

“A Charge to Children – Part 1”
Colossians 3:20
(Preached at Trinity, October 28, 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. In **Chapter 3** Paul has been giving a high emphasis upon our union with Christ. This union changes everything. Our whole life is lived in the light of Christ and the transforming grace of the Gospel.
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."
2. Beginning with **Verse 18** Paul describes the practical effect of our transformed life upon the family – wives & husbands, children & parents, slaves & masters.
3. Paul begins with the institution of marriage – the relationship of husbands and wives, because this is where the family begins.
Paul's 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."
4. In **Verse 20** Paul turns his focus upon children. This teaching follows reasonably and logically after Paul's instruction on marriage. Children are the fruit of marriage. The charge here also includes 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.
5. Paul gives the basic command, "Children, be obedient" in the imperative. Then he adds, "for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."
 - a. Paul is declaring that obedience to parents is obedience to God. God's standard of obedience is His Law. Paul states this more clearly in **Ephesians 6**
Ephesians 6:1-3 NAU - "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² 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."
 - 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?"
6. 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."

7. 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 family relationship – "Our Father"
8. 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 50 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."¹

Paul warned of such a day:

2 Timothy 3:1-2 NAU - "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,"

9. We need strong Biblical instruction for the family. 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, be obedient"
 II. Second, we'll look at our motivation – "This is well-pleasing to the Lord" –

- I. First, our duty to obey – "Children, be obedient"

- A. The word "duty" has fallen upon hard times
 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 NAU - "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,"

3. The concept of duty implies a debt—something we owe. Our chief duty is to God—we owe obedience to God. God's commands are not open for discussion or for investigation as to whether we should obey.

¹ Lloyd-Jones, D. Martin, *Life in the Spirit, An Exposition of Ephesians*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), Page 218.

- B. Children also owe a debt to their parents. They owe them respect. There are several reasons why children should see respect for their parents as a duty
1. Because God commands it. Submission to our parents provides a picture of our submission to God's authority.
Rebellious children towards their parents are merely displaying their rebellion against God.
 2. 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."
 3. 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
 4. Because of the respect they are due because of their age
 - a. It is good to respect those older than we are. This is largely lacking today. There is little respect for age.
 - 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."
 - Part of Paul's appeal to Philemon was his advanced age.
Philemon 1:9 NAS - "yet for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*-- since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus"
 5. 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

- II. Second, we'll look at our motivation – “This is well-pleasing to the Lord”
- A. Duty alone should be sufficient for us to obey. But duty alone is always insufficient for sinful man.
1. Duty alone will not bring a wife to submit to her husband or a husband to sacrificially care for his wife.
Duty alone will not bring children to obey their parents or parents to place a high priority on the proper raising up of their children.
 2. 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"
 3. Obedience is something pleasing to Christ and our great passion is to please Him.
- B. The ultimate obedience is from a heart to please God
1. Parents have to be very careful here. “Well-pleasing” does not imply a meritorious act. Good intentioned parents will tell their children, “Don’t you want God to be pleased with you?” They are teaching their children that God’s favor can be gained by our actions.
 2. Such statements can be detrimental to the Gospel. Pleasing God must not be taught as a means of gaining God’s acceptance.
 3. Directing our lives to please God is the proper response to the goodness of God.
It’s the goodness of God that leads us to repentance.

Conclusion:

1. Parents must fill the lives of their children with a constant reminder of the goodness of God - - the beauty of our surroundings, the bounty of our provision all points to the richness of God’s goodness. He is worthy of our worship, worthy of a life whereby we strive to please Him.
2. The Godly parent then points to how impossible it is to live in obedience to God. Thus, we need the Gospel – Christ and Him crucified.