

69.I - Fathers, Do Not Provoke Your Children to Wrath - Ephesians 6:4a - 2021-03-28
originally preached 2016-09-04

INTRODUCTION

For these two years, this church has been engaged in a study through the part of the Bible called, “1 Timothy,” a pastoral epistle or letter from our Lord Jesus Christ’s apostle Paul to Timothy, his faithful young co-worker in the ministry. Timothy had been left in charge of the large church at Ephesus, to set right some things that were starting to go wrong. This letter is the word of God to Timothy and the church about how Christians ought to behave in the church of God.

Since last summer, our labor together has been in chapter 3, about the church knowing how to choose pastors for itself, men described as being “blameless.”

Since January of this year, we have been surveying passages in the Old Testament, to understand as well as we can what is meant in 1 Timothy 3 when the Bible says a man must rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. It has been very edifying to see what the Bible has to say about that subjection, and I am very thankful to the Lord for all we’ve learned together about how a man can be a good father.

Last time our study together moved us from the Old Testament to the New Testament, as we saw that what Malachi prophesied what was then fulfilled in John the Baptist, that through the preaching of repentance, God would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.

Today we turn to the very brief New Testament scripture that directly addresses the situation of fathers with their children. Please consider this assertion:

If the apostle Paul requires that a man have his children under subjection, then what Paul instructs a man to do toward his children must be his idea of how that is to be accomplished.
OR

If the Holy Spirit of God inspires it to be written down that to be blameless, a man must rule his own household well, having his children in subjection, then what the Holy Spirit of God instructs fathers to do with their children must be the will of God for how a man is to go about doing that.

Today’s text, Ephesians 6:4, presents the will of God for fathers in two halves: one warns fathers what not to do; the other instructs fathers what to do. I put the first half to you in today’s sermon; the other half in next week’s sermon, God willing.

TEXT Ephesians 6:1-4

BODY

I. Fathers, You Carry in Your Flesh the Potential Ruin of Your Own Dear Children

A. You have been set in a position over your children

1. by God's design and command, your children have been placed under your rule
2. by God's design they look up to you, they admire you, they love you
3. they have been commanded by God to honor you, to obey you
4. they have been warned by God that this is a matter of life and death to them, and promised by Him that to honor you is to expect life to be good for them and long

B. But you are deeply flawed, severely corrupt

1. when you sinned in Adam, you made yourself a slave to sin; and every time you have sinned in your own life, you have made yourself more and more accustomed to sinning, and more and more a stranger to righteousness
2. by God's grace, the Lord Jesus Christ has saved you from slavery to sin; sin is no longer your master
3. and now God is pruning you like a master gardener, removing from you what is not fruitful, that you may bear good fruit for Him
4. when the Lord Jesus comes back, in the twinkling of an eye you will be changed---the corruptible will put on incorruption
5. but until that day, we deal every moment with remaining sin in our flesh, which is at war with the Spirit

C. By that corruption in your own flesh, and by the wiles of the devil, and by the evil influence of this world in which we live, you are always tempted to be unfaithful with what has been entrusted to you

1. on the one hand, you are tempted not to discipline your children, not to train them, not to teach them to obey their parents, to honor all who are in authority over them, and to obey all the commands of the Lord, but just to let them have their way
 - a) if you neglect to do this, it is an expression not of love for your children, but of hatred
 - b) to neglect this duty is to send them to an early grave, and to hell thereafter
2. but on the other hand, as soon as you realize that disciplining your children is your responsibility, and you set about trying to do so, you find yourself tempted to rule over your children with an arbitrary, despotic, even tyrannical rule; to become a petty tyrant in your own little kingdom

D. The temptation to become a cruel dictator in your own home is made strong because your position gives you the power to get away with it

1. have you ever noticed that the very highest government officials seem to be able to do very bad things, to the great harm of the people under them, and get away with it? When you are very near the top, or at the top, in an organization, you can get away with bad behavior that people under you would be punished for.
2. it is this phenomenon that means when the father is tempted to rule in a tyrannical way, he has little outside restraint to keep him from it
3. if you tried yelling and screaming at people in a setting where you are not the boss, you would not get away with it for long at all
4. if you tried beating on people at church, or at work, or at school, you would soon find yourself in big trouble
5. but if you do whatever your flesh is pleased to do as the father in the family, you can to a large degree get away with it, because in the home there is no one over you to discipline you

