

Walking in Reverence for Christ in Family Life Ephesians 6:1-4

Ephesians 6:1-4 (ESV) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [2] "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), [3] "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." [4] Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Introduction

- A. As many of you know I had a once in a lifetime experience this past week. On Wednesday, Dec 5 (just a few hours after my birthday), my mother died.
 - 1. Though she was sick for over 20 years her death came as a major surprise. As you can imagine, this made for a rather full week.
 - 2. Because I was making almost daily trips to LGH I asked Paul if he could take a sermon in December and he graciously agreed to cover Christmas Sunday for me.
 - 3. Mark Prater was helpful in serving me and offered to cover this Sunday for me. I said thanks for thinking about me but no.

- B. It was my desire to preach this sermon precisely because it is about family and this is where my thinking has been over the past couple of weeks. I have a heritage I wouldn't trade.
 - 1. My parents taught me (by word and example) to love God and to love others which included active participation in the body of Christ (the church). What could be more important?
 - 2. My parents have said they weren't very good parents. They believe we have so much more to equip us than they had. They did enough that I have no excuse.

- C. You may wonder what the grieving process is like for me (no problem if you could care less).
 - 1. Tears come upon me from time to time for no obvious reason. I'm sad and tired, though not as tired as my mom was.
 - 2. Grieving plays out differently for different folks. In my view, take as long as you like but don't settle down into an inward focus only. Give your life away.

- D. So I'm up here trying to do that. The title of this sermon is **Walking in Reverence for Christ in Family Life**. Parenting will test you in your faith and in your love. The context:
 - 1. Unity - walk in all humility, patience and love (see Ephesians 4:1-2).
 - 2. Purity - put off the old self and put on the new self (see Ephesians 4:17-32).
 - 3. Be filled with the Spirit by singing songs, giving thanks and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (see Ephesians 5:18-21). Ephesians 5:21 is a bridge.
 - 4. Wives, submit to your husband (see Ephesians 5:22-33).

- E. The text mentions three characters (children, parents, and the Lord). We'll consider each one.

I. Children.

- A. Children are given two commands.
1. One, **obey** your parents in the Lord. Why? Because it is right (and we know this).
 - Obey is a verb (*hupakouo*) that means to listen to or attend to (see Acts 12:13 where Rhoda comes to answer Peter's knock on the door).
 - To obey "in the Lord" means that we obey so long as the command is not sin.
 - Notice that in Ephesians 5:22-33 wives were not told to obey their husbands. Your wife is not your child. A husband long on his wife's obedience will be short on respect.
 2. Two, **honor** your father and mother. Why? So you have a successful life (Ephesians 1-3 makes clear our blessings are now in Christ).
 - To honor is primarily a valuing. As children, we show our parents by our actions and attitudes how much we value them. Words are not necessary (helpful).
- B. The commands are clear. Crystal clear. No child is a fool in this life when they choose to obey and honor their parents.
1. It is quite common for children at some point in time to say something like this. I can't wait until I make my own decisions. One problem - you have been and you will be.
 2. To follow Christ is to do Ephesians 6:1-3. Philippians 2:10 tells us that one day every knee will bow to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ. It is only a question of when.
- C. It is reasonable that we apply wisdom to the text by asking this question. Who is it that falls in the category of children?
1. I would be reluctant to apply an age (a specific number). My suggestion would be that if you are living at home you are in this category of children.

Ex: Ryan living at home as a 27 year old. His courtesy was commendable. Where he was, when he would be home, and meal coordination. Why? Honor.
 2. So what about a college student? When living in the home you obey and you honor. This is your test as to whether you reverence Christ or not.
- D. That raises another question. What if you are living at home but you aren't a believer?
1. You obey and you honor because it is the right thing to do.

Ex: No right turn on red (you obey or get a ticket - maybe we should fine our kids?).
 2. When you leave home you are on your own (leave and cleave).
 - Parents hopefully retain influence in your life even then. You don't obey at that point but the command to honor is for all believers.

II. Parents.

- A. Ephesians 6:4 says “fathers,” but commentators agree this applies to both parents (but get this, dads). There are again two commands given.
- B. One, **do not provoke your children to anger**. How would we do that? One problem is when we require more of them than we require of ourselves as adults (live the golden rule).
1. Harshness (we are too firm or mean).
 - To put off harshness is to put on love and kindness. It is mercy that leads us to repentance. It is also wise to excel in encouragement.
 2. Indulgence (we spoil them).
 - Show me a human being (much less a child) that gets every possession they want and I’ll show you an unhappy child.
 - You will also avoid a solid work ethic which doesn’t serve the child.
 3. Distance (we avoid them).
 - The affection of dad and mom is huge (security) in their lives. When you couple love with encouragement you have a powerful synergy at work.
- C. Two, **give them (children) discipline and instruction of the Lord**. Why?
1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If our children don’t have worship and awe and reverence for Christ there is no telling where they will end up.

Ex: How our children need to know that actions have consequences. Me talking my mom into going to a basketball game and I end up in a fight.
 2. Our hope, though, is not in our methods. We aren’t good enough or perfect and therefore our hope is in God.
- D. I find we parents often fail the test of faith. God has said (so it is true):
1. His word does not return void or empty. His word is in fact powerful.
 2. The prayers of a righteous man avail much.
 3. We reap what we sow.
 4. God gives grace to the humble.
 5. If we’ve failed in word, prayer, sowing, and humility repentance remains.
- E. If you presently have a child who is not obeying and honoring you do not lay down your shield of faith or your sword, rather, fight the good fight of faith. Do you want it?
1. Trials come to build us up in our faith. Never, never, never quit on your child.

Close

- A. Parenting is the hardest thing I've done because parenting hooks my idols like nothing else.
1. For us parents the best thing we can do is dazzle our kids with God.
 - Creator
 - Savior
 - Sustainer
 2. Sadly, in my family, at one time we were larger in our children's eyes than God was. That is a recipe for disaster.
- B. Children, God's will for your life is that you be fruitful for His glory.
1. You will find that the best way to arrive there is to honor and obey your parents. They know more than you know. They have more wisdom.

Ex: In my family peak arrogance was on average about age 17. Then the decline sets in and you begin to realize there are things that in fact you do not know.
- C. I pray our families here at Living Hope demonstrate reverence for Christ by walking wisely. The fruit will be sweet for all of eternity.
1. Remember that parents and children are not enemies. We are on the same side.
 2. Remember, too, that we demonstrate the love and obedience of Jesus Christ. May people see Godly families and give glory to God.

May the Lord grant you the love that leads the way, the faith that nothing can dismay, the hope no disappointments can dismay, and the passion that burns like fire. *Benedictions*, p 103