

“Obey Your Parents – Part 1”
Ephesians 6:1-3
(Preached at Trinity, November 22, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul is continuing his instruction on the effect of the indwelling Holy Spirit upon every human relationship.
Ephesians 5:18 NAU - "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,"
Ephesians 5:21 NAU - "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."
This is followed by, "wives . . . to your own husbands"
2. In **Verses 22-33** Paul maintained a focus on marriage as he instructs husbands and wives.
 - a. Marriage is the first and the greatest of all human relationships upon the earth. In marriage a man and woman become one. This union is indivisible.
Matthew 19:6 NAU - "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."
 - b. This is the foundation of the family. Without a strong foundation the family will be weak. It is essential that we have strong marriages if we expect to have strong families.
3. As we come to **Chapter 6** our attention is still on the family but now we turn to the interaction of parents and children. Paul begins by addressing children - "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."
This teaching follows reasonably and logically after Paul's instruction on marriage. Children are the fruit of marriage.
But the charge here is also to other cases where children are under the care of those who did not bear them naturally – this would include adoption. You could add to this the occasion where grandparents or foster parents have been called upon to care for children bereft of their natural parents.
4. Paul gives the command, "Children obey" in the imperative, and then gives the Law as the basis of his authority.
 - a. This reminds us that the Law consisting of the 10 Commandments remain in force under the Gospel. It remains God's standard of holiness. The Law and the Gospel are not incompatible with one another but remain in perfect harmony. This must be stressed in our generation where there is so much confusion, particularly with regard to the 4th Commandment.
 - b. At the heart of the 5th Commandment is a charge of submission to those God has placed over us. The ultimate authority is God – "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." God has delegated His authority and then commands us to obey.
 - c. The first manifestation of authority we all face is parental authority. It is really foundational. Augustine – "If anyone fails to honor his parents, is there anyone he will spare?"

5. The parent/child relationship is so important that God's models it for us in His own Divine nature – the Father and the Son. Jesus modeled perfect obedience to His Father. Jesus said obedience to His Father was His sustenance:
John 4:34 NAU - "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."
 Paul wrote of His obedience:
Philippians 2:8 NAU - "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
6. Our relationship with God is a family relationship. One of the sweetest of all doctrines is the doctrine of adoption.
John 1:12 NAU - "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name"
Romans 8:16-17 NAU - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ"
 A. God has adopted us as His dear children.
 B. The Lord's Prayer is a wonderful declaration of relationship – "Our Father"
7. We are living in a day where we've witnessed the breakdown of the family. The foundations of our society are crumbling.
 Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote over 40 years ago:
 "We are living in an age when there is a ferment of evil working actively in the whole of society. And there is no respect in which this is more evident and obvious than in this matter of the relationship of the parents and the children."
 Paul warned of such a day:
2 Timothy 3:1-2 KJV - "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy"
8. We need strong Biblical instruction for the family. Paul is making an important assumption in this entire passage on the family. He is assuming a love relationship with Christ.
 A. This was true in the previous chapter as Paul gave us instruction on marriage. It is only possible to follow God's model for husbands and wives if they have a high interest in the honor and glory of Christ.
 B. This is also the assumption as we now deal with children and parents. Our love of Christ again is our great motivation. Paul writes:
Ephesians 6:1 NAU - " Children, obey your parents in the Lord"
9. As Christians we must strive to have strong families, God honoring families. May God instruct us from His Word as we look at this brief, but important section of Scripture.
 I. The first thing we see here is our duty to obey – "Children obey"
 II. Second, we find our motivation from the Divine perspective – "This is right" – meaning, "righteous," "correct"
 In other words this is pleasing to God. Look at the parallel passage in Colossians
Colossians 3:20 NAU - "Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."
 III. Third, we find our motivation from the human perspective – "that it may be well with you."

This morning I'll focus primarily upon the child's duty to obey.

Next week we'll look at the motivation for obedience and we'll also look at how this applies to adult children.

