

Text: Ephesians 6:1-4

There are three institutions established not by man, but by God. Those institutions are:
The Church-Jesus said I will build my church..

The Government-Romans 13 says there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God.

There is one more institution and that is the family, and in Gen 2 God says and therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh, and to them God said be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth!

We are looking at relationships in the family, particularly today children and fathers.

Intro from the bulletin: As we are coming to the close of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians the message continues to be very practical and the focus today is upon the relationship of child and father. In our text we have four commands, three positive commands and one negative command. Children are to obey and honor, and fathers are not to provoke but rather to nurture. These may appear to be simple commands, but the ability to fulfill these commands is impossible apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps of all the quotes I have ever heard or read about children this one speaks to me the most: "Children are those living epistles that we leave for a day in which we will not see". As parents we have the fortunate privilege of establishing within our children a spiritual legacy that will go on beyond our years here on this earth. Perhaps for this reason it could well be said that our children are our first order of evangelism. They certainly should be! Win the world and let your child be lost! Win the world and watch your child go to hell! It is unthinkable, and yet it has happened.

And when our third child was taken home to glory during Sheila's 6 month pregnancy nothing spoke more to my heart in terms of comfort than to hear a sermon on the radio in which the preacher said "that child was created for eternity". They are lent to you for a moment but they are created for eternity. God help us to see our children as eternal beings. God help us to view the entire human race in this way! We think we are bound by time. We wear time pieces, and we set agendas, goals, objects, milestones, and all the rest of it, but are we really bound to them. We are bound by eternity. It does not stop here. This is just a pause in our journey of life.

Vance Havner says: when children are four they have all the questions, and when they are 18 they have all the answers, and this is when their parents try to convince them that they really do not know anything.

In Scripture God says:

Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is a tremendous promise, and many a parent has taken God up on this promise, and found that even though some stray for a season, if the foundation is laid they do eventually come back to the faith they once believed.

Isaiah 54:13 "And all your children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of your children.

Proverbs 22:15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. Now I know it is not politically correct to teach this verse in this enlightened age of the 21st century, but it is the Word of God, and guess what it works! I am a witness; it kept me out of trouble. I won't share any illustrations now, but I am tempted to...

Psalms 127:3 Says: Children are a heritage of the Lord. In other words children are an inheritance from the Lord. God has given us children so that we might invest our lives and our resources in them so that they can be best prepared to make a maximum impact for the Kingdom of God! This process continues from family to family, from generation to generation.

Deuteronomy 6:7 Says: You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Lastly Colossians 3:20 Is a close mirror to our text for it says: Children obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

President Teddy Roosevelt was a very adventurous President. On one occasion Teddy took a long journey to South America. He traveled straight through the heart of the jungle of South America and he was nearly 60 years old. Some say it almost killed him. Some asked Teddy Roosevelt why did you do it? He said "well it was my last chance to be a boy, and it was said of President Roosevelt that he was a great big boy all his life. We men love our toys and our boyish activities don't we, and yet I think there is a spiritual take away and it is this: the bible says we are "to be childlike". Except you become as little e children you will in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We are to be childlike but not childish, and there is a difference. Childlikeness has to do with our faith (we are to have a childlike faith), but childish has to do with carnality or immaturity. We should have childlike faith, but not childish behavior and it does not mean we need to abandon our toys, but we should if they prevent us from living a mature Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The children in our text are not to be childish. God is admonishing these children to grow up and gives them a command. And this brings us to our text and look at it: Children obey your parents in the Lord. Now it is interesting the personal commands in scripture. This one is very personal it is clear; it is direct-children obey! God is not talking to adults; he is talking directly to children. Children are to make it personal! Young people have heard God tell parents what to do, and they have heard God tell the church what to do. They have heard God tell the lost what to do. Here God is telling children what to do and He says: Obey! That means do what your parents tell you to do-simply that!

God has every right to tell children to obey their parents because of who he is: He is God! He is the creator, He is the Savior, and He is the consummator of all things. Romans 11:36 says: For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: To whom be glory for ever. Amen. Of Him-creator, Through Him-sustainer, To Him-consummator or the one who will determine everyone's final destiny!

