

Harris Creek Baptist Church
John Elmore
Series: Ephesians
May 19, 2024

The Call to Discipleship

6 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. 5 Bondservants,[a] obey your earthly masters[b] with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. 9 Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master[c] and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Hey, good morning, Harris Creek! Good to be with you all. So thankful to be together on a Sunday morning worshipping the Lord. It's a joy to hear y'all and your voices singing in praise.

So, this past Sunday, knowing that we were going to be preaching this text, I gathered the kids together because I read it and I'm like, “Okay, here's a teachable moment.” I called them to the dinner table, and I was like, “Hey kids. I'm going to be preaching next Sunday, and I've got something that I want you to hear, because it's specifically for you.” So, this is Ephesians, we're going to be in chapter 6. Here's verse one. Listen close, see if you can follow. It says, “Children, ‘Obey your parents, for this is right.’ Do you need any explanation?” And I share that. And, as Drew said, it's Pentecost Sunday. The Holy Spirit convicted me and was like, “Why don't you keep reading the passage to your kids?” And begrudgingly, I was like, “So kids, also there's another part in the passage, and it speaks to dads, and here's what it says. It says, ‘Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger.’” And they're silent, and they're looking at me, and they're like, “What does provoke mean?” And I was like, “It means to cause you to be angry.” And they go, “Oh! Oh, you do that! You do that, Dad. Mom never does.” [laughs] I was like, “This Bible studies over, go to your rooms.”

Y'all, I'm here to teach this passage, because I need this passage. And I need the healing of the Holy Spirit in this area. And I think we all do. And God knows this. This isn't for us to sit under this and be like, “Oh, I'm such a failure!” It's to sit under this and be like, “Okay, the Lord knows, He knows that life is hard, we live in a fallen state, and He's given us instructions that lead to life, and He's given us the Spirit. As we walk in the Spirit and are filled by the Spirit, we can live this out by His power.” And so, in this passage, He speaks to children, anyone still on their parents' tab, living under their household, even if they're paying for your college. He speaks to fathers, head of household, including all parents. Then he speaks to anybody outside of the home, workers, and bosses. And so, there's something for everyone today as we navigate through this life. And the reason why He does is because He knows that we're not battling a thousand. Nobody is. And yet, He's like, “I need you to live as salt and light in this world for you to be different, that others would look and be like, ‘Who is

this God that you know, that you love, that you're indwelt by, that you serve, and how can I know him too?" Because in our flesh, independence is involuntary. Like, you don't have to be taught that. It comes naturally every single day of our lives apart from the work of the Spirit in us. It's submission and respect and honor. Those are supernatural things that come to us from the Lord that we can live rightly with each other.

And so today, children to parents; parents to children; workers to bosses; bosses to workers, God's calling us to live differently, and He knew, so He wrote it. We're going to be in Ephesians chapter 6, one through nine. This is right before the passage on the armor of God. And so, we're moving into the conclusion of the letter to the Ephesian church. And here's the thing. Like, this is going to feel different, because all throughout the letter to the Ephesians church, He's like macro-speaking to the entire church. He's like, "Hey, you've been predestined and adopted through the blood of Jesus. You've been sealed by the Spirit. You now are being built together on Christ the cornerstone, apostles, and prophets, rising up as a temple to the Lord. Therefore, put off your old self, put on the new, in Christ." He gives us all these instructions and then he goes granular. It's like the Lord through Paul zooms in and He's like, "Kids, dads, workers, bosses," and gets really specific, which is a gift. Because life contains, I mean, there's broad strokes in life, and it's like, "But how do I navigate this?" God's like, "I know, I got you."

And so, the preview of where we're going to be today, if you want to like, take notes, or just follow along mentally, here's the path that we're going to be on, is that children obey and honor. Children, obey and honor. Dad's discipline and disciple. Dad's discipline and disciple. And then, workers worship. That whatever work you're doing, it is worship. That's where we are today.