E. Fathers who succumb to this temptation, and institute a despotic rule in their own families, provoke their children to wrath; they are the cause of sore temptation to their children, to become angry at their parents and rebellious against them

II. Our Sinfulness in This, and Our Children's Sinfulness in This, Shows Us All Our Need for the Savior

A. Whenever we encounter law in the bible, we are tempted to think:

1. I keep the law very well, thank you
2. I'm going to keep the law better than everyone else and rise to the top
3. I hope I can keep the law well enough to be acceptable to God

B. Instead of thinking those things when we read God's law, let us think: Here is God's commandment, and I feel in me how unable I am to keep it. Oh, God, have mercy on me through Jesus Christ my Savior!

C. Think what sinners we are!

1. Fathers are tempted to either to neglect our own children, or to provoke our own children to wrath
2. Children are tempted to disobey their own fathers, and to become angry at their fathers when they try to make them obey

D. We need the Savior to reconcile such sinners to God

1. why would God be willing to take in such sinners?
2. He has made atonement through the blood of His own dear Son!

E. We need the Savior to make our works acceptable to God

F. We need the Savior to work in us by His Holy Spirit

- III. This Warning of What Not to Do As Fathers Turns Us Away from the Wrong Path That Has Troubled the World So Many Times, and That Would Be the Ruin of Our Children
- A. Here is what being in a position of authority actually does give a man the right to do: to rule according to basic morality, within the bounds set by the unwritten traditions and written constitutions of his organization
 - 1. you heard this read to you from Deuteronomy, that a king in Israel was to hand copy for himself the law God has given as Israel's constitution
 - 2. you find this in Joshua, when God tells Joshua, as the new leader of Israel, to meditate day and night on God's law
 - B. This is true of all three aspects of government: legislative, executive, and judicial
 - 1. if his position includes a legislative function: to make laws that are wholesome and necessary for the common good, and in keeping with basic right and wrong and the traditions and constitutions of his organization
 - 2. if his position includes an executive function: to declare and enforce the existing laws equitably, and determine just and reasonable procedures necessary for doing so
 - 3. if his position includes a judicial function: to judge fairly who has broken the laws of the organization, and pass sentence on such lawbreakers, according to basic morality and the traditions, constitutions, and laws of the organization
 - C. When a normal person is ruled by a ruler in such a way, the person is glad for his rule; he is glad those laws are the laws; he is glad those laws are made known and enforced; he is glad those lawbreakers are punished if they will not obey the laws.
 - 1. APPLICATION: When children are ruled by their father in such a way, they of course resist and object to some degree, but essentially they see the rightness of it, they feel the love in it, and they are taught to fear the Lord and obey His commands. They are made wise unto salvation through Jesus Christ.

- D. The sinful man is tempted to think that being in a position of authority over others gives him the right to rule arbitrarily, to rule according to whatever he wants or thinks; but that is not true. Here is what the sinful man is tempted to think that his position of authority gives him the right to do:
1. make laws arbitrarily: that is, make whatever laws he wants to make, whether or not they are wholesome, whether or not they are for the common good, whether or not they are in keeping with basic morality, whether or not they go against long-held traditions, and whether or not they are in keeping with the written constitutions of his organization
 2. enforce the laws even if they have not been made known, enforcing them sporadically, unreliably, unequitably, by unreasonable procedures, and by severe means that are not necessary
 3. judge unfairly who has broken the laws, and inflict severe, even cruel penalties for lawbreakers, all out of proportion to their offenses, with no regard for basic morality or established traditions or written laws and the constitutions of the organization
- E. This kind of arbitrary rule is known as despotism. Such a ruler who rules despotically is known as a despot. If he comes to enforce his arbitrary rule by severe punishments, that is known as tyranny. Such a ruler is known as a tyrant, his rule referred to as tyranny.
- F. You are surely aware that this temptation of men in positions of power to establish an arbitrary rule, to become despots and even tyrants, is present in every kind of institution where someone is in a position over someone else.
1. a school: the teacher ruling despotically over the students
 2. a business: the owner or manager ruling despotically over the workers, sometimes even to the point of reducing them to involuntary servitude
 3. a church: the pastors or other officers ruling despotically over the members
 - a) whether in a small local church
 - b) or a huge episcopal organization like the Church of England
 4. a military: the higher officer ruling despotically over the soldiers
 5. a sports team: the coaches ruling despotically over the players
 6. a government, whether local, state, or national: the government officials ruling despotically over the citizens (we have repeatedly fought wars over this one)
 - a) 1641 Parliament had to form armies to fight against our own king, King Charles I, who had for 11 years attempted to establish an absolute monarchy in England

