

# Children, Parents, and Christ's Preeminence

Col 3:20-21

Pastor/Elder Phil Layton, GCBC, Feb. 28, 2021

## BE SURE TO SHARE GOSPEL SOMEWHERE

Turn to **Col 3**. Review last time, marriages 50 & 60+ – Don Schwarzburg?  
Joan Therkelsen turning 97! PTL: families, multi-generation, grandparents.  
We've been teaching through Colossians verse-by-verse, this is **part 2 of the Christ-centered family**.

*<sup>18</sup> Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

Last time we looked at v. 18-19, Pastor Cliff great family message last week. Today we come to v. **20-21**, children and parents and Christ's preeminence. Children in the home, obey you parents. And all children are to honor their parents into their old age. Fathers need to not provoke or discourage their kids

Discouragements in 2020: some separated from aged parents in life or death. God's Word commands honor of parents, but govt. has often prevented that.

Parents are separated from a HS daughter's decision to abort their grandkid.

Pastor James Coates this Sunday again is separated from his kids in jail. In Canada they let out criminals for COVID #'s but they don't let this dad out?

In this lockdown, fatherly abuse is at all time high, drug abuse on all levels, suicides by kids at home have taken more young lives by far than COVID.

Questioning or challenging authority is at an all-time high in society/family

## Police and parents are disobeyed and dishonored

Kids are brainwashed to be anti-authority and have a mentality of entitlement.

In America a kid with \$100 shoes will drink a \$5 cup of coffee and type on a phone worth hundreds about how oppressed he is and capitalism failed him!

Boys and girls are told there aren't boys or girls, you create your own identity.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have lost identity – girls sports now have guys! This week a conservative book on transgenderism was cancelled by Amazon.

If you played with Mr. Potato Head as a kid, just know that this week Hasbro made that toy brand gender-neutral. No Mr. or Mrs., that limits, isn't inclusive

## I think of Toy Story and angry eyes! We all need our eyes and ears on!

To this gender-confused anti-family world comes God's Word **in Col 3:20-21**. Society says don't listen to parents, listen to yourself, how you feel. Our culture tells kids pleasing themselves is what it's all about, parents can fuel that fire, but the end of **v. 20** talks about pleasing God. What does He say?

- Outline:**
- 1. Christ must have the preeminence**
  - 2. Children must obey their parents**
  - 3. Fathers must not cause discouragements**

## **First and foremost, Christ must have the preeminence**

Read **v. 20, 1:18**: 1st place in everything includes the family. #1 in the home (as Jesus said we must love Him more than father, mother, son, daughter).

Not long ago **Barna** singled this out as one of the most significant things he had discovered: Of those who regularly attend church, only 15 percent say their relationship to God is their first priority... [but] "first priority" is Jesus' ... **"great" commandment** (Mt. 22:38)<sup>1</sup>—not to mention the point of **Col 1:18**.

**1:9-10** (APPLY HOW TO PRAY IN FAMILY), **3:1** & **Mt 6:33**, **Dt 6:5-9**.

Our closing hymn A Christian Home says: 'no enemy can sever  
If [Christ is] always Lord and Master there...the center of our least endeavor  
Be...our Guest, our hearts and homes to share...  
Give us homes built firm upon the Savior, where Christ is Head...and Guide  
Where every child is taught His love and favor...walking by his side!'

READ **3:15-16** – apply to **the Word read in home**, talk about Word, sing together:

Give us homes where Christ is Lord and Master, The Bible read...hymns still sung;  
Where prayer comes first in peace or in disaster...Christ sufficient...for old and young.

READ **3:17**, **Lordship in family relationships** (wife, husband, kids, parents).

COMPARE **EPH 5:22-6:4** '*as to the Lord...as Christ loved...in the Lord...*'

COMPARE **1 COR 10:31** 'everything you do **to glory of God**' (cf. **Col 3:17**)

**Col 3:17** is a **family context**, 'We must do and say everything on the authority of His name and for the honor of His name... [It's been said] Every parent tries to teach his children to honor the family name. In just a few minutes, a person can disgrace a name that it has taken his ancestors years to build.'<sup>2</sup>

What does it mean to **do all in the name of the Lord** in **v. 17**? I have a set of books of Puritan sermons and one is all on this verse and its many "uses":<sup>3</sup>

1. It is to do all in his strength and power... exercise faith on him...
2. For his glory... be much taken up in him...
3. To do all by his authority and command...

Reasons why we must do all in the name of Christ:

1. Because all we have, are, or can do, is of Christ
2. Christ [has the] name above every name

### **Christ must have preeminence, #2. Children must obey their parents**

**v. 20** *Children...* This context is a letter read in church. Look at **4:16** '*And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.*'

Some think that **other letter** is the **Ephesian** letter which also speaks directly to children (we read in church earlier *obey...honor your father and mother*).

**Paul** doesn't say 'parents, tell your children later what we read in church,' as he writes this letter he says 'children...' he **expects them there, listening**.