So, first, Ephesians 6, 1 through 3. **"Children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right."** [Okay, that seems clear. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. I'm like, "That would be enough. That'd be a gift."] **"Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."**

So, children, obey your parents, honor your father and mother. But there's a reason behind it, that it may go well with you, children. So, I'm going to allow you parents to tune out, truly. You parents, you can start checking your phone, you can make a grocery list, because this part isn't talking to you. Like imagine being a kid in the Ephesian church, this is probably like house church, whoever had the biggest house, like, "Okay, everybody gather together, we got a letter from Paul." And he stands up to read it, whoever's the pastor or teaching that particular day is like, "We got a letter, here we go." And the kids are sitting there, and they don't have a kid's ministry. They're not in some other room, everyone's together, you got babies crying, toddlers crawling around, four-year-olds, and whoever's reading this letter from Paul would have said, "Children," and you know those kids would have been like, "Wait, what? There's something in there for us? He wrote to us?" which would have been categorically mind-blowing, because in the Roman era, ancient Near East, nobody cared about kids. Like on par with dogs, like you could execute your kid under Roman law if you wanted to, because you didn't like them, they were disobedient, they were a problem to you. Like zero standing in the social class, which is why Jesus flips it all on its head and the disciples are like, "No, no, get back, He's only got three years of public ministry, He doesn't have time for you." And Jesus is like, "Let the little children come to me. For such is the

Kingdom of God. And, unless you become like one of them, you'll never enter the Kingdom.” This just like free spirited desperation, “I know who you are, and I want to be near you,” instead of this polished, posing, and presenting ourselves as religious, the kids are just like clamoring towards me. He's like, “You be like them and don't keep them from Me.” And so, God in a letter to the church is like, “I want to talk to the kids now.” How beautiful is that?

And so, with parents tuned out and youth leaning in, any high school grads in the room? Raise your hand. High school graduates? Yeah. See you. Congratulations! Like huge accomplishment. You will never forget this moment in your life. And I plead with you to stay on the trajectory that you're on right now, sitting in this place of worship, worshipping the Lord, seeking Him like because it says it'll go well with you. He's got you. So, congratulations to all. Even if you're listening online, we're proud of you. It says, “Youth honor and obey.” Honor and obey.

1. Youth Honor & Obey

And so, think about it this way. Obedience is action, honor is attitude. Obedience is action, honor is attitude. And look, there's stuff, I'm speaking to the youth right now, but this is applicable to all of us. We've all got various ways that we need to obey and honor. And so, as I tell you to tune out, like, you're welcome. So, obedience is action, honor is attitude. Think like talk, treatment, temperament for honor; how you respond to someone. And obedience expires, but honor never does. Like a hand holds for this, obedience expires. One day you will be out from under your parents' authority as you become an adult, leave their household and their provision. But your honor for them never expires. And so, first, obey. It says, “Obey in the Lord.” So, what if you're like, “But I don't, you know, my parents and this and that.” He's like, “No, in the Lord, as you live life in the Lord, I'm asking you to obey regardless of circumstances, regardless of who they are, how they act, how they talk. I'm asking you to obey them in Me, not in them, in Me. Obey in the Lord for this is right, righteous.”

And so, when you're obeying your parents, because it says, “In the Lord,” you're obeying the Lord. It's an offering unto Him. Like as you obey your parents, it's not just doing it for your parents, you're doing it unto Him. And conversely, oppositely, when you disobey, you're actually disobeying the Lord. I tell our kids this, I'm like, “Hey!” Whenever they're out of line, I'm like, “Hey, you know that ultimately, you're not even disobeying Mom and Dad.” Like this is why this really, really matters. Because I'm after their heart and not their habits, because one day they'll be out from our household, and the habits won't matter. What will is their heart, and so I'm after their heart, and like, “Who you're actually disobeying is the authority that God has put in place.” And so, the disobedience is actually unto Him. But what I need to start saying more is, “Your obedience is unto Him, like that they would see their lives as living sacrifices, as Romans 12 says. That they would know the positive and the negative there in obedience.

