

“Obey Your Parents – Part 2”
Ephesians 6:1-3
(Preached at Trinity, November 29, 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. For several weeks we've had the family as the focus of the text beginning with the relationship between husbands and wives. The Gospel has a profound effect upon every human relationship. Our relationship with Christ affects everything in our life. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ."
2. In **Chapter 5:22-33** Paul maintained a focus on marriage. Marriage 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 upon 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."
It is in the imperative. Paul uses the Law as the basis of his authority. At the heart of the 5th Commandment is a charge of submission to those God has placed over us. God has delegated His authority and then commands us to obey.
4. As Christians we must strive to have strong families, God honoring families. In these verses we find instruction from God for the building of strong families.
5. The first thing we see here is our duty to obey – "Children obey"
This was my focus last week. Paul gives our two-fold duty to our parents—to obey them and to honor them. I set before you several reasons why we owe honor and respect to our parents as a duty.
6. Duty alone should be sufficient for us to obey. But duty alone is always insufficient for sinful man.
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.
Duty alone will not bring slaves to honor their masters.
But there is a higher principle of obedience for the Christian.
7. This week I want to continue by setting before you our motivation for honoring our parents. We have a duty to honor them, but duty alone is never sufficient.
 - I. First, we find here 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."
 - II. Second, we find our motivation from the human perspective – "that it may be well with you."

- I. The highest motivation for the Christian is the motivation of pleasing God. In other words the honor of God should be our highest goal in all things.
- A. Paul said “This is right” – meaning, “righteous,” “correct” - δίκαιον
1. In other words, it is intrinsically good for us to honor our parents. It is a part of God’s created order. God places children under parents. Children must be governed. Even unbelievers know this. It is right for children to obey their parents.
 2. But Paul means more here. δίκαιον is the word used to describe righteousness—rightness in the sight of God. It is righteous for children to obey their parents. God’s standard for righteousness is His Law. The Law reflects God’s holy character. Paul is linking this to the 5th Commandment. Obedience to our parents reflects God’s holiness.
 3. The opposite is also true. Disobedience to God’s Law is unrighteousness. God calls it wickedness.
 4. Obedience is something that 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."
 5. The driving force of this entire section is honor to Christ. Paul is presupposing that within the heart of every believer is a desire to please Christ.
Ephesians 5:21 NAU - "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."
- B. Paul reminds us that it is righteous for children to obey their parents
1. Obeying your parents is the right thing.
For the Christian, doing the right thing is about doing what is most honoring to Christ. What is most honoring to Christ is obeying the Law.
John 14:15 NAU - "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
 2. Paul adds in Colossians that it is “well-pleasing” to Him
Christ is our highest motivation for obedience. Our love for Him controls everything we do.
We must desire His great glory to shine forth upon the earth.
- II. We are also motivated on a personal level. Paul says, "that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."
- A. Obedience always has a positive effect upon our lives.
1. This is consistently taught in Scripture. Isaiah declares the blessedness of keeping the 4th Commandment
Isaiah 58:13-14 NAU - "If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot From doing your *own* pleasure on My holy day, And call the sabbath a delight, the holy *day* of the LORD honorable, And honor it, desisting from your *own* ways, From seeking your *own* pleasure And speaking *your own* word, ¹⁴ Then you will take delight in the LORD, And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; And I will feed you *with* the heritage of Jacob your father, For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

2. Paul says 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. There are blessings attached to it. There is a positive benefit 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. They learn the value of honoring authority. This bodes well for them all of their life.
 - c. And obedient children are a joy to their parents
Proverbs 10:1 NAU - "A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother."
 3. By implication, it also means there are negative consequences for disobedience.
 - a. The disobedient child brings disgrace upon his life
Proverbs 19:26 NAU - "He who assaults *his* father *and* drives *his* mother away Is a shameful and disgraceful son."
 - b. He carries a reputation of disgrace and stubborn rebellion. He never learns the virtue of humble submission.
 - c. 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."
 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."
- B. What is meant by the promise annexed to the fifth commandment – "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."
1. The word for “first” in the Greek (πρῶτος) can have several meanings. “first” as in the first in a sequence, or it can mean “prominent” or “foremost” or “chief.”
 - a. In a sense, all of the Commandments carry a promise. The general declaration in the 2nd Commandment applies to the whole Law.
 - b. But the 5th Commandment carries a covenantal promise—the promise of prospering in the Land of Promise. God’s covenant promises to Israel were conditional.
 - c. Extending to the Gentiles God promises spiritual blessings. The New Covenant looks to our glorious blessings in Christ.
 2. It is simply stating the incomparable blessing of walking in fellowship with God, in the light of His countenance and in the experience of His love.
 3. “That it may be well with you” should ring loudly in this verse. It is always a good thing to obey God. It is always a good thing to walk in His ways.
 4. And we must remember that there are always consequences for sinful disobedience. To walk outside the ways of God is to walk outside of His fellowship. There is no greater loss.

- 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.”
 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.

III. How does this commandment speak to adults?

- A. First of all, our chief duty is to our 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. Paul refers 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
 - a. We must do this in our childhood – children must be respectful to their parents. As we saw last week, it is their duty
 - 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 we should seek it.
 - c. Adult children still living with their parents must submit to their authority.
 - d. But what if our parents are unbelieving?
 We owe God our first allegiance but we must honor our parents.
 2. The principle of 1 Corinthians 7 also has application regarding extended family
1 Corinthians 7:15 KJV - "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."

- a. Many Christians have lost family due to the Gospel
Matthew 19:29 KJV - "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting 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.
 - 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
- C. 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.
 - 2. As I pointed out last week, we also honor our parents as 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 – "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old."
 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"
 - 4. Even in His agony on the cross Jesus obeyed the 5th Commandment in caring for His mother.
John 19:26-27 – "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! ²⁷ Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

Conclusion:

1. This is a weighty charge. Paul says, this is the Law of God – Children obey. 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 – “And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.”
 - B. He obeyed His heavenly Father
John 4:34 – “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”
John 6:38 - "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."
Philippians 2:8 – “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the 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.