

“A Charge to Children – Part 2”
Colossians 3:20
(Preached at Trinity, November 4, 2018)

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. Last time we began looking at Paul's charge to children. We are still looking at the impact of the Gospel upon the family. This section began with **Verses 18-19** where Paul gave instruction to married couples:
"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as fitting in the Lord."
"Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them."
2. **Verse 20** follows reasonably and logically after Paul's instruction on marriage. Children are the fruit of marriage. In a fallen world God's purpose for families becomes marred by sin. Today, only 45% of people above 18 years of age are married. God's design for human sexuality is set aside. Over half of children are born out of wedlock. These domestic principles become more and more difficult.
3. In addition, sinful human beings do not easily submit to authority. Children do not naturally obey their parents. And parents do not naturally understand the principles of Godly parenting. We need strong Biblical instruction for the family and submissive hearts to follow the instruction.
4. Last time I began this two-part sermon on Paul's charge to children. My focus last time was directed primarily upon the child's duty to obey – "Children, be obedient" – Children owe their parents respect. It is their duty:
 1. Because God commands it.
 2. Because our parents are the instruments of our being.
 3. Because of the love of our parents.
 4. Because of the respect they are due because of their age
 5. Because it provides harmony in the realm of social order
5. Second, we began looking at our motivation for obedience – "This is well-pleasing to the Lord"
 - A Duty is always an insufficient motivation for sinful man. By nature our desire to satisfy our own flesh will outweigh and override any sense of duty.
 - B. There is a higher principle of obedience for the Christian. We offer obedience because of Christ. He is the reason for everything we do -
"This is well-pleasing to the Lord"
Colossians 3:15 - "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"
Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you"
Colossians 3:17 NAU - "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus"
 1. A life pleasing to Christ is our highest motivation.

2. I closed last week with an admonition to parents.
 “Well-pleasing” must not be presented as a meritorious act—do this or that and God will be pleased with you.
 Rather, God is a good God who showers us with the richness of His blessings. Pleasing God is the proper response to the goodness of God.

I. There are positive benefits to a life of obedience.

A. This is consistently taught in Scripture

1. Not meritorious blessings but simply the consequences of a life lived according to the principles of God’s Law.
Ephesians 6:2-3 NAS - "Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."
2. Paul is saying here that by keeping the 5th Commandment it will “be well with you.” In other words, it is a good thing to stay within the realm of obedience.
3. There are positive benefits for you to obey your parents.
 - a. The child that learns submission and humility builds a good reputation and character that follows him all the days of his life.
 - b. The child learns the value of honoring authority. This bodes well for children all of their life.
 - c. Obedient children create a joyful atmosphere in the home.
Proverbs 10:1 NAU - "A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother."

B. By implication, it also means there are negative consequences for disobedience.

1. The disobedient child brings disgrace upon his own life and the reputation of his family.
Proverbs 19:26 NAU - "He who assaults *his* father *and* drives *his* mother away Is a shameful and disgraceful son."
2. He carries a reputation of disgrace and stubborn rebellion. He never learns the virtue of humble submission.
3. The miseries of sin consume him
Psalms 38:3 NAU - "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no health in my bones because of my sin."
4. Sin always has its consequences
Proverbs 3:7-8 NAU - "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. ⁸ It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones."

C. It is a terrible thing to show your parents a lack of respect.

1. Children have always had difficulty honoring their parents.
 Socrates wrote 400 years BC –
 “Youth today love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, no respect for older people, and talk nonsense when they should work. Young people do not stand up any longer when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, talk too much in company, guzzle their food, lay their legs on the table, and tyrannize their elders.”¹

¹ Ryken, Philip Graham, *Exodus*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), Page 612.

2. If you are guilty of disobeying this command may God's Word drive you to repentance. Confess your sin and seek God's grace to obey.
3. But what if your parents are dead? You were rebellious and disrespectful. How can you repent now? How can you correct your sins? By confessing and then by submitting to the authority God has placed over you. There are no perfect children, and there is grace and forgiveness through the Gospel of Christ.

