

Ephesians 6:1-3

Ephesians
Help, I'm a Kid!

Clarence Darrow: "The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents, and the second half by our children."

The author James Baldwin: "Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them."

The truth is being a kid has never been easy.

When a child was born to ancient Greek family, a naked father carried his child, in a ritual dance, around the household. Fortunately we've eliminated that practice.

Some girls were taught to read and write by their mothers, but this was rare. At age 15, the girls of wealthy families were expected to throw away their toys and marry the man that their father chose for them. Peasant girls found their own husbands while working in the fields.

In Rome, when girls were 14 years old, their fathers planned a marriage for them. When they married the man chosen by their father, the girls left their house to live with their new husband and his family. Boys were not allowed to marry until they were 15 years old.

In Europe in the Middle Ages, hardly anyone went to school. If you were one of the fortunate ones to live past infancy you worked in the fields, or took care of younger brothers and sisters. Around the age of twelve or thirteen, kids usually went out to work helping to plow the fields or take care of animals.

In this country children have part of the seismic changes that have taken place culturally.

Early in the year 1929 President Herbert Hoover said, "We are nearer today to the ideal of the abolition of poverty and fear from the lives of men and women than ever before in any land."

The majority of Americans still worked on family farms. In October of 1929 the stock

market crashed and by 1932 we were in the middle of a Great Depression and 12 million Americans were out of work. Most of the families who left the farms never returned.

On December 7, 1941 the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and our country was plunged into war. Our country built huge factories and new technology streamlined assembly line production.

In 100 years we went from 6 out of 10 people working on mostly family farms to 1 out of 100.

Since many women had gotten started working in factories during the war the woman's work force continued to grow. We got hooked on 30 year mortgages and car payments and it kept costing more to live.

Since both men and women were now working day care centers, which were virtually unknown during WWII became common place.

What happened to our children was the family structure was drastically redesigned all around them.

Kids went from living in close families who worked a farm or a family business to seeing mom and dad go off to offices and factories and not getting home until evening.

Suddenly children were growing up in affluence. No one wanted to struggle like the old days so everyone worked hard. But many times the parents substituted stuff they could buy their children for time spent together.

With the advent of affordable cars teenagers could now take off from home.

Finally the cycle was complete. Time together as a family was in short supply.

Along with all that has come a cataclysmic shift in moral values. Not that it was always so great in the "good old days," but with the media today and relativistic approach most people take to life, it gets really tough to separate right from wrong.

In fact for a lot of people the concepts of right and wrong have all but lost their meaning.

Putting all that together means that while it's always been tough to be a kid in our world, growing up in America today, has it's own unique set of challenges.

All this makes the Bible so important for us to understand.

The reason Faith Community Church exists is because we have a God who has explained who He is and what His plan is for this world.

It only makes sense that the God who created us as cognitive beings who communicate and study and learn and are self-aware would have a message to communicate to us.

If He did, then a written message would be ideal because it could be passed down from generation to generation.

We would expect that communication from God to be unique in ways that no other document could be.

That's exactly what we find in the Bible. It's prophetic accuracy is precise, it's historical accuracy is unerring, and it's scientific harmony is exact.

God has spoken through His prophets and His word is inerrant, trustworthy, but above all life-changing.

That's why we get together to study a book that is centuries old.

The latest parenting books will be outdated in a few years. The Bible is timeless.

Now, a few weeks ago we started a series on relationships that comes in the middle of a larger study we're doing of the New Testament book of Ephesians.

So far we've seen the example for all relationship issues is God Himself. He's a God who gave, and served, and sacrificed for us.

Not when we deserved it, but when we didn't. And starting from the very beginning He promised a redeemer would come.

To Adam, and Eve He said it would be a human being. To Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob He said it would be a Jewish person. To King David He said it would be one of David's direct descendants.

Through Isaiah He said it would be one born of a virgin. Through Micah He said it would be one born in Bethlehem.

God gave His commandments and His laws to His people along with an elaborate system of animal sacrifices.

The law showed His perfect standard and the sacrifices showed the cost of breaking that standard.