And this is for everybody too. Think about it this way. Somebody told me this from a mission sending organization. It's never left me. Obedience is rich. Obedience is rich. R I C H. It is radical, it's immediate, it's costly, and it's holy. So, obedience is radical. That would look like just this like, it looks counterculture. It's not what the world would look like. So, when all they're like, “Man, why do you have to go home at 10? That curfew is stupid. I get to whatever.” It's like, you're going to look different. It's going to seem very different. “Why can't you take your device into your bedroom? Why can't you go on the overnight with the

boys and the girls and we're all staying at the lake house? Why can't you, why can't you, why can't you?" It's radical. You're going to look countercultural. And if you don't, there may be an issue with that. Obedience is immediate, meaning when it's said and clear, the action is there. There's this immediacy to it, and you see it throughout all these different people in the Bible. Like Abraham, I mean, God says, "Go sacrifice your child." Next day, he's like, "Okay, then that's what I do." There's an immediacy to it. Not a delay, not a questioning, not a deliberating, not like, "Mom and Dad, let me pray about it." It's like, "You said, I'm going to do it." It's costly. This is why it rubs against us and grates against us. It's like, "But I don't want to. Like I have desires. I have things I want to do!" It's going to cost you something. And the reason, as you obey, and again, for any circumstance, it's holy. That's what makes it holy is, if this is an offering to the Lord, because it is radical, immediate, and costly. And so, it's like, "I am obeying my parents in the Lord, for this is right."

We tell our kids, "Hey, act and then ask. Like please do what I say, don't argue with me, act and then ask. You can ask questions. Like, 'Why do we have to, why do we, why do you ask me to do this?'" But first obedience, then questions. And look, cause I'm, we're trying to raise adults. I'm not trying to raise juvenile 20-year-olds. I'm trying to raise a kid, Laura and I both, that like when their boss one day, when their teacher one day, when their spouse one day, that they will act and then ask, which is a great test for obedience. There's a phrase, right away, all the way, and with a happy heart. Plays well with little ones.

And then the second one is to honor. To honor. So, obey and honor. God says both. Why? Because you can obey without honoring. You see this all the time with police officers. A video clip on Instagram or on the news, where someone's not doing something inherently illegal to where they could get cuffed and taken to jail, but they're like screaming curse words, giving the finger, like so much disrespect towards police, which, by the way, is a thankless job, and if we didn't have them, this nation would unravel. So, hats off to officers. [clapping] And yet, people are like, "Well I'll obey you, but I'm going to let you know I hate you, put you on blast, grossly disrespect you." Like, where are the videos of that online? It's always like against the other. And so, there can be obedience without honor, which is why I said, obedience is the action, but honor is the attitude, and they can't be separated.

Or it's like, God says, He's like, "Hey, I see what you're doing, but your heart is far from me." He knows. And so right action, you can do the right action with the wrong attitude. But listen to this, and kids, lean in here, youth. Because it says there's something for you. This isn't just like some obscure, like, "Hey, you know what? You got to pay the tax, cause everybody else did, so obey your parents. Obey their rules, their stupid rules. Like just follow in line, everybody does it, you have to too. Pay your dues." God says they'll be rewarded. He says that it will go well with you and that you may live long in the land. He's like, "Look, I've got everybody under an authority. Every authority has been appointed by God. And this in your household, you're learning to live under authority as everyone does. And as you do, it's going to go well for you. And you're going to live long in the land."

I used to live in Dallas. I say used to like it was a long time ago, it's been six weeks. [laughing] But man, we love this place and we love these people. So, thank you for having us. But I remember Dallas traffic, because y'all don't have it, we don't have it. This is like, "Man, promised land." It would take me 45 minutes to go three miles. Because it's just like gridlock. We'd be on a six lane, ten lane, whatever. And every now and then you'd hear like, "Woo woo woo!" [makes siren noises] and you'd hear the lights and everybody's merging.

There's nowhere to merge, but you scoot over. And if the Lord was shining upon you, you'd like, not even, you don't use your blinker in Dallas, you just go because if you use your blinker, like they'll cut you off. So you just got to take them by surprise. I would come in behind the ambulance, of course, at a 300-foot or whatever the legal limit is. And I would fly, follow them. And all of a sudden, it's like, now all these people, they're just gridlocked. And I've got like a presidential escort. Like, I'm just like, again, at appropriate distance, whatever it is, I was following it. And I'm just cruising through Dallas like, See ya! Like you guys." And now I'm going behind them, like lead block, get home. They're like, "You're home early." I'm like, "Well, I got an escort. Something happened to somebody, and I got provision. I got the hall pass." That's what God will do for you, youth.