- b) 1688 the English nobles had to call for William and Mary to replace King James II, who again was attempting to establish an absolute monarchy in England, and overturn the protestant reformation and return the country to the Roman Catholic religion and allegiance to the pope
- c) 1775 the original American colonies had to take up arms against their own country's military, and in 1776 declare independence from Great Britain when a long train of abuses by parliament and the king demonstrated a design to reduce the colonies under a tyrannical rule
- d) 1835 the Texians had to take up arms against their own country's military, and in 1836 declare independence from Mexico when the rest of the Mexican states refused to keep the central government in compliance with its constitution, and Santa Anna attempted by force to establish an arbitrary rule over Texas
- e) 1861 the southern states, including Texas, seceded from the union and fought the invading U.S. army trying to resist unconstitutional rule by force by the United States federal government, which resistance having failed, the elected officials and bureaucrats of the United States federal government now exercise an arbitrary rule over the citizens of the states, including our state of Texas, with precious little regard for essential right and wrong, or long-standing traditions, or our written constitution, or even their own laws

G. Yes, you are aware of this strong tendency in sinful man, for men in positions of authority to try to establish an arbitrary rule, becoming despots or even tyrants; but see here our Lord's warning that you must not succumb to such temptation as ruler over your children, lest your precious children become discouraged or angry

1. think of how you feel when the police arrest a murderer, stopping his violence, protecting his potential future victims
 - a) you are glad our state code includes laws against murder
 - b) you are glad our law enforcement agencies have arrested the murderer
 - c) you are satisfied when the court finds him guilty and sentences him to suitable punishment, and when the punishment is carried out
 - d) such lawful government causes the citizens to be at peace with the government, and tends to give them confidence in the rule of those in power, and inclines the citizens to obey the government's laws

2. but think of how you feel when the officers of the government refuse to enforce our laws, the most wholesome and necessary
 - a) the supreme court cancels our state laws against abortion and sodomy
 - b) the men in the white house refuse to enforce our immigration laws, announcing illegal executive orders in their place
 - c) such arbitrary rule provokes us citizens to anger, to wrath, and if continued long enough and pressed on the people hard enough, leads to complete loss of confidence in the rulers, and rejection of their rule by rebellion or secession
3. this equation is present in the rule of the father over the children no less than in the rule of the government officials over the citizens
 - a) if you practice an arbitrary, despotic, and especially if a tyrannical rule over your children, instead of training them to obey their parents because it is right, and to obey all of God's law and believe His gospel, you will provoke them to wrath
 - b) they are sinners themselves, just as you are, and provoked to wrath they inevitably will sin in that anger
 - c) and that sin may well take the form of rejecting your rule, rejecting what you would like to teach them, rejecting the law of God, and despising the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - d) the sin of the children is their own sin; they own it; they are culpable; they are responsible before God for their rebellion
 - e) but you, the father who was to teach them to obey the Lord, would be the one who provoked them to rebel against Him, to their own destruction

CONCLUSION

- IV. This Warning Forms An Important Part of How We Obey the Instructions We Are Studying in 1 Timothy 3
- A. The church needs blameless men to serve as its officers, both pastors and deacons; but a man rightly can be considered blameless only if the church judges that he rules his own household well, having his children in subjection
 - B. If a man provokes his children to wrath, if that is his way to rule his household; if that is not the exception, but his normal way with his household, it is likely to show up in children who are not in subjection to him, but who are in an angry rebellion against him
 - C. Such a man should not be chosen for office, which is a grief and a loss to the church
 - D. Therefore, let every man here repent of any thoughts and actions of the despot or tyrant. Let him purpose in his heart to rule his household well.
 - 1. let him make and recognize just rules and laws.
 - 2. let him be diligent and consistent in executing those laws.
 - 3. let him be just in judging who has disobeyed his laws, wise and consistent in bringing corrective chastening on those who need it
 - E. Let each man's rule over his own household be so good that his wife and children, whether they understand it or not, find themselves able to submit to his rule, to be in subjection to him
 - F. Then the church can delight in judging him blameless, in setting him in office, and in receiving blessings from the Lord through his good service in the church.