It's been pointed out: '**children are addressed as responsible members** within the congregation.'<sup>4</sup> 'they are thought of as both present in [church] where the letter would be read out and as responsible agents despite their youth.'<sup>5</sup>

John Stott said 'That children should have been included in the instructions, and given a section of their own, is an indication of the already pervasive influence in the church of him who had said, '*Let the children come to me, do not hinder them...*' It was a radical change ... in the Roman Empire, in which ... children were regarded by many as a partial nuisance ...'<sup>6</sup>

**Kids aren't unimportant or unwelcome intrusions** in a church, we **welcome them as important** in the kingdom. Jesus was greatly displeased when His disciples thought of kids as burdens or bothersome distractions to adults. He sees children as blessings from and not to be forbidden from His teaching.

Kids of all ages are welcome in our services. We have nursery and classes for toddlers and younger ones, but I welcome and encourage children being trained to sit in with their parents as they are able (sermon notes for kids).

So let me talk to the kids directly, how long are you a child that must obey?

**Ephesians 6** gives the longer version of this, children obey your parents, and then it talks about children being brought up in discipline and instruction (v. 4). So children in this context is kids being brought up (i.e., raised in home). **1 Tim 3:3** talks about a managing his household with submissive children. Children living in their parents house must obey them as they raise them up. If you're a dependent, you're not an adult on your own, obey your parents.

There's no age it sets, but there is a stage of life when the parental authority changes, if not sooner, when you get married (leave father and mother and cleave). Dads walk daughters down the aisle, a minister asks "who gives this woman to be married?" The father gives away his daughter, and in that moment as she transitions from his arm to the arm of this man, her headship and authority is passed from dad to the groom. The husband is responsible to be her authority and head, her new loving covering, protection, provision in every way. Bride and groom leave the father-and-mother dependence and relationship, dad's job is done, all that's left in the wedding is to comfort his wife. And any debt in the future or dental work is no longer on dad's hands.

**v. 20** *Children **obey your parents** – hupakuo lit. 'come under to hear/listen'*

- **Prov 1:8-9** *'Hear, my son, your father's instruction And **do not forsake** your mother's teaching; Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck'* (NASB)

- **Prov 4:1** (NIV) *'Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; **pay attention ... "Lay hold of my words with all your heart..."** <sup>10</sup> Listen, my son, **accept what I say...** <sup>20</sup> My son...listen closely to my words.'*

Kids do you obey in this way? Do you put yourself under mom and dad and listen? You heard earlier if you don't honor them, it won't go well with you.

But when you obey, **Col 3:20** says it pleases the Lord (circle of blessing).

Christ-pleasing obedience=right AWAY, right ACTION, right ATTITUDE

God always wanted heart obedience not just external religion of many Jews. **1 Sam 15:22** says it strongly: *'to obey is better than sacrifice...rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry'* (KJV). God sees disobedience, rebellion, or stubbornness like witchcraft or idolatry

TURN TO **ROMANS 1** – READ *'disobedient to parents...'* What kids are being taught by society? Paul, should we flee Rome to another province? v. 15-16 (compare TMU interview question about moving to another State).

TURN TO **2 TIMOTHY 3**, read **v. 1-2** (sound like today?). READ **v. 14-15**

SALVATION FOR KIDS – not by faithful obedience, but faith in Christ.

- Lives marked by disobedience to parents need to be saved, changed.
- Come as the prodigal son, humbly begging forgiveness from his dad.

- Turn from sin to Jesus as Lord, He makes you pleasing to the Lord.
- **Eph 2** says all are ‘*sons of disobedience. But God, rich in mercy...*’
- Not just children, parents, too must be saved by grace through faith, not of ourselves, all a gift – then obedient changed heart (**Rom 6:17**)
- **Titus 3:3** ‘...*we ourselves were once foolish, **disobedient**... But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy by...poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior...being justified by his grace...*’ Are you?
- Look to Jesus, who is perfect but He honored imperfect parents by obeying and submitting to them (**Lk 2:51**). He always honored His Father in heaven (**John 8:41**) Jesus us. He obeyed perfectly for us.
- He shows how to obey → submit → honor, **Lk 2** -> **Jn 2** -> **Jn 19**

In **Matthew 15** Jesus has strong words for adults who didn’t honor parents. He tells the Pharisees ‘*God said, ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,’ and, ‘**HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.**’ “But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,” he is not to honor his father or his mother.’ And by this you invalidated the word of God... “**You hypocrites**...‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.’*’<sup>7</sup>

**Pr 23:22** Listen to your father...**do not despise your mother when she is old.**

If you’re not a child at home but have living parents, what’s the application?

**Help them in their old age:**

**1 Tim 5:4** if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for **this is pleasing in the sight of God.**

(not just young children obeying that pleases God, older caring for)

**Honor them at every stage of life**

Praise mom like **Prov. 31**, thank parents, making them feel honored (remembering special days, asking for their counsel or forgiveness for your dishonor, spend time with, help with practical things, etc.). If you have kids, bless them by letting them see often (**Ps 128:6**)

That’s children and parents,

Finally: **Fathers must not cause discouragements**

<sup>21</sup> **Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.**

**Eph 6:4** expands with the positive: *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

There is a place for discipline. **J. Vernon McGee** talked about “the **board of education** for the seat of learning.” But there’s also a positive instruction.