Then finally, at the right time God fulfilled all of those predictions and object lessons in Messiah.

Isaiah put it this way in the Tanakh 700 BCE (This is the from the Jewish Publication Society): *He was despised, and forsaken of men, a man of pains, and acquainted with disease, and as one from whom men hide their face: he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

Surely our diseases he did bear, and our pains he carried; whereas we did esteem him stricken, smitten of G-d, and afflicted.

But he was wounded because of our transgressions, he was crushed because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our welfare was upon him, and with his stripes we were healed.

All we like sheep did go astray, we turned every one to his own way; and HaShem hath made to light on him the iniquity of us all.

How absolutely phenomenal God is. We are the sinners. We deserve His wrath. But instead of just blowing the planet to smithereens, God enters it as our Savior.

Turn with me to Ephesians 5 pg 1041 Read vs 21

The verse we're using as our home base for this series is Ephesians 5:21. We keep coming back to it every week because it's the key to all the other relationship issues we're discussing.

Above everything else, with God Himself as our example, we're to submit our inclinations, our priorities, and our agendas to one another. In other words, we're to seek the good of others even if that means not always doing what we want to do for ourselves.

We're to submit to one another in the fear of God. That's how we've understood God's program for husbands and wives, and now were going to use it as the basis for our understanding of children and parents.

The Bible is an extremely practical book and it has specific direction for our family relationships.

As we serve one another in the family, the family relationships are strengthened, and instead of being pulled in a bunch of different directions, we'll work together as a unit.

Today we want to see God's specific application of 5:21 as it relates to children's responsibilities and next week we're going to see the responsibilities of parents.

I. Children Are To Obey Their Parents God-Given Authority

Read 6:1

These New Testament letters were written to be read publicly in church meetings. They didn't have children's church so the kids would have been right there with their parents.

Children, this is written directly to you and for you. Listen very carefully and hear God's wisdom. Children are to obey their parents.

The word translated "obey" is actually a compound word in the original Greek.

Remember we saw the verb for "submit" was *hupotasso*, *hupo* meaning "under" and *tasso* meaning "to arrange."

This one's *hupakouo*, *hupo* the preposition "under" and *akouo* which means "to listen" or "to hear."

It actually means “to listen and then to put yourself under what you hear.” “Submit yourself to what you hear by obeying.”

Children are to listen and be under their parent’s authority.

The word translated “children,” *teknon*, is a generic word meaning “offspring.” It’s used 91 times in the New Testament. It was used of everything from children who were to be circumcised, to sons who work in their father’s field, to describing believers as children of God.

If you’re living in your parent’s household this word applies to you. Obviously it takes on a different characteristic as you grow older and make more decisions for yourself, but it’s still not limited by age.

Children are to obey their parents God-given authority. That’s easier said than done sometimes, isn’t it?

A mother sternly said to her 4 year old, “Didn’t I tell you not to eat those last two cookies?” The little boy said, “Yes, mother.” So she makes the typical parent mistake of asking a “why” question. Be careful of why questions.

She says, “Then how come when I turned the light on in the kitchen I only saw one cookie?” And the little boy thought for a minute and said, “I guess it was so dark I didn’t see the other one!”

Obedience is hard. The Bible says we’re born into the world as offspring of Adam. That means we have a nature and a will that’s corrupted.

And as we get older we move from stealing cookies to lying to lustful thoughts to pride, jealousy, and envy.

Sometimes we even move to more outward offences like drunkenness, adultery, thievery.

Why is that? Because we need a new nature and a new life from our Creator. Something dramatic happened when Adam ate that fruit. God calls it spiritual death. Estrangement from our Creator.

That's why the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Jesus Christ came as the final sacrifice, the perfect Passover lamb, to die so that we could be redeemed.

By faith in Him we're given a new life. The Bible calls that a spiritual birth. And that new life is God's life within us.

The prophet Ezekiel brought God's message, *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.* Ezekiel 36:26

Once we put our trust in Yeshua as Messiah and Savior we have eternal life. We have a new life.