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

~~Haven~~ Allison - Prelude "~~Amazing Grace~~"

Allison - Trinity 151 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

~~Rita~~ Allison - Trinity 125 "My Heart Doth Overflow"

~~Rita~~ Allison - Trinity 362 "Let Thy Blood in Mercy Poured"

next week: 293 "Let Children Hear"

Dillon - Call to Worship: Psalm 119:17-18

Roel - Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 17:14-20

Chris - Congregational Prayer

- I. God Our Father Always Rules Perfectly
 - A. He is God, and there is no other; He rules over all
 - B. He never changes
 - C. He always acts in keeping with His perfection
 - D. Everything He does is just, is righteous, is pure, is good
 - E. He is not tempted to do something as ruler that is corrupt, unlawful, deceitful
 - F. He never does anything He shouldn't do, nor does he leave undone anything that is His responsibility to do
 - G. Creatures under God's rule get angry at Him, but never for any good reason
 - H. God the Father has no need for someone to exhort Him to rule justly or warn Him against ruling unjustly
 - 1. He is perfect
 - 2. and His rule over us is perfect
- II. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Always Rules Perfectly
 - A. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the great God-Man
 - 1. truly God, and truly Man
 - B. God the Father's will for Christ's rule was that He first humble Himself to death on the cross
 - C. He did that, and did it perfectly; God the Father approved of what Christ did, and showed His approval by raising Him from the dead and seating Him on the throne in heaven at His right hand
 - D. Now the Lord Jesus Christ rules as head over all things; King of Kings, Lord of Lords
 - E. All His rule is perfect
 - 1. He was tempted to do things as ruler that were corrupt, unlawful, deceitful, but He never did and never will
 - 2. He was tempted to do things he shouldn't, or leave undone things He should have done, but He never did and never will

3. People became angry with Him, but never for any good reason

F. Our Lord Jesus Christ has no need for someone to exhort Him to rule justly or warn Him against ruling unjustly

1. He is perfect

2. and His rule over us is perfect

III. We As Fathers Are Sorely Tempted to Rule Sinfully and Destructively

IV. The Two-Fold Danger to Our Children

A. If you do not train your children to know God’s law and the gospel of Jesus Christ, you are sending them to death

B. If you set about to train your children, but do not resist the temptation to become a tyrant in your household, you will make them angry instead of obedient

I. Fathers, Understand the Danger Your Family Is In Because of Your Sinfulness

A. Your children desperately need you to act the part of the father

B. As soon as you move to do so, you are tempted to sin in what you are doing

C. If you follow the sinful urges of your flesh, you will produce the very opposite of what is needed

1. instead of the children learning to honor those in authority over them, they will learn to be angry toward those in authority over them

and you fathers

Wesley:

Mothers are included; but fathers are named, as being more apt to be stern and severe.

Gill:

Fathers are particularly mentioned, they being the heads of families, and are apt to be too severe, as mothers too indulgent.

JFB:

including mothers; the fathers are specified as being the fountains of domestic authority. Fathers are more prone to passion in relation to their children than mothers, whose fault is rather over-indulgence.

Hodge:

The duty of parents, who are here represented by the father

Barnes:

The object of the apostle here is, to show parents that their commands should be such that they can be easily obeyed, or such as are entirely reasonable and proper. If children are required to “obey,” it is but reasonable that the commands of the parent should be such that they can be obeyed, or such that the child shall not be discouraged in his attempt to obey.

it is the duty of children to obey a parent; but it is the duty of a parent to exhibit such a character, and to maintain such a government, that it would be proper for the child to obey; to command nothing that is unreasonable or improper,

JRY:

Children are responsible to obey. But who is responsible to train the child to obey? the father!

