberty to encourage and assist the gender transition of a young person against the wishes of mom and dad. A decision that will haunt that child long into adulthood.

- Christian Parents, we can't afford to simply trust the system anymore. You need to know what is being taught. If a teacher or educational system is influencing your kids in a way that is contrary to truth - you must engage the system for change, or remove your child from that system.
- Every here are FBFirst, if a young person wishes to be baptized, we instruct the child, with speak truth to the child, but then we get with the parents and we defer to them. Listen, they know that child better that we do. They can discern if the child is ready for baptism or if they are simply doing what they've seen friends do.

If you are a teacher, an administrator, even a neighbor, as a society we must learn to honor and reinforce the role of Parents in the life of children...

- b. **It is expected that Mom and Dad are unified** - If Dad is saying one thing and Mom something else, how are the kids going to obey both? So it is important that you work through how you are going to parent.

This is one of the reasons that Paul warned us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. If you are deeply committed to your Word of God and your spouse is not, parenting is going to be doubly difficult. Listen, it's hard enough when you do agree!

But if you are in disagreement... here is what happens.

Little gears begin to turn in the child's mind. You see, children are expert political theorists. If they smell disunity in the party, they will unleash an ingenious propaganda machine to exploit the fracture. They will pit mom against dad, and dad against mom... that they will rest comfortably in the chaos that ensues.

PRO TIP - Have few rules and enforce them faithfully. The more rules you have the more difficult it will be to enforce them.

ILLUSTRATION: One of our rules was, "Obey first, discuss later". So, if I said, "Son take out the trash." Cole would want to philosophy about the sanitation system in our country. But the rule was - obey first, then we can have a philosophical conversation.

But mom and dad are expected to function as a single unit. When a disagreement occurs between mom and dad, try to pull aside and work that out in private. Don't fight it out in front of junior.

- c. **Recognize the implied transition** - Paul's use of the word teknon rather than wheeos, suggests that mom and dad should gradually **command less** and **advise more** as the child transitions into a teenager.

If you continue to command your son into adulthood, you will either produce a fully

grown child which will be a problem that the rest of society has to deal with, or you will drive your son or daughter to rebellion as they seek to embrace life as an adult in spite of your commands.

You are not called to produce grown up children - but Godly Christian Men and Women. Resist the urge to remain in childhood indefinitely. Enjoy it while its proper, but transition well.

Rights of passage can be very helpful. Our sons and daughters need to hear parents and the community say, "you are no longer to be treated like a child, rise to the occasion".

ILLUSTRATION: Think about the story of the Prodigal son. He made an adult decision. It was a very bad one, it would cost him greatly, he would have scars for life. But his father let him make it. He was there to celebrate with him as he came to his senses, but Dad did not attempt to control his son once he came of age.

Allow them to fail... encourage them to fail forward.

- d. **There are exceptions** - This to be done, "In the Lord", in other words, the child is to hear the direction of the Lord through the voice of mom and dad. But there are times when a parent will direct a child in a way that is so clearly contrary to the revealed will of God, that the child must choose to obey God rather than man.

That's a grownup decision the kids ought not ever have to make. But if there is an abusive parent, it is good and right for the child to seek help.

Not only a Sobering Instruction notice secondly...

2. A Strong Incentive -

² "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

The word HONOR is the Greek word TIMA. It means to set a high value upon. This word is different that the word for OBEY. A person can obey while harboring very negative thoughts and feelings toward the one they obey.

ILLUSTRATION: We've all heard about little Johnny. The teacher told him to be seated, he refused, she more sternly demanded he be seated, he refused, Finally, she picked up the "board of education" and said if you don't be seated you'll get three licks. Johnny sat down and said, "I may be sitting, but I'm standing on the inside".

Well the word honor means, to obey not only with the will, but also with the emotions. To intentionally place a high value on the role of your parent.

Now, obedience will be outgrown, but honor will not. Jesus reprimanded a group of

Pharisees for failing to honor their parents in their old age.
Listen, you are called to honor your parents even after they are gone.

WHY? It's a teenagers favorite question... WHY?

Now, notice here a Parenting lesson from God Himself. Consider how He speaks to your children.

- a. **He speaks to them respectfully** - as though they are able to understand truth and respond accordingly. He could have spoken only to the parents and presumed the little critters don't have sense enough to comprehend anyway, but he didn't.

Rather, God inspired the great Apostle Paul, to put pen to paper and send a direct word to kids under the age of 12. He preserved that words through 2 millennia and He makes in available for you children today. What a thought!

Jesus always has an innate respect for children. He wasn't an intimidating figure for them. They ran to him, laughed in his presence, they would be fully themselves with Jesus.

In one place he said, "the kids don't have to become like the adults to enter the Kingdom, but rather the Adults have to become like the children to enter".

He seemed to love their sincere faith.

BTW, if Jesus speaks respectfully to your children, shouldn't you?

Avoid condescending. Avoid name calling. I know adults who have spent a lot of money on therapy to get over some label a parent put on them at an early age.

Jesus spoke to them as though they could understand and obey.

