

We come this week to our sixth question, in our short series entitled, Pressing Questions, Are You an Obedient Child?—by child I mean—children old enough to understand what I'm saying, to full-grown children still living at home...

Now, this doesn't deny the relationship between parents and full-grown children shifts (full-grown children obviously have a unique relationship to their parents), yet, while I want to address younger children this morning (much if not all of what I will say, applies to all children, regardless of age)—Are You an Obedient Child...

Now, before I go further, let me say (as with the relationship between husbands and wives), the relationship between parents and children, also reflects the relationship between God and His children, MLJ—"The earthly father is, as it were, a reminder of the heavenly Father...The relationship between the parent and the child is a replica and a picture, a portrayal, a preaching of this whole relationship that subsists between those who are Christian and God Himself..."

That is say—the relationship between a child and parent, is to reflect the relationship that exists between Christians and their heavenly Father...

- I. What are Children to do?
- II. How are Children to do it?
- III. Why are Children to do it?

I. What are Children to do?

1. The apostle provides two (closely related) duties for children—"Children obey your parents" "Honor your father and mother..."
2. Perhaps put another way—the apostle roots obedience in the fifth commandment—"honor your father and mother..."
3. Thus—the fifth commandment—"Honor your father and mother"—includes far more than—obeying your parents...
4. But—Paul's point here is to stress one essential aspect of honoring and that's obeying—"Children obey your parents..."
5. Now—in coming to the topic of children's obedience—I want to suggest it entails more than outward compliance...
6. To be more specific, if children are to properly obey their parents, they must obey soberly, totally, quickly, heartily, and joyfully...
7. [1] Soberly—by this I mean, children must receive the words of their parents with a sense of their God-given authority...
8. The Greek word rendered "honor" literally means—"to fix the value or worth of something, to esteem it properly..."
9. Thus at its very core—to honor someone is to recognize their place—to properly esteem their authority over you...
10. Ex.20:12—"Honor your father and mother"—the Hebrew word rendered "honor" means "to make have or weighty (Ex.17:12—but Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it)..."
11. Thus—to properly obey your parents, you must receive their words as weighty, as having weight or authority...
12. Dear children, especially you younger children, you must be aware, your parents speak with a God-given authority...
13. There is a sense in which, when you hear them, you hear your heavenly Father, to disobey them, is to disobey God...

14. [2] Totally, Col.3:20—"Children, obey your parents IN ALL THINGS, for this is well pleasing to the Lord..."
15. Cotton Mather—"Children, if your parents command you any thing that is not sinful, you sin if you do not obey them..."
16. Now of course, as I said of wives so I say of children, if you are ever commanded to sin, then you must disobey...
17. But, providing your parents do not command you to sin, you MUST obey them, and that—"IN ALL THINGS..."
18. Now—I mentioned earlier, as children grow older, there are unique dynamics between parents and children...
19. Older children (that is, grown children), need space to begin making decisions, as they trust God for themselves...
20. But—the bottom line is this, generally speaking, all children (regardless of age), must obey their parents in all things...
21. Thus—in one sense, it doesn't matter whether or not you fully agree, as you get older it's possible you won't, but you must still obey...
22. When you get older, God-willing, and have your own children, then you can do things differently, but until then you must agree...
23. Now—let me clarify—as the child get's older, it may not be improper to all them to humbly ask for a reason...
24. Depending on the issue, I allow my older children to ask me—"May I ask, why I am not allowed to do this"...
25. And then I'll give them a rationale behind my decision—this affords them an insight into my thought-process...
26. But—regardless if your parents allow this or not, and regardless if you agree or not—Children obey your parents...
27. [3] Quickly—delayed obedience is disobedience, children must listen for their parents voice, and obey it swiftly...
28. This is implied in the word "obey"—literally it means—"to listen intently or carefully"—there's the idea of anticipation...
29. The implication is—children keep one ear open for their parents voice—they are always anticipating a command...
30. 1Sam.3:10—"The LORD came and stood and called...Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel answered, Speak, for your servant hears..."
31. Ps.119:59-60—"I thought about my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies. I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments..."
32. Let me also say, as an aside, if your parents speak to you and you act like you don't hear them, that's disobedience...
33. You must always have one ear open, scanning the house (as it were), waiting for the voice of your parents...
34. [4] Heartily—that is, Christian obedience is from the heart, it's sincere, it's inward as well as outward obedience...
35. Eph.6:5-7—"Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to the Lord; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing serve, as to the Lord, and not to men..."
36. Bondservants were not to obey their masters merely outwardly, but from the heart—that is, inwardly and outwardly...
37. For example, if a mother tells a child to clean their room, it's possible to obey externally, but not internally...
38. That is—within your heart you are complaining and murmuring, you are inwardly disobeying even though outwardly your comply...
39. Dear children, you must remember, though your parents look merely at the outside, your heavenly Father looks at the heart...