There's just one thing to remember. We still have that pull of sin. The Bible says there's a battle going on for our allegiance. Galatians 5:17 *For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.*

So even if we're a child of God we still can struggle with obedience. That's why God keeps calling us to look at Him.

He submitted Himself for our good. He took the pain and the loss at the cross.

If He willingly did that for us than who are we to be so conceited, self-important, egotistic, and pompous that we'd refuse to obey God given authority.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.

Just a couple of observations about this verse.

First the phrase "in the Lord." The New Century Version captures the thought this way, *Children obey your parents as the Lord wants...*

Now remember, this was a letter written by an apostle to a congregation. It was meant to be read in a church service. It wasn't something that was originally intended to be read down on the street corner in Ephesus.

This is God's truth specifically designed for His people.

God has a command designed to be read on the street corner. It's in Isaiah 45:22. *Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.*

Looking isn't doing something. God doesn't say, "Do this this, and this and you'll be saved."

If our salvation depended on what we could do then God would be less than perfect. If we could provide our own forgiveness then God wouldn't have a righteous standard and we could pat ourselves on the back and take credit.

Instead we have to look to God who alone forgives sin based on His own holy character. Then God receives the worship and exaltation.

In other words, the One who really deserves the veneration get it.

The rest of the commands of the Bible are written to believers.

That's why it says "Children, obey your parents in the Lord..."

That doesn't mean, "Children, obey your parents when they're talking about something spiritual." It means obey your parents in connection with the Lord and His purposes for you.

In other words, as you obey God you will submit to your parents authority in the home.

Just to compare, hold your place in Ephesians and flip over 2 books to Colossians.
Page 1120. Read Colossians 3:20

A child's obedience in the home is the fruit of his or her relationship with God.

Listen, if you're bucking the system at home instead of submitting in the fear of God that's a sure sign God's not at the center of your priorities. At that point you're the center.

You're big and God's kind of small right then.

Remember Ephesians 5:21, Submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Now look back at Ephesians 6:1

Here's observation number 2. The reason kids are to obey their parents is because God says it's right.

Now at first you might say, "What kind of reason is that?" I mean, when they get a little older than toddler stage kids start wanting to know why parents make the rules they do, don't they?

"Because I'm the mommy, that's why," can be kind of tough to swallow.

But this is so absolutely indispensable and compelling for us to understand. God says, "Because I'm God. That's why."

God created the world. But He didn't set things up haphazardly. He set things up to operate according to natural laws.

The great pioneers of modern science like Johann Kepler, Isaac Newton, Michel Faraday, Blaise Pascal, Louis Pasteur, and others believed that God created the world and therefore the world could be studied.

Science demands a biblical world view whether consciously or subconsciously. You have to believe that like causes produce like effects, that natural phenomena follow fixed and intelligible natural laws.

That presupposes that no random, chaotic world, but a world of laws that can be studied and documented.

Well, that same intelligent designer made an order and structure to the family that puts parents in a place of leadership and calls children to obedience.

So kids, when mom says, "Because I'm the parent, that's why," remember what God says in Ephesians 6:1. You obey because it's right. It's God ordained. It's God's order for humanity in every culture and at every time.

You say, "I don't know about this obedience stuff. Sometimes I think I know more than mom and dad."

I'd say two things to that. First is the classic quote from Mark Twain, "When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man

around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.”

You may think you know better but it’s amazing how differently we see things when we get a few years on us.

The second thing I’d say is listen to Luke 2:51, *Then He (that’s Jesus) went down with them (that’s Joseph and Mary) and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.*

He’s now 12 years old. He’s just been in the temple in Jerusalem in an intense theological discussion with the Scribes and teachers and He tells his mother, “I was doing my Father’s business.”

If anybody could say, “Why should I listen to my parents? I know a whole lot more than they do,” it was Jesus.

But He did what was right. Are you doing what’s right?

In a Christian family each person submits to the others in the fear of God. We’ll see how that works for parents next week.

But so that there might be order and not chaos the God of order has placed parents in the place of authority within the framework of the family.