- b. **God uses healthy incentives**

God offers two incentives for children to obey parents - **Quantity of Life** (live long in the land) and **Quality of Life** (it may go well with you).

In other words, life will be much more difficult if you fail to honor your parents.

A refusal to honor parents may be an evidence of a deeply rooted instinct in the heart of the child to cast off all authority. Eventually it will overlap to teachers, coaches, law enforcement, ultimately to God Himself.

ILLUSTRATION: Think of how God spoke to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Now if you were Jesus and you left Heaven to intercept the primary persecuted of the church... what would you say? I'd probably say, "take one more

step and you'll burn in hell for eternity" or something to that effect...That's not what Jesus said...

When Paul recounts the encounter in **Acts 26:14 (ESV)** he says, ¹⁴ ...I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

So interesting! The phrase there refers to an Ox who doesn't want to obey his owner. The owner would GOAD him in a certain direction with a long pointy stick, but the OX would kick back injuring himself again and again.

Jesus doesn't warn him of future judgement. He simply says, the way you are living hurts doesn't it? It's hard. Then he offers him a better way.

God offers incentives throughout the Bible. We have a tendency to ignore them because of the abuses of the property gospel crowd. But frankly, there are a lot of incentives that if you trust and obey the Lord, life will be much better for you than if you do not.

Simultaneously, life itself will punish you if you refuse to obey. God may also, but He normally doesn't have to.

Dr. Rogers used to say, "sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you far more than you want to pay".

Life will be hard. It doesn't have to be. And a life that "goes well" starts with honoring your Parents.

A Sobering Instruction, A Strong Incentive.. then thirdly notice...

3. A Serious Caution -

⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Now previously he had spoke to Father and Mother, this word zeroes in on the Dad's. Probably, because this is our tendency more than moms.

The warning relates to the emotional state of the child. It requires us dads to be sensitive to how our parenting is effecting our sons and daughters emotionally.

Our tendency is to be results oriented and pragmatic - in other words, "did it work". I wanted little Johnny to sit down, I wore him out, he sat down... bingo it worked. MAYBE NOT....

You see, the problem is we have a very limited perspective. That is why pragmatism can be so dangerous.

What seems to work in the short term
may have devastating consequences
in the long term.

a. Dad's lead by relationship more than rules -

If you consistently enforce rules without developing a loving relationship through which your child can interpret your rules, they will develop a deep seated anger that will boil up to rebellion.

ILLUSTRATION: Harvard University sociologists Sheldon and Eleanor Gluck developed a test (that proved to be 90 percent accurate) to determine whether or not five- and six-year-olds would become delinquent. They discovered that the four primary factors necessary to prevent delinquency are:

- the father's firm, fair, and consistent discipline;
- the mother's supervision and companionship during the day;
- the parent's demonstrated affection for each other and for the children;
- and the family's spending time together in activities where all participated

Two consistent factors in that test – ***Rules and Relationship.***

Hebrews 12:6 (ESV)

⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Steve Farrar was right, *In Parenting like bowling, error increases with distance.*
Less time = Less influence

Is Quality Time or Quantity time more important? – We would all agree that Quality time is the best, but the fact is, you can't make quality time happen; therefore Quantity time produces more Quality time.

James Carroll said, *“the curse of fatherhood is distance and good fathers spend their lives trying to overcome it.”*

b. Avoid Arbitrary or Inconsistent Discipline

Never discipline a child if you emotions are not under control. You will unwittingly go too far.

- **Avoid treating accidents like sins** - Spilling a drink is an accident. Throwing the drink at a sibling is a sin.

- **Avoid treating symptoms like sins** - Listen, some kids have inherent difficulties with certain things. It may not be something they can help. They may need help more than discipline. Tune in and be sensitive to those things.
- **Avoid Humiliation at all costs** - While your child may be able to take punishment and course correct. Humiliation is something few people can bear. Take the child aside, get his or her attention, try to connect on an emotional level, then give fair consistent consequences. It is very hurtful to humiliate your kids in front of others.
- **Avoid Condemnation** - Harsh words, mean words, words like, “You always...” This can create a narrative that the child lives in for years. It can become a self fulfilling prophecy.

Listen, there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, experience that, then express that to your kids. There is discipline yes, but condemnation no.

c. **Parent from a Positive Perspective -**
bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

That phrase, “bring them up” is translated nourish them in other places.

It speaks of intentionally giving them the proper food at the proper time.

Letting your instruction and discipline be age appropriate.

Showing them the WHY behind the WHAT.

Take them to the word and instruct them, show them why your expectations are important and helpful.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: Parenting is serious calling. Children are called, “arrows in the hand of a mighty warrior”. Raised wisely, they can be tremendous benefits to the Kingdom of God and they can wreak havoc on the work of Satan. Raised foolishly, they will experience pain and cause pain to more people than you can imagine.

Maybe that is why, God chooses to share His ultimate title with you - so that at the proper time, they can relate to Him primarily as, “Our Father”.

Do you know God as Father?

ANNOUNCE: Over 40 signed up for Israel Trip.