40. [5] Joyfully—just as God loves "a cheerful giver" He loves "a cheerful obeyer"—who delights in obedience...
41. This is how our Savior obeyed His Father, Ps.40:8—"I delight to do Your will, O My God, and your law is within My heart..."
42. Throughout the 119th Psalm, David describes His obedience in terms of joy, delight, rejoicing, and gladness...
43. Ps.119:16—"I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word" v24—"Your testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors" v35—"Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it" v47—"And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love" v70—"I delight in Your law" v77—"Your law is my delight" v174—"I long for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your law is my delight..."
44. Dear children, you must remember, that your obedience to your parents, is obedience to your Heavenly Father...

II. How are Children to do it?

1. Here I'm thinking about that beautiful and all-important phrase—"in the Lord"—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord..."
2. Now—let me say very simply, this little phrase "in the Lord"—is a very common especially throughout this letter...
3. All throughout the first few chapters, Paul has again and again used the shorter version "in Christ" and "in Him"...
4. In short—it refers to our union with Christ—its a beautiful way to describe true Christians, those in the Lord...
5. They are in union with the Lord, they are by faith in Christ, they are by the grace of God, true and sincere Christians...
6. John Stott—"The phrase 'in the Lord' brings child-obedience into the real of specifically Christian duty, and lays upon children the responsibility to obey their parents because of their own personal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ..."
7. Now—before I go any further, let me suggest a few things from this passage—[a] Paul understood that children would be present...
8. Notice, he speaks directly to children, v1—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord"—he assumed their presence..
9. He assumed they would be present in the congregation, alongside wives, husbands, parents, servants, and masters...
10. [b] Paul understood that children can be Christian—this doesn't mean he assumed they were all Christian (any more than he believed every woman was a wife and every man a husband)...
11. But—it does mean that Paul assumed there would be within them Christians of all ages (including older and younger children)...
12. How young can a child be and become a Christian—they need to be old enough to understand and believe the gospel...
13. Children, can you understand what I'm saying, well if you can, they you are old enough to become a Christian...
14. [c] Paul understood that Christian children are just like adult Christians—they are, by faith—"in the Lord..."
15. Accordingly, what I said of wives and husbands is equally true of children—to become better children you must become better Christians...
16. Thus—I suggest that the phrase "in the Lord" generally means two things—children must obey FOR and FROM Christ..
17. [1] Children must obey FOR Christ—that is—children must obey "as unto the Lord"—in obedience to Christ...
18. In other words—Christian children are to obey parents, in light of all that Christ has done FOR and IN them...

19. Eph.4:1—"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called..."
20. To "walk worthy of our calling" is to walk (live) mindful of what we once were and now are, BY HIS GRACE...
21. Remember what you WERE—a depraved, selfish, self-righteous, self-focused, self-dependant, disobedient rebel...
22. Remember what you ARE—an adopted, forgiven, sanctified, humble, Christ-loving and trusting, child of God...
23. And—remember who or what has made you to differ—the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and intercession...
24. [2] Children must obey FROM Christ—that is—children can only obey, as they abide in Christ and His grace...
25. Eph.6:10—"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"—be strong in the resources found in Christ...
26. The only way any Christian, regardless of age, can obey God's holy law, is by faith abiding in Jesus Christ...
27. Rom.3:31—"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law..."
28. Here I want to take a few minutes and remind you, how we are made strong in the Lord—three essential components...
29. [a] His Spirit, Eph.5:18—"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit..."
30. Christian children (all Christians), are made strong in the Lord as they cry out to Him for His gracious Spirit...
31. Zech.12:10—"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication..."
32. The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of grace and supplication" because He graciously makes us cry to God for grace...
33. [b] His Word, Acts 20:32—"I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified..."
34. The Spirit always works in and through the word—He uses the words of Christ and puts grace into our souls...
35. [c] His Person—we must remember, it is through His Spirit and word that we have personal communion with His Person...
36. All of the grace that you need to obey your parents (to obey God), is abundantly found in the Person of Christ...
37. Thus, Christians abide (remain) in Christ, as they cry for the Spirit, and fellowship with Christ through His word...

III. Why are Children to do it?

1. Verses 1-3, provide three glorious motives for children to obey their parents, natural order, the law of God, and the promise of God...
2. [1] Natural order—here I'm thinking of the words—"children obey your parents"—which describes natural order...
3. Children should obey their parents because of God's divinely instituted order—children come from parents...
4. We saw a similar logic with regards to the wives, 1Tim.2:13—"for Adam was formed first, then Eve"—she was from man...
5. So too, there is sense in which children come from parents, and thus, they are obligated to obey their parents...
6. Though I trust this point is rather obvious, it's one that needs stressing in our day—parents are parents and children are children...