He says, **"Obey your parents, honor your mother and father so that it may go well for you."** God's like, "Look, this is a broken, fallen world. There's going to be suffering and hardship and trial and tribulation." That's the promise of the scripture. But He's like, "You follow Me, you honor them. Like I'm going to, it's going to go well for you. I'm going to lead block. I'm going to clear a path. That doesn't mean you're going to be without suffering. It will come." But He's got you. He'll lead you. He'll help you. He'll guide you. He'll fill you. He'll heal. So, you follow Him, and He'll lead block through all the gridlock, chaos, stop traffic. It's what He promises. You'll live long in the land. The other way, you're going to be stuck in hardship. God's saying, "I'll lead block."

And then lastly under honor, because I said obedience expires, but honor never does. I want you to raise your hand if you're a son or daughter here today with us, the youth. Like, I don't know why some of your hands didn't raise. You're like, like this isn't gender confusion, like son or daughter. We're all, that's it. That's us. Everybody in here is a son or daughter because obedience expires, but honor never does. And so now we've got a bunch of parents who are caring for aging parents who need to honor aging parents. That one doesn't expire. And I was talking to a guy, Wes, in my office just this week. He popped in. He wants to be a Regeneration mentor for somebody, by the way, which is incredible. We need more of those on Monday night, somebody to walk people through the steps. And Wes was like, "Man, I'll do it." And then I was like, "How's your week going?" He's like, "I'm actually, having these conversations about the family." And here's what he said, because he's wrestling with it. He's got an adoptive mom and a biological mom. And he was like, "You know, I'm wrestling right now, but I think I know the right thing to do is, I'm going to care for my aging biological mom, because she didn't do things for me, but I'm now called to care for her later in life as she has needs, like material financial needs for her care." Y'all, Wes is going to care for her in a way, frankly, that she never cared for him. And it may be like, "I'm going to throw a flag, that's not fair. She didn't do it for him, then why would he do it for her?" It's not fair, it's faith. It's like, "I'm not actually ultimately even doing it for her, I'm doing it unto the Lord, because he calls me to. And her disobedience when I was a kid doesn't mean that I can, as she's an aging parent, obedience expires, honor never does."

Secondly, Dad's discipline and disciple. Dad's discipline and disciple. This is Ephesians 6:4. Got one verse here, Dads. Lean in. **"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."** I think Dads hearing that, in the, again, in the Roman era would have been like, "Wait, what? It doesn't matter what my kid thinks or feels. He's under me, my house. I can put him to death if I want. He's like a household servant to me. Why in the world would I why, what are you telling me not to provoke him to anger? It doesn't matter." God really, really cares about those kids and then

how we treat them, which is why I like have conviction when I miss it in this area. But I was stuck here on this second point. I made it through the first one. It's like, "Okay, kids obey and honor their parents. That's it. And then I'm just like sitting at my keyboard, staring at my screen in my office right there. And I'm like, "Man!" Text community group, life group like, "Will y'all pray? Like I'm writing the message right now, I need prayer." Staring at it. Y'all, ten minutes later, I'm like, "Oh! Oh, my goodness! [laughs, makes texting noises] Oh, my goodness!" Text community back. I'm like, "God just totally came through." I read the passage. It says, "**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**" Discipline and instruction of the Lord. Amen. Discipline, showing them what not to do when they go out of bounds. Instruction of the Lord, showing them what to do. That would be like discipleship. Discipline and discipleship. Discipline and discipleship. D A D, Dad! Discipline and discipleship. Oh, my goodness! Our job is written right there in the name. That we would never forget. Like Dad, every time you hear your kid go, "Hey, Dad. Hey Dad. Dad, can I? That you would hear my role is discipline and discipleship.