The 2007 version of Ephesians 6:1 would be “Parents obey your children for this will keep them happy, bring peace to your home, and give them a great self-image.” The problem is, it’s not right.

I. Children Are To Obey Their Parents God-Given Authority

II. Children Are To Honor Their Parents God-Given Position

Read vs 2a through *mother*

God’s direction for His people isn’t really that complicated. In fact, when He was leading Israel into the Promised Land He gave them 10 straight-forward commandments.

The rabbis always taught that each of Moses’ two tablets contained five commands each. That makes sense and we have no reason to think it was other wise.

That would mean the second tablet contained the laws dealing with others. You could call that our horizontal responsibilities.

No coveting, stealing, lying, adultery, murder all dealt with our relationships with other people.

The first tablet contained the laws dealing with our relationship with God. No other gods, no graven images, don't take the Lord's name in vain, and then right in with all those God-ward type commands is "Honor your father and your mother."

That's huge. It includes honoring our parents in our duty to God. I believe God spelled things out this way because during our childhood His purpose is that our parents represent God to us. They mediate His love and authority.

Because parental authority is God-given respect for parents was always a top priority in Israel. In Leviticus 19 God said, *Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father: I am the LORD your God.*

Reverence for parents was part of reverence for God.

And notice something else about this command. Ephesians says, it's the first commandment with a promise. **Read vs 2b- 3**

Exodus 20:12 God says, *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*

Think about how that sets the fifth commandment apart from the others.

God says, "No other gods before me." We say, "OK Lord do we get a promise with that one?" No.

God says, "No graven images." We say, "OK Lord we can do that one. Do we get a promise with that one?" No.

"How about not taking your name in vain. That ought to rate a promise." No.

Then He elevates the honoring of parents with a promise.

It's like God was saying, "If you want to go on living in this land of promise I'm leading you into, keep these commandments and this one in particular."

Now, as Christians we don't have a promise of a specific piece of real estate. Our blessings are focused in the heavenlies.

But there's still a sense of blessing here on earth as we live by God's design.

If you honor your parents you'll have a full and meaningful life and not only that but you'll live out the days God has appointed for you.

There won't be any regrets on your part at your parents' funerals.

And remember this is one of the Ten Commandments given to all Israel. Not just kids.

We obey our parents when we're in the home. That responsibility of obedience comes to an end at some point. But long after we move out, get married, start our own family we're to keep honoring our parents. That's a lifetime responsibility.

Now as we look at these things I'm sure the same questions surface as they did when we looked at God's design for husbands and wives.

What does a kid do when he lives in a home where his parents don't know God or if they do, they aren't serious about doing life God's way?

How about this one? What do you do when your parents are hostile towards your faith?

We have a young man in our congregation whose father spit on him when he told him he had trusted Christ as Savior. Now what?

It seems absolutely clear here in Ephesians and in the 10 commandments that God wasn't saying, "Oh, by the way if your parents aren't honorable for some reason you can just shelve all this honoring stuff."

To a believing child in an unbelieving home I would say honor and obey your parents as far as possible without dishonoring God. Unless for some reason they would ask you to do something that was blatantly disobedient to the Bible (Which is highly unlikely) you need to honor them.

When a young person honors and respects their parents it usually prompts love and mutual respect from mom and dad. That humble attitude can become a tool in God's hand to reach out to you family.

They may argue with your theology but they can't argue with a loving, respectful life.

But even if nothing else ever changes make sure you honor your parents because it's the right thing to do.

Let me challenge young people here today by asking, do you cheerfully obey your parents? Are your attitudes, actions, speech, tone of voice respectful? Can you receive a 'no' as willingly as you can a "yes?"

Do you look for ways to bring your parents joy or are you so caught up with yourself that you're not even concerned about them?

Do you argue and grumble when you don't get your way? Do you refuse correction?

Our culture so often mocks and sneers at parental authority. It minimizes the seriousness of disobedience and disrespect. To God it's a big thing. It's a real big thing. It gets top 10 billing!

If it hasn't been a big thing with you, maybe you need to bow before God today and confess that to Him. Ask Him to fill your life and change your attitude so that you can live out these verses by His strength.