7. Society becomes confused when this line is blurred—parents no longer want to parent their children but become friends...
8. My dear friends, the rampant disregard and disobedience of children to parents, is a manifestation of great evil...
9. Lev.20:9—"Everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood shall be upon him..."
10. To *curse* someone means, to invoke the judgment of God upon them—it's more than a flippant unguarded statement...
11. It was the expression of the deepest and most calculated hatred possible—and thus, it was punished with death...
12. And notice how this text underscores this wickedness—"He has cursed his father or his mother"—a sin of the highest order...
13. Why—because God has established within the fabric of natural order—disobedience to parents is against nature...
14. MLJ—"It is unnatural for children not to obey their parents; they are violating something that is clearly a part of the whole warp and woof of human nature, seen everywhere, from top to bottom..."
15. [2] The law of God—here I refer to the last phrase of v1—"for this is right"—that is, as defined by the law (v2)...
16. Dear brethren, surely we are all clear on this point—only God's law determines what is good and what is bad...
17. Away with the opinions of men, regardless how supposedly learned they are, away with the voice of the masses...
18. The only thing that determines right and wrong is God's holy law—it, and it alone, is perfectly and eternity right...
19. William Hendriksen—"The proper attitude of the child in obeying his parents must therefore be this: I must obey my parents because the Lord told me to do so. What He says is right for the simple reason that he says it! It is he who determines what is right and what is wrong..."
20. Thus, the apostle roots the obedience of children in the 5th commandment—"Honor your father and mother..."
21. In other words—the apostle Paul assumed that the Ten Commandments, remained binding for NC Christians...
22. He believed that the Ten Commandments, are a summary of God's eternal, moral, and universally binding law...
23. Now—most of us know, that the Decalogue is often divided into two parts—the first directly relates to God the other to man...
24. Thus—the second table of the commandments (the 5th commandment), begins with honoring father and mother...
25. The point being—this is foundational to the rest—a person who doesn't honor his parents won't honor any authority...
26. Think about it—those neighborhoods where parental honor is absent, are overrun with all forms of foolishness...
27. We have largely raised a generation that doesn't honor parents, and thus, have no respect for any form of authority...
28. [3] The promise of God, v3—"Children, obey your parents...honor your parents...that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth..."
29. There's actually two promises in this verse—[a] that it may be well with you, [b] you may live long on the earth..."
30. But—before I come to these, let me briefly remind you of that they were originally given in the Old Covenant...
31. Now—to refresh your memory, the OC was made with the nation of Israel and was typical and temporal in nature...
32. Thus—the prosperity that they promise (v3), originally had a largely external and physical dimension to them...

33. As I mentioned this last Wednesday, the promise of long life in the land, had reference to physical life in Canaan...
34. Chronically disobedient older-children, were put to death under the OC, and obviously, would not live long...
35. But—and this is very important, this outward and physical prosperity was typical of spiritual and eternal blessing...
36. [a] That it may be well with you—"obedience to God's law, brings peace of soul and all forms of spiritual blessing..."
37. [b] That you may live long on the earth—this ultimately has reference to long life on a new and renovated earth...
38. Now, obviously, our obedience doesn't earn these blessings, but God graciously rewards obedience with heaven...
39. Prov.3:1-2—"My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you..."
40. Jn.5:28-29—"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life..."
41. Rom.2:5-7—"the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds, eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality..."
42. Now, in closing, let me rather quickly say a few things by way of application, as I bring this message to a close...
43. Application 1—Don't FOOL yourself—there may be some present, who are actually characterized as disobedient...
44. I'm speaking to you who know you hate obeying, and most often, you rebel against your parents (if not outwardly, inwardly)...
45. My young friend, don't fool yourself, chronic and constant disobedience, is a sure sign you're still unconverted...
46. Rom.1:28—"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness...backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents..."
47. 2Tim.3:3—"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents..."
48. Application 2—Don't TRUST yourself—here I'm thinking of children, whose consciences' have been troubled...
49. And very simply, I want to remind you, that your acceptance with God, is not based on obedience to your parents...
50. I remember, when my girls were younger, I would often remind them that Christ perfectly obeyed His parents...
51. I often asked them—When Jesus' parents told Him to clean His room, did He? And they would say, Yes. I would then say, There's your righteousness...
52. Simply put, Christ perfectly obeyed His Father—He soberly, totally, quickly, heartily, and joyfully obeyed...