2) Dads Disciple & Discipline

That we would never forget because America has been sold a false bill of goods where it's like, "No, dad. No, actually, your job is that they get straight A's, that they become valedictorian, that they get a scholarship, that they're the quarterback, that they have a great batting average, that they have a kid, and multiple, and a dog, and the house, and the lake house, that they're successful, that they've got the 401k early on, that we've got them set up for success," and those are all these things that have crept in, and God's like, "No, no dads. No, your role is to discipline and disciple." D A D, Dad, that's it. The rest is details. You share those things; it will go well with them in the land as they follow the Lord. Show them what not to do and Who to follow. That's it. The rest is details. And yet, when they told Norman Rockwell to paint like, "Hey." He was America's painter. Always a slice of life in all of his paintings. And they're like, "So Norman, like, you know, portray Sundays. American Sundays. This is what he did. He painted this picture which shows this passive dad who had relegated the responsibility of spirituality to the mom. It's like, "No," and if you zoom in, you can see like he's onto the sports page. The funny pages are laying there on the floor. He's read everything at this point. You know, the opinions and every just like, checked out and you see the mom, they're all dressed to the nines. They're ready, Sunday best, but the boy, you can see the boy, he's walking, but his eyes and heart are already drifting maybe that, that looks better than what I'm doing. I want to be like that. To discipline and disciple. Because dads can be a hero in the home if you do these things that the Lord has called out.

And the caveat here, like as the Lord talks about fathers here in this passage, we know that a mother and father, a husband and wife have become one flesh. And so, God's speaking to the head of the household. But all of this applies to moms. By the way, we were like out to eat last night with the Pokludas, and a single mom was waiting on us with a six-month-old. And we just stopped and praised her. Like look, Laura and I almost lost our minds with both of us doing it together. You're a single mom, six-month-old, waiting tables. Like, you're our hero. Hats off to you. And got just love on her and appreciate her as she raises the little ones. So, this is not just to the dads, but to everyone raising kids. And to moms, like in the other passages, 2 Timothy 1, Titus 2, Proverbs 31, God speaks to the moms as we all raise up these kids together. So don't check out moms.

Discipline and disciple. First, discipline. This would be what not to do. What not to do. When they go out of the bounds, what not to do. But interestingly, God says, “Hey, there should be consequences, but it's consequences without provocation. Like you need to give them a consequence that they learn authority, that they learn that sin leads to death. But don't stir them up to anger in how you do it, which is often what happens to me. Like, I get angry about their disobedience, which gets them angry, and it's just this cycle that spirals down. Instead, the Lord says, **“Don't provoke them to anger.”** And so, it's been shared with me, I didn't come up with it, but I think it's genius, and I need more of it, is that dads in the home are supposed to be like a referee. There's predetermined rules, and there's predetermined consequences. And so, a referee like, you know, watching Luka play for the Mavs, He's not like, “Blow the whistle,” and he's like, “Come on, Luca! What in the world? You know better than that! I don't know what they're teaching you over in Eastern Europe, but you're in America now! You know you can't do that. You know, Double dribble, stepped over the line. What are you doing?” Never, no referees doing that. It's just like, whistle. Give the ball to the other side. Totally unemotional. Predetermined rule. Predetermined consequence. Now, Luka may talk back to the ref, get in his face, bump him, whatever. But the ref's like, “I'm not getting into this. I'm not going to emotionally entangle in the disobedience. And for a dad to be like a referee within the household. Referee blows whistles, not a fuse. And so, to know, I'm going to create stability in this home as I discipline.

There can be three D's for this. There's disobedience, disrespect, and dishonesty. Learned this from JP. Disobey, disrespect, and dishonesty. And that last one, he always says, is double trouble. Because it's an integrity thing. And so, there's some good handholds for discipline. Proverbs 19:18 says, **“Discipline your child, for in this there's hope.”** Meaning, if you discipline them, look, all are given over to sin. We are natural born sinners. If you discipline them, then there's hope. And then it gives the antithesis and says, but if you don't, you're actually a willing party to their death. Like, you're signing off on their sin, that you're not disciplining and you're like, “I know this is going to kill you, and I'm okay with it. I'm going to let you die. I know your underage drinking. I know your pornography. I know your pride. I know your disrespect. I know your apathy. Your eating disorder. Whatever it may be. The homosexuality. The same sex attraction. And I'm just going to sign off. The idolatry of sports, I'm going to sign off on it. I'm going to be a willing party to your death.” And so, He says, “Dad's discipline.”