- I. The word "duty" has fallen upon hard times
 - A. Modern man does not like the word duty
 1. It refers to an obligation, something required, something demanded
 2. Modern man sees this as infringing upon his autonomy. It reflects our self-centered culture.
2 Timothy 3:1-2 KJV - "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy"
 3. The concept of duty implies a debt.
 - B. Children are indebted to their parents. They owe them respect. There are several reasons why children should see respect for their parents as a duty
 1. Because they are the instruments of our being. God ordained that you were born under their authority.
Proverbs 23:22 NAU - " Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old."
 2. Because of the love of our parents.
 The love of a parent for his or her child cannot be matched. God placed within a parent great love for their children.
 Sacrifices made, care given
 We owe them our love in return
 3. Because of the respect they are due because of their age
 - a. It is good to respect those older than we are
 - b. Our Southern practice of saying "sir" and "ma'am" is a good thing
 - c. God commands our respect of age
Leviticus 19:32 NAU - "You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD."
 - d. This is a consistent Biblical pattern.
 Paul tells Pastor Timothy to give regard to age
1 Timothy 5:1-2 NAU - "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, ² the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity."
 4. Because it provides harmony in the realm of social order
 - a. God created the family as the foundation of social order.
 - b. Parents are the chief means of training up children – children have a duty to submit to their instruction
 5. Because it provides a picture of our submission to God's authority
 Rebellious children towards their parents are merely displaying their rebellion against God.

- C. The Bible teaches that Christian piety begins at home
1 Timothy 5:4 NAU - "but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God."
1. The word for "piety" is εὐσεβέω which means worship. It indicates our true position of submission before God.
 2. The word for "return" is ἀμοιβὰς – it is a noun meaning a repayment
 Children owe a debt to their parents
 3. Paul gives the reason we owe this duty:
 "for this is acceptable in the sight of God."
 We owe care to our parents because we owe it to God.

II. Paul describes here a two-fold duty. Obey and honor

- A. The first charge here is for children to obey their parents
1. That God commands it should be sufficient for us to obey
 This is in the imperative – "Children obey."
 It isn't a suggestion. It isn't open for discussion or for investigation as to whether or not we should obey.
 2. God has the authority to command our obedience. The Fifth Commandment commands obedience to parents. It is a moral duty.
 Children, if you are disobedient to your parents you are being disobedient to God. He commands you to obey.
 3. "Obey" implies an ear to listen—to hear the instruction of your parents and to carry out their instruction.
Proverbs 2:1-2 NAU - " My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, ² Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding"
Proverbs 3:1 NAU - "My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments;"
 4. The obedient child listens to the words of his parents and sets his heart on obeying them. This obedience will only ultimately be rendered if the parent has won the heart of the child. Forced obedience is never consistent obedience.
- B. Paul also uses the wording of the 5th Commandment – "honor"
1. The word for "honor" is (כָּבֵד) – "to be heavy, be weighty, be grievous, be hard, burdensome, to be heavy."
 2. The obedient and faithful child gives weightiness to his responsibilities to his parents. We are to respect our parents with all gravity and esteem because they deserve it and because God commands it.
 3. We owe them high respect

- C. Disobedience to God's Law brings men under God's condemnation.
1. The OT demanded severe penalties for breaking this command
Deuteronomy 21:18-21 NAU - "If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, ¹⁹ then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his hometown. ²⁰ "They shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.' ²¹ "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear *of it* and fear."
Exodus 21:15 NAU - "He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death."
Leviticus 20:9 NAU - "If *there is* anyone who curses his father or his mother, he shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother, his bloodguiltiness is upon him."
 2. God has ordained that man be under authority – Parental authority teaches us early that we are not our own
 3. The problem is we lack the ability to render perfect obedience. We have all broken this command from God. We all stand condemned. This is why the Gospel has such infinite value. This is why are in such need of grace.

Conclusion:

1. Duty alone should be sufficient for us to obey. But duty alone is always insufficient for sinful man. There is a higher principle obedience for the Christian
2. We honor and respect our parents because of Christ. He is the reason for everything we do.