Why, if the commandment is, "Honor thy father and mother," and the apostle's application is, "obey your parents," does the admonition to parents then say, "Fathers"?

- mothers are included

- fathers are more in need of this, as less likely to do it naturally

 - see "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children"

- the father is the head of the family

do not provoke your children to wrath

Calvin:

- by unreasonable severity

- a harsh and unkind manner rouses them to obstinacy, and destroys the natural affections

Trapp:

- God forbids bitterness and austerity in husbands, masters, and parents.

Poole:

- viz. by unreasonable severity, moroseness, unrighteous commands, &c

Henry:

- Though God has given you power, you must not abuse that power

- Be not impatient with them, use no unreasonable severities and lay no rigid injunctions upon them.

Gill:

- Neither by words; by unjust and, unreasonable commands; by contumelious and reproachful language; by frequent and public chidings, and by indiscreet and passionate expressions: nor by deeds; preferring one to another; by denying them the necessaries of life; by not allowing them proper recreation; by severe and cruel blows, and inhuman usage; by not giving them suitable education; by an improper disposal of them in marriage; and by profusely spending their estates, and leaving nothing to them

- they should take care not to provoke them to wrath, because this alienates their minds from them, and renders their instructions and corrections useless, and puts them upon sinful practices; wrath lets in Satan, and leads to sin against God; and indeed it is difficult in the best of men to be angry and not sin

Clarke:

Avoid all severity; this will hurt your own souls, and do them no good; on the contrary, if punished with severity or cruelty, they will be only hardened and made desperate in their sins. Cruel parents generally have bad children.

Parents are called to correct; not to punish, their children. Those who punish them do it from a principle of revenge; those who correct them do it from a principle of affectionate concern.

JFB:

irritate not, by vexatious commands, unreasonable blame, and uncertain temper
[Alford]

Ellicott:

the exasperation produced by arbitrary and unsympathetic rule

Hodge:

They are not to excite the bad passions of their children by severity, injustice, partiality, or unreasonable exercise of authority. A parent had better sow tares in a field from which he expects to derive food for himself and family, than by his own ill conduct nurture evil in the heart of his child.

RWP:

Paul here touches the common sin of fathers.

EB:

In these parallel texts two distinct verbs are rendered by the one English word "provoke." The Colossian passage warns against the chafing effect of parental exactions and fretfulness, that tend to break the child's spirit and spoil its temper. Our text warns the father against angering his child by unfair or oppressive treatment.

"wrath" (or "provocation") used in Eph_4:26, denoting that stirring of anger which gives peculiar occasion to the devil.

the father must not be exasperating, must not needlessly thwart the child's inclinations and excite in order to subdue its anger, as some will do even of set purpose, thinking that in this way obedience is learnt. This policy may secure submission; but it is gained at the cost of a rankling sense of injustice.

Barnes:

That is, by unreasonable commands; by needless severity; by the manifestation of anger. So govern them, and so punish them - if punishment is necessary - that they shall not lose their confidence in you, but shall love you. The apostle here has hit on the very danger to which parents are most exposed in the government of their children. It is that of souring their temper; of making them feel that the parent is under the influence of anger, and that it is right for them to be so too. This is done:

(1) when the commands of a parent are unreasonable and severe. The spirit of a child then becomes irritated, and he is “discouraged;” Col_3:21.

(2) when a parent is evidently “excited” when he punishes a child. The child then feels:

(a) that if his “father” is angry, it is not wrong for him to be angry; and,

(b) the very fact of anger in a parent kindles anger in his bosom - just as it does when two men are contending.

If he submits in the case, it is only because the parent is the “strongest,” not because he is “right,” and the child cherishes “anger,” while he yields to power. There is no principle of parental government more important than that a father should command his own temper when he inflicts punishment. He should punish a child not because he is “angry,” but because it is “right;” not because it has become a matter of “personal contest,” but because God requires that he should do it, and the welfare of the child demands it. The moment when a child seem that a parent punishes him under the influence of anger, that moment the child will be likely to be angry too - and his anger will be as proper as that of the parent. And yet, how often is punishment inflicted in this manner! And how often does the child feel that the parent punished him simply because he was the “strongest,” not because it was “right;” and how often is the mind of a child left with a strong conviction that wrong has been done him by the punishment which he has received, rather than with repentance for the wrong that he has himself done.