I think sometimes that, you know, I think about some of the contextual things like, “Hey, you can drink so long as you're with me.” When the law of the land says, “No, you don't drink ‘til you're 21. It's like, “Well, it's okay. They're with me. And so, nothing bad will happen because they want to drink. So at least I'd rather it be under my supervision.” What you're teaching them is to break rules. That the law doesn't apply to them so long as they do it in a way where they won't get caught. That's what you're modeling for them. Or vaping. Well like it could be worse. At least they don't have a needle sticking out of their arm. Or pornography. Like, well, I mean it's rampant. And so long as they're not acting out, you know, prostitution, or sleeping with their girlfriend. Or that. It's that we like, you know, uphold like, “Hey, virginity,” with total disregard to purity. Sexual purity entirely. “So long as you don't have sex, don't do that. Not everything else like, meh.” But that we lead them to live a life of purity. And we tell our kids too, “Hey if I don't discipline you, then I'm actually in sin. Because God's called me to it. And so, I don't want to be passive. If I don't discipline you, I'm actually in sin.” And that's not me trying to put the blame on God. I'm like realizing like this is important. We're teaching our kids to live in the fear of the Lord.

And to the kids, I tell them also like, “Hey, I discipline you or the world will. Pick one. I’m in it. My motivation is love. The world’s motivation is pain. They want to bring pain into your life to get you to submit. Mine is actually in love. Mine’s for healing. Theirs is for hurt. So, who do you want to discipline you in this house or out in the world? Because the world will not love you and does not love you. So, it’s better that you learn it under our roof with Laura and I.”

But then secondly, it’s to disciple. If discipline is what not to do, disciple is what to do. JP last week talked about how dads are the spiritual leaders in the home. And dads, listen, if your faith is only shown at a meal, then their faith will not be real. If it’s like, “Well we just pray before meals,” their faith will not be real. What they’re learning is to follow traditions instead of following Christ. And so, your discipleship of these kids, look that’s like a word. And you’re like, “Oh my goodness, what do I need? Do I need a curriculum? Do I’ve got to have these like steps? It’s like it feels like it’s got to be all scheduled.” No, it’s living a life of faith as they walk with you.

And so, we’re having dinner at Casa de Castillo, and we’re like, “Hey,” we always pray before the meal, “Idalia, can we pray for you in any way?” She’s like, “Yeah, absolutely.” And our kids are seeing that and being like, “Oh, so this is not a like that one is at a meal, but we’re engaging someone else. We’re not just praying for a blessing but trying to reach others.” And like, “Hey, do you have a church home?” And trying to connect dots, sharing the Gospel with others. Yeah, it’s to disciple and raise them up in the Lord. So, a morning devotional is good, it’s a great place to start, but it can’t end there. We’ve got to live a life of faith. Because if we don’t, they won’t. If our faith is compartmentalized, theirs will never materialize. And if it does, it may, out of the grace of God, not because of you, but because of someone else who stepped in. So, Dad’s like, let’s do this! D A D, Dad.

And there’s another case where the world verifies what God testifies to. So, listen here, Mom. What the world verifies, God testifies to. You won’t see this in the passage, but you do see it from the U. S. Census Bureau. The U. S. Census Bureau ties predictors for healthy fatherly involvement in the home to a stable marriage, a supportive wife, marital satisfaction. Those have nothing to do with parenting. Like on paper. And yet from the marriage, from the wife to the father, it creates great fatherly structure in the home, says the U. S. Census Bureau. And confidence in the father’s ability to parent, which means encouragement by the spouse. So, your role, Mom, helps dad’s role in the house, for him to discipline and disciple.

And then we’ve got all the statistics if the dad isn’t present. That there’s greater risk for crime, prison, obesity, teen sex, drug use, theft. That those stats are there when the parent, when the dad specifically is absent. What we don’t have statistics for, is when the dad is present and yet passive. Relationally, emotionally, and spiritually passive. He may be in the home, but he is not with the home. And I think some of those predictors for future problems still exist there with the dad. And so, Dad, let’s do this. This is our calling, written into our name, at least in the English language, to discipline and disciple. Because if we do, this baton pass of spirituality will ripple through generations, and they’re going to be Christ followers and a thing to behold. Youth honor and obey. Dad’s discipline and disciple. And the third and finally, and this is everybody, workers worship.

