

Harmony at my House (Part 3)

Spirit-filled Parents & Children

Text: Ephesians 6:1-4

Introduction:

1. In Eph. 5:18, we have the command to “be filled with the Spirit”. The Apostle then proceeds to demonstrate the fruit that flows out of a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life.
2. The Spirit-filled life produces:
 - Harmony in God’s House (Eph. 5:19-21)
 - Harmony at My House (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
 - Harmony at the Work House (Eph. 6:5-9)
3. In the previous two messages we saw how the Spirit’s filling impacts on the marriage relationship between husband and wife.
4. We now complete this section on the Christian family as the Apostle deals with the relationship between parents and children.

I. THE EXHORTATION TO CHILDREN (Vs. 1-3)

Children are to...

A. Obey their Parents (Vs. 1)

1. The Mandate – ‘obey’
 - a. ‘obey’ = the word means “to hear under”. It speaks of the one hearing as being under the authority of someone else. It is listening with a view to obey. “Listening is wanting to hear.” The word is used of Rhoda who came to ‘