JRY:

There is a very important thing we parents want to do and indeed must do. But we have within our own flesh a set of weaknesses and temptations that threaten to undo the very thing we want and need to do.

What is it that the government officials do, that provokes you to wrath? Is it that they govern you? No, it is that they govern you in ways not in keeping with the constitution and with what works and with what is good for us and with what is in keeping even with their own laws.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Trapp:

dispirited, and through despondency grow desperate in their resolutions.

Poole:

lest some children, who might with a moderate hand be reduced to obedience, should be (as it were) dispirited, by the roughness of their father’s discipline, and even pine away with grief, or grow desperate.

Gill:

disheartened and dispirited; their spirits be broke through grief and trouble, and they become indolent, sluggish, and unfit for business; or, despairing of having any share in

the affections of their parents, disregard their commands, instructions, and corrections, and grow obdurate, stubborn, and rebellious

Ellicott:

What is forbidden is a constant and restless stimulation, “spurring the willing horse;” which will end in failure and despondency.

Spurgeon:

Some fathers do; they expect more of children than they will ever get, and more than they ought to expect; and they lay heavy burdens upon them, which are grievous to be borne; and for little faults there are severe chastisements.

Wesley:

Which may occasion their turning either desperate or stupid

Call to Worship: Psalm 106:1-2

Scripture Reading: Psalm 106:3-11

Sermon: “Fathers, Do Not Provoke Your Children to Wrath” Ephesians 6:4a

Benediction: Psalm 106:47-48

Paul Bayne on Ephesians 6:4 page 559-560 in my green book

“bestow them under stalls” means to leave babies at someone else’s door
from *Domestical Duties* by Gouge

“Contrary is the practice of such lewd and unnatural women, as leave their new-born children under stalls, at men’s doors, in Church porches, yea many times in open field...They oft lay their children forth in public places, for others to shew that mercy, which they themselves have not.”

I, on behalf of this church of Jesus Christ, am engaged in the work of teaching those who have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, to observe all things our Lord has commanded us. At the same time, by those commands, I am commanding all men everywhere to repent, and by His gospel preaching that there is forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ for all who believe in Him.

By God's grace, for a whole year we worked our way through the first three chapters of Ephesians, learning to give God all the glory for the great salvation He has given us through Jesus Christ. For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.

We then spent another whole year learning the doctrines of chapters 4 and 5, where we are taught to walk worthy of the calling with which we are called, walking in love, as God has loved us and as Christ Himself has also walked.

Now, this year, we have come to the beautiful code of conduct for the home life of the Spirit-filled church. When the apostle had said that one of the features of a Spirit-filled church is that the believers are submitting to one another in reverence for Christ, that thought was the jumping off point for the doctrine of submission in family relationships. We have been seeing that "submit to those who are over you in the Lord" is the first line in this doctrine. We have seen that the wife is to submit to the husband, and the children are to obey the parents. Next we will see that the servant is to obey the master. Elsewhere the apostle teaches that the citizen is to submit to the government authorities. The apostle Peter, in his letters, teaches the very same things.

We also are seeing that in each case where one party is commanded to submit to those who are over him, those who are in authority are commanded how they are to behave properly in that position of being over others. The husband has been told that as the wife is to reverence him, he is to love her even as he loves himself.

Likewise, the children have been told to obey their parents, to honor their father and their mother, and so we come, predictably, to the corresponding doctrine of how the parents are to walk in a way that is worthy of the position of authority in which they have been placed by God.

There is room here for everyone to be instructed. Mothers surely may and must learn from what is said here. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, big brothers and big sisters, and anyone who exercises any rule or leadership in the home should heed these words. Anyone who ever will be in a position of leadership or under someone else who is the leader may learn in this verse the will of the Lord for you. But the responsibility for rule over the children while they are children falls most squarely on the shoulders of the father. In him the authority in the home is vested. He is responsible for what goes on there. So if you are a father, hear the word of the Lord addressed directly to you in a matter most important and serious.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 "When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. 18 "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.