

Sermon Ephesians 6:1-4

Father Knows Best?

Intro: We live in a culture of clashing perspectives

Kids' Perspective:

- Obedience has a negative feeling
- Obeying means I have to do what my parents say because I am their slave
- I have my own things I want to do but never get to do them because I always have to do what my parents say
- My parents are dumb and do not know what's best for me
- We don't want to disobey, we just don't agree with your rules
- "My parents don't remember what it's like to be a teenager and do not understand my life!"

Parents' Perspective:

- We want the absolute best for our kids
- We want our kids to live – be safe- and not do stupid things that could kill them (trust me, we've all done stupid things that could have gotten us killed and we do not want you to experience the same)
- We want you to have the best relationships...just with the right people
- We are not against dating... we're just against **you** dating
- We think it's ok to kiss your boyfriend or girlfriend...as long as it's on your wedding day
- We want you to look stylish...as long as we can't see your cleavage, mid-riff or underwear
- We do remember what it's like to be a teenager...and that's exactly why we have so many rules!

1. What does it mean to obey

- a. Why should I obey my parents?
 - i. God commands us to obey our parents. We need to understand that God has chosen to order the universe in a particular way. The sun, moon, stars, they are all ordered to work together. Your body is designed in such a way that your brain, heart, lungs, every cell in your body works together for a purpose...to keep you alive. And so it is with how God has ordered the family and with children being under the authority of their parents.
 - ii. We are called to live God-glorifying lives. Everything we do goes back to one question:
 1. What is my main purpose in life (What is the chief end of man)?
 - a. Answer: To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. This purpose has to guide absolutely everything that we do, including this command to obey our parents.
 2. I Corinthians 10:31, "*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*"
 3. By not obeying your parents you are really acting out spiritual rebellion against God. The heart of disobedience is spiritual rebellion. And this is dangerous.
 - iii. Children obeying their Parents opens them up to God's Grace:
Parents have the tremendous responsibility of standing in God's place over their children. God has not left children on their own. This means that parents need to take that responsibility very seriously. But this is an act of grace on God's part. God wants the best for your life, according to His plan.
 - iv. Obeying your parents can bring prosperity to your life and to everyone around you.
"honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

God Himself says that your life will go better, your life will be more fulfilling if you obey your parents. There is no way around explaining that obeying your parents, who have your best interests in mind, that your life will be better.

- What if your parents never told you it was not ok to walk out into the street?
- What if they let you watch tv and play on the computer 6 hours a day?
- What if your parents never told you to do your homework?

You think that would be great, but even from a young age your parents are looking out for your best interests, they know what's best for your life.

- Your parents know you can get killed by walking out into the street.
- They know that watching tv and playing computer games all day creates a lazy, slothful person who will end up homeless and destitute one day because they had not developed a strong work ethic.
- They know that if you don't do your homework, you'll fail out of school and be stuck flipping burgers at McDonalds's the rest of your life.

Obedying your parents is an act of faith, where you are actually trusting that God knows what He is doing by giving you your parents.

Story of Randy who lived a wild and rebellious life and died at age 19.

- v. Is it ever OK to DISOBEY my parents?

Yes, because the passage says that you are to "obey your parents in the Lord". That means that you obey them out of your relationship with Christ. If your parents ask you to do something immoral and sinful then yes, you can disobey your parents. This is not normal, but I am sure that it happens. If it happens, you need to point out to your parents that what they are asking you to do is immoral and point them towards Christ. **By the way, asking you to empty the dishwasher and take out the trash is not immoral or sinful.**

- b. What should Characterize my obedience? How should I obey my parents?

I know you have all been waiting to hear this one.

- i. Honor and respect. Remember, this passage is pointing back to the 5th Commandment. *"Honor your mother and father."* God wants us to respectfully obey our parents. He wants us to have a good attitude, actually believing that they have our best interests in mind when they tell us to do something, *or stop doing something as the case may be.* Phil. 2:14 says, *"Do all things without grumbling or questioning."* Or *"do everything without complaining or arguing."*

Obey without grumbling, complaining, questioning or arguing.

Tone of voice, obeying immediately, they all go a long way in honoring and respecting your parents.