3) *Workers worship.*

So, let's read this passage.

It says, **“Bondservants,”** [this is verse 5] **“Obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, [listen] as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing [Listen to the rewards here] that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”**

So, in this context, talking bondservants and masters, like slavery, now somebody some day is probably going to come up to you and say, “You know the Bible's a big farce, right? You know the Bible endorses slavery?” And they might even go to this passage to try to deconstruct your faith. And in that moment, listen, I'm going to give you the answer. You take them to 1 Timothy 1:10, and you say, “Oh, no. I understand why you might think that. In 1 Timothy 1:10, it says that the ungodly and the lawless and the disobedient, and it gives a list of things. And one of those is enslavers of men. So, God hates slavery. He's against slavery. He calls them wicked and lawless.” What God was doing is He was speaking into a cultural context. He's like, “Okay, hey, this problem, this evil, this wickedness exists. And so, I'm going to speak into it, so that if it's a believing slave, bondservant, they're going to live rightly and glorify me, even in their unjust state. And if it's an unjust master, I'm going to call them to account and say, stop threatening them because you're under Me.”

And so, God, in that way, now for our context, because praise God, that wickedness has been purged from the land, we now could read this as a parallel as like workers and bosses. That you're an employer with employees below you. And so, He's giving it to us in this way now. It's how we can apply it. He tells us how and under who. That our work, no matter what the work, no matter what the org chart, no matter what your title is, that we're all working under the Lord. And so right now, I want everybody to think about the name of their employer. And if you're a stay-at-home mom, you can just be like, “Mom,” which stands for must obey me. You can think, like, what's the name of your employer? Everybody got it. Okay, on the count of three, I want you to say the name of your employer out loud. One, two, three. [mumblings from congregation] Yeah. Guys. Guys. That passage we just read, here's what it says. **“Obey as you would Christ, as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God as to the Lord.”** We all should have in unison said, “Jesus. That's the name of my employer. Now I'm under a certain authority here in a worldly standpoint, but from a spiritual standpoint, I work under Jesus. That's my employer.” And when you can change that mindset, it's going to change how you work, which is what God is saying. And He doesn't just say it here. He says it in Colossians chapter three. He says it in Titus chapter two. He's like, “When you work under the Lord because you're actually bondservants of Christ. You work under the Lord for the Lord, the glory of the Lord.” And He's going to reward you, which is incredible.

So, my kids know, like, “Hey, if my boss calls at any point, it doesn't matter if we're at a meal, at bedtime, on vacation, my boss calls, I pick up.” Why? Because I'm working under the Lord. And so, I'm interruptible in that sense. And you might think, “Well what if they're a jerk? What if they make threats like this passage says?”

[Cell phone rings. Congregation laughs. John answers cell phone] “Hey man.” “Hey buddy, you're doing a great job.” [congregation laughs] “Thanks bro. Do you need something?” “No, keep going man. Give him the Word.” “Okay, yeah, I am. I was.” [John ends phone call. Laughs. Congregation laughs. Clapping] Ha! And yeah, it was staged. [Congregations laughs]

But it kind of makes a point. Like, work under the Lord. It's not like when the call from your boss comes, it's like, “Eye roll, screen the call like pfft, whatever. That jerk.” That you might think or feel instead, it's like, as unto the Lord, as unto the Lord, I'm a bondservant unto the Lord. And so, your work is worship. Your work, then, is worship. Like, whether you're folding laundry, working on a balance sheet, supervising, cleaning toilets, whatever it is, teaching our youth, like hero teachers, whatever it is. Your work is worship. Workers worship. Like your grind is not a grind if it's in the Lord. This was Brother Lawrence practicing the presence. I think that's the name of the book. Maybe that's Comer. Anyway. It's like everything, whether you're peeling potatoes, carrying the trash, whatever, your work is worship, and it changes everything.