II. How does this commandment speak to adults?

- A. First of all, your chief duty is to your immediate family – the nuclear family
1. Husbands and wives have primary duty to one another and to their children
Genesis 2:24 NAU - "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."
 2. This Creation Ordinance is repeated in the New Testament
 - a. Jesus repeated it:
Matthew 19:4-6 NAS - "Have you not read, that He who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh '? ⁶ "Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."
 - b. Paul also referred to this Creation ordinance:
Ephesians 5:31 NAS - "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh."
 3. This priority will direct how we perform our duty to our parents. Years ago, I moved my family into my mother's home to care for her after a series of strokes made it impossible for her to live alone. But my chief duty never ceased to be directed towards my wife and children.
- B. How are we to apply the fifth commandment to adult children?
1. First, by respecting your parents – your whole life. It is generational.
 - a. We must do this in our childhood – young children must be respectful to their parents. This is demonstrated by their obedience and respect for the authority of their parents. It will be good for them to remain within the sphere of obedience and detrimental when they step outside.
 - b. We must do this as young adults – Young adults have major decisions to make about career and marriage. They should honor their parents by seeking their counsel. When we are no longer under their roof we are not bound by their counsel but it is a wise child who seeks it.
Proverbs 4:10-11 NAS - "Hear, my son, and accept my sayings, And the years of your life will be many. ¹¹ I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths."

Proverbs 5:1 NAS - "My son, give attention to my wisdom, Incline your ear to my understanding;"

- c. A wise child remembers the instruction of his parents even into adulthood.

Proverbs 3:1-2 NAS - "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."

- 2. Adult children still living with their parents must submit to their authority.
 - a. It has been asked, at what point does a child come out from under the authority of his parents. The answer is when they leave home and become self-supporting.
 - b. Our generation has seen an increasing number of adults remaining at home. They refer to it as a "Failure to Launch" – the young adult struggling with the transition to adulthood. Up to 45 percent of young adults 18-34 are still living with their parents.
 - c. If a young adult is still at home he or she is still under submission to their parents. The parents have a right to expect submission.

C. Some principles for showing respect to our parents

- 1. What if our parents are unbelieving?
We owe God our first allegiance, but we must honor our parents.
- 2. Although **1 Corinthians 7** deals chiefly with believers married to unbelieving mates, the principles have application regarding extended family

1 Corinthians 7:15 NAS - "Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace."

- a. Many Christians have become alienated from friends and family due to the Gospel

Matthew 19:29 NAS - "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life."

- b. Sometimes our love for Christ and obedience to His Word will bring conflict. Sometimes it will bring division. There have been many Christian children who have become estranged from their parents due to their commitment to Christ.

Matthew 10:34-36 NAS - "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."

- c. Our first duty is to our immediate family – to focus upon honoring Christ with our family, even if it means alienating our extended family.
Genesis 2:24 NAU - "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."
- d. Even still we should seek to be gracious
- D. How do adults honor their parents?
1. There is a certain respect they are due as parents. God has placed them in a position of honor. It is good to respect the honor of their position. This is true of in-laws. I always tried to treat my wife's parents with the respect I gave to my own parents—especially in their latter years.
 2. As I pointed out last week, we respect the honor of their age. We owe general respect to all who are older than us, but how much more our parents.
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."
 3. We honor our parents as they experience the weakness of age. We must care for them to the end of their lives.
Proverbs 23:22 NAS - "Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old."
 - a. Luther: In obedience to this command "we serve them, help them, and provide for them when they are old, sick, infirm, or poor, and all that not only gladly, but with humility and reverence, as doing it before God
 - b. Paul declared:
1 Timothy 5:8 NAS - "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever."
 4. Even in His agony on the cross Jesus obeyed the 5th Commandment in caring for His mother.
John 19:26-27 NAS - "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own *household*."
 5. This care is owed without regard to profit or the wealth of inheritance. Nicolas Byfield wrote: "Some children are *dutiful* so long as anything is to be had from their parents; but when they have all they must have, then their forwardness to please is neglected: this is base mercenary obedience."²

² Byfield, Nicolas, *Commentary on Colossians*, (Stoke-on-Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2012) Page 357.

Conclusion:

1. This is a weighty charge. Paul says, "Children, be obedient to your parents"
Our best example is Christ. Scripture is silent for much of Lord's childhood but what we do have we find submission and obedience.
 - A. He obeyed His earthly parents
Luke 2:51 NAU - "And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all *these* things in her heart."
 - B. He obeyed His heavenly Father
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."
John 6:38 NAU - "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."
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."
2. May God grant us the grace to obey this command.
Obedience is always good and pleasing in the sight of God. But obedience is always impossible apart from the blessings of His grace. God commands us and then sends forth His Spirit to enable us to obey. The Holy Spirit holds the light of the countenance of Christ before our eyes. Motivated by the beauty of His excellence we obey.
3. May God continue to make Christ all the more beautiful to us.
Colossians 3:17 NAU - "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."