What sweet music it is when I ask one of my kids to do something and their response is, "Yes sir." And they do it immediately. But what misery it is when they say, "Why do I have to do it?" or "I'll do it in a minute."

This leads us to the second part of the passage..."Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger."

2. “Fathers do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

The first question you might have is, why does it point out “Fathers”? Do I really need to answer that one? You know that if mom gets angry, you’d better head for the bomb shelter! Cause’ if you’ve gotten mom riled up to the point of “anger” and she starts screamin’, there’s going to be heck to pay, for everybody. But men have this sinful bent towards anger. No excuses for it, it is just the way our sinfulness has developed in our gender. And so we are good at provoking our kids as well.

- a. How does a father (or lets go ahead and put both parents in this one) provoke their child to anger?

I asked my kids this question (let’s get the real deal, remember clashing perspectives?) and they said...

- i. They get angry when I laugh at them. So when we are in the heat of a “discussion” and I believe their line of thinking and arguing is so ridiculous, I tend to laugh out loud. This provokes them to anger. So I need to be sensitive to this and keep my laughter to myself.
- ii. They get angry when I ask them to do something that I myself am not willing to do. This may either be well founded or a misunderstanding. Either way, parents this is something we really need to pay attention to because our kids get angry when we are not modeling a godly lifestyle.

If I always ask my kids to empty the dishwasher, but never do it myself then they see this as a problem and they should. If I ask them to make their bed and clean their room and they walk into my room and it’s a complete disaster, they see this as a problem.

If I tell my kids not to gossip and they overhear me talking about the neighbors in a derogatory way then they see this as a problem.

If I tell my kids not to cuss and then they hear me yelling explicative’s from under the sink while I’m pretending to be a plumber then this is a problem.

These things provoke our children. They see a dissonance between what I am telling them to do and what I am actually doing myself.

Parents, we have to live a godly life. We have to model to our kids the life that we want them to live. We cannot just teach them Christian values and then go and not model a Christ-like life.

The passage says that we are to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Parents, it is our primary responsibility to lead our kids to Christ, to teach them His Word and to encourage them as they try to follow Christ themselves.

This involves:

- Living out a godly, Christ-centered life ourselves.
- Studying the Scriptures with our kids and helping them understand the gospel of grace. If you feel that you are not real good with this then talk to one of the families you know is good with this. It is a discipline you have to learn.
- Bringing your family to church and being involved in ministry.
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Puts it this way:

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 6:4** "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.¹⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

This leads into our third point...What if I have made such a mess of things in my family and with my kids that I feel there is no way to reverse what I've done? What if I have not modeled a godly life? Screamed abusively at my kids, treated them in such a way that they no longer respect me?

3. There is HOPE in the Gospel of Grace

Listen closely to me...

Jesus Christ suffered and died a miserable, excruciatingly painful death so that you could start over with your family.

The gospel says that Jesus has redeemed us from our horrible failures, and that He will put His Spirit in our hearts to guide us, give us wisdom, to forgive us of unmentionable acts and words that we have done and spoken and give us the ability to start over with the relationships we have tried to destroy. There is no word or action that cannot be redeemed.

I am NOT talking about psychological mumbo jumbo you hear on Dr. Phil. I am talking about the life-giving, redeemed from the death penalty, sin-forgiving gospel. Jesus died for you. The gospel is what is real, the gospel is what makes life worth living, the gospel is what restores relationships.

Conclusion: Story of cleaning the beach house...

I can't take back my words or actions, I can't take delete that scene from Tessa's memory, or mine. The wounds are there and there will be scars for possibly the rest of her life. But that does not mean that our relationship cannot be restored. It does not mean that forgiveness is impossible.

I can't make it up with good deeds either, I have only one choice, and that is to believe in the gospel that says, "Jesus Christ died on the cross to take away my sin and has forgiven me through His deeds not my own."

This believing in the gospel is a two way street though. Because not only do I have to believe the gospel but Tessa needs to believe the gospel, that Jesus' death has redeemed her daddy and that their relationship can be restored and start over.

Will you believe the gospel? Will you trust that your only hope in raising your kids and loving your family and obeying your parents is in Jesus? Will you begin, right now, to allow God to wash your heart clean with the blood of His Son? It's your only hope, without Jesus your life is lost and means nothing and you have no hope at all. So trust in Jesus.