I want you to imagine a heavenly scene. You get to heaven, you're trusting in Jesus, you're walking through the, you know, the pearly gates, you're on the streets of gold, and you roll up on this mansion, like mansion of mansions. You're like, “Whoa! Who lives there? Like, I mean, I thought I was walking through some neighborhood, but that's like, ‘What in the world did they do?’” You're like, “I got to find out.” Come to the door. “Hi, welcome. Come on in.” You're like, “Hey, I got to know what you do. Were you a missionary to China? Did you translate the ancient scriptures so that we could have them today? Were you martyred for your faith under ancient Rome? Like, were you in the Colosseum with the animals? What did you do to get this? Oh, my goodness! How? Like what? I bet you gave your life for Jesus. I got to know!”

And I think maybe that mansion might belong to a woman named Helen from Eritrea, which is one of the most persecuted nations. Helen was the manager, is the manager, at the In N Out that I used to go to. She's a believer. But Helen like shepherds her workers. I'd go in there. I'm like, “Okay, double, double animal style.” She'd be like, “John, hang on. Cory, Cory, come here! “Cory's having some problems at home. Can you talk to him? Will you meet with him and pray for him?” “Hey, Sheila, I told you this, remember Monday nights, you go to ReGeneration.” She was in there like offering her life, In N Out manager, on an hourly wage. And she's like, “This is my lot. It's fallen in a pleasant place. This is the flock that God's entrusted to me. I'm going to love them. I'm going to give my life away. I'm going to work on to worship for the Lord for Jesus and for the souls of men and women that He would entrust to me.” Now that's a beautiful thing because God says your work is worship and that He will reward you. It's not in vain. Nothing you do is in vain. It's worship if you make it worship.

And so, we obsess over where we work and what title and God's like, “None of it. It's not where and what, it's how and why.” And then for bosses, this is incredible. It's so like God. It's like bondservants and, you know, that the masters in the room are like, “That's right, you tell them.” And He gives them three or four verses and then He says, “Masters, lean in.” Like what you're going to say, good job?” He says, “Do the same to them. You be like them. With fear and trembling and reverence, let your work be as worship. You're a bondservant under the Lord.” It's like, “Look, you're all under my org chart. King of Kings, Lord of Lords. So,

you treat them with dignity, honor, and respect. You think you're in charge? You're not. Your work is worship too.”

I think about a new friend that I have here, J. T. Carpenter. Some of you may know him. He works at Texas Farm Bureau. He's their in-house legal counsel, which means lots of degrees and real high on their org chart. And we're hanging out together and he could have gone big time, talked about his job, case, law, whatever. Instead, he goes, “Man, you know who's amazing at our company is these TSTC grads who run our facilities. Dude, they're amazing. The things that they can do, I'd never be able to do. Like they've got so much intelligence and ingenuity to keep our place running.” Here is the in-house legal counsel for Texas Farm Bureau and he's, as a first impression, telling me about their facilities guys. Let that be us. Let our work be worship. Youth honor and obey. Dad's discipline and disciple. Workers, we work for Christ. Our work is worship.

I started by telling you about some of the dad stuff. My kids, where they're like, “Oh, you do that!” I ask them for forgiveness when I do. I know I blow it. Laura's like, “Hey, your tongue.” I asked them for forgiveness, but I live with this perpetual dad guilt. Like man, I'm making father wounds in real time. And I shared that and Drew, our worship leader, he goes, “You know, I want you to know something. My dad asks me for forgiveness. He always has.” He's a pastor. He goes, “I don't really remember anything wrong he ever did to me. I just remember that he asked for my forgiveness.”

Sin is inevitable, which makes forgiveness essential. And in this room, we all have sin. We need the forgiveness of Jesus Christ that will transform us in the home, in the workplace, and for eternity. To trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, and here on Pentecost Sunday, being dwelt by the Spirit, that all of our life would be one of worship. Amen. Let's pray.

Oh, Father, thank you for your Words. They are, they're water to weary souls. As you teach us how to live and Who to live for, that our life would be one of worship and there would be tenderness in the household, obedience under authority, and that our work would be worship. You alone are worthy. In Jesus name. Amen.

Y'all please stand. Sing to your Savior.