**Whose job is it to bring them up?** Not the Church, State, society or secular culture. Not the school (even less with shutdown), not even Sunday School. We don’t need Super Nanny or psychology books or silly songs with Larry.

It doesn’t take a village to raise a child, or a government, **it takes a family.**

And **a father especially** is called to task, and warned not to provoke his kids.

In the original context, men were lords of their home and often lorded over those under them. But **v. 17** starts all this with **Jesus as Lord of the home**.

**Roman law** of patria potestas gave a father absolute power, 'right to sell his children as slaves, or to have them put to death if they disobeyed him.

<sup>18</sup> But **God's law** tells dads to be gracious, encouraging, in nurture and admonition.

NIV 'do not embitter...' NAS 'do not exasperate...so they will...lose heart.'

Flip-side: **how can we encourage our children**, or strengthen their hearts?

An experienced father once said, 'Before I got married, I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories!' My experience only took me 5 kids (or less) to figure out I don't have child-rearing all figured out yet, not even in theory! I'm a learner, not an expert.

I've learned the hard way **how dads can provoke, exasperate, or embitter:**

1. **Moralism or legalism** (Col 2:21-23, 3:10). Tedd Tripp writes in *Shepherding a Child's Heart*: 'change in behavior that does not proceed from the heart is not commendable, it is condemnable.'<sup>9</sup>
2. **Anger and sinful words** (Col 3:8, 4:6)
3. **Lack of compassion or kindness** (Col 3:12a, cf. Ps 103:13-14)
4. **Pride or Impatience** (3:12b) Symptoms: not humbly receiving correction from a spouse a child when we sin. Never admitting we were wrong. Self-centered reactions ("how could you do this to ME?"), more concerned of what other people think of my parenting
5. **Not forgiving or asking forgiveness** (3:13)
6. **Not putting on love above all** (3:14)
7. **Not giving thanks – to God and them** (3:15-17, 1:3-4)

**Lou Priolo's** book *The Heart of Anger*, gives 25 ways parents can provoke anger, including being a child-centered home, hypocrisy, inconsistency, favoritism, comparing, not enough freedom...or too much, not listening to or taking time to talk to, invest in our kids.<sup>10</sup>

He gives **these applications:**

- **Identify the specific ways** you have been provoking your child
- **Confess...to God**...Ask your child's forgiveness for your sins
- **Plan** and consider how to **provoke to love and good** (Heb 10:24)

That's painful to go through, but it's for our good (Heb 12:10-11). It hurts me as much as it hurts you. Mention Dean comment on his encouraging dad

Fathers can discourage or crush the spirits of their children, but **Ps 34** says 'Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you... The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and **saves those who are crushed in spirit**. [v. 11, 18 NIV]

NET 'he delivers those that are discouraged...Come children! Listen...'

**Ps 78:4-7** help them not lose hope by helping them put their hope in God.

Discouragement in isolation or when feeling alone, heightened in 2020. **Dt 31:8** 'The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; **do not be discouraged**.' (NIV)

**Isa 41:10** ‘...**Don’t be discouraged**, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.’ (NLT)

**Isa 42** says of **the Messiah/Christ** to come: ‘He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice ... A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out...he **will not falter or be discouraged**...In his teaching the islands will put their hope’ (NIV). Christ isn’t and doesn’t discourage.

**Lk 1:17** announces Messiah coming ‘**TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous**’<sup>11</sup>

**Hebrews 12:3** says let’s keep looking to Jesus, fixing our eyes on Jesus and ‘consider Him... lest you become weary and **discouraged** in your souls... “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be **discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens** ... what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ... no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it’ NKJV

**1 Thess 2:11** ‘...**like a father** with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God.’

There’s **only one perfect Father** but I pray this encourages us to **parent like Him**. God help us not to provoke or discourage but **do all in Christ’s name**

O give us homes with godly fathers, mothers,  
Who always place their hope and trust in Him...  
A home where each finds joy in serving others,  
And love still shines, tho' days be dark and grim

<sup>1</sup> As cited by David Wells, in *The Courage to Be Protestant*.

<sup>2</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Wilkinson, in *Puritan Sermons, 1659-1689*, vol. 2, p. 493-99.

<sup>4</sup> *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer and G. J. Wenham, 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Col 3:18–4:1.

<sup>5</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 250.

<sup>6</sup> Stott, 237-38.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 15:4-8 NASB.

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Malina and Stephan Joubert, *A Time Travel to the World of Jesus* (Halfway House: Orion, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Ted Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* (Shepherd Press, PA, 1995), p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger: Practical Help for the Prevention and Cure of Anger in Children* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 1997), 30-51.

<sup>11</sup> NASB.