God also purchased you, and when you purchase something you own it. I purchased some crackers the other day. I thought they were stale and wanted to throw them away. Sheila called me a work and said those crackers are ok. You know I wanted to throw them away I could have why? Because I purchased them, which means they belonged to me. God purchased you, not with money but with the blood of His son! In that God purchased you He has every right to tell you what to do! He has more authority over our lives than our parents, He owns them too!

(Perhaps I should pause and ask the question: What does the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ mean to you? There is a song: Are you washed in the blood? Have you been to Jesus for cleansing power, are you washed... Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour... In other words are you saved today, are you a Christian?

So children are to obey and if they do not learn to obey at home, they will have a very hard time obey others in society, such as teachers, administrators, employers, and other adult figures and ultimately if they continue in disobedience they become criminals and society attempts to teach obedience by placing people in jail.

But there is a condition in this verse. Children obey your parents in the Lord. “In the Lord”. That is the condition. What does this mean? It means that when children are told to do something that violates scripture or the will of God they are not under obligation to obey, and at that point they do the will of God, and not the will of their parents. But as long as it does not violate scripture or the will of God they are to obey. The question is raised: What about unsaved parents? I believe the same principle applies, but again only in the Lord, and this only can be done in the Lords strength.

Verse 2 is a quote from Exodus 20:12 which is a direct quote from the finger of God which God gave to Moses in the Decalogue.

Obviously, we are commanded to honor our parents, but how? Honor them with both actions and attitudes ([Mark 7:6](#)). “A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke” ([Proverbs 13:1](#)). In [Matthew 15:3-9](#), Jesus reminded the Pharisees of the command of God to honor their father and mother. They were obeying the letter of the law, but they had added their own traditions that essentially overruled it. While they honored their parents in word, their actions proved their real motive. Honor is more than lip service. The word “honor” in this passage is a verb and, as such, demands a right action.

We should seek to honor our parents in much the same way that we strive to bring glory to God—in our thoughts, words, and actions. For a young child, obeying parents goes hand in hand with honoring them. That includes listening, heeding, and submitting to their authority. After children mature, the obedience that they learned as children will serve them well in honoring other authorities such as government, police, and employers.

While we are required to honor parents, that doesn't include imitating ungodly ones ([Ezekiel 20:18-19](#)). Again, If a parent ever instructs a child to do something that clearly contradicts God's commands, that child must obey God rather than his/her parents ([Acts 5:28](#)). When we are living at home we are told things by our parents and we are to obey. When we move away from home we are no longer instructed in the same way in which we were when we were home, so the obedience may not continue in the same way it did when you were home, but we are still to honor them. In fact we are always to honor our parents.

Now if you are a child and you are having a hard time with this, examine your heart-it may be because you are not saved!

Now what is the promise at the end of verse two? Verse three. That it may be well with... This is tremendous and it also works. Many times you will meet people who have parents living well into their 90's and they have children living into their 70's, and you talk to them, and it is interesting that often the parents in child have a close relationship. I call this honoring, cherishing, caring for our parents, and the promise that it may be well with the and that they may live long!

Verse four gives us instruction to fathers and I have often wondered why the father is singled out here, but it says “Ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath...” Parenting is not easy, and I am not an example of a good parent. I am very fortunate in that I have a wife who is a very good parent. Many fathers are disciplinarians, and I am not knocking it, but I do think that the lesson from this passage is that we need to be more nurturing. To nurture is to train. This involves spending time with our children, and it involves maximizing those teachable moments. It means that we seize opportunities to

correct with words. And for some children this may be all that is necessary, so we have to spend time to know our children also.

In addition to nurture we are called to admonish, and this is warning them. This has to do with providing instruction that will keep your children from something that will harm them or warn them in regards to things that will be detrimental to their spiritual development.

Now let me wrap this up:

The duty of children can be summed up in two words: Obedience and honor

The duty of fathers: Negative-do not provoke our children to anger, but and here is the positive, nurture and admonish them!

How is this to be accomplished: Only by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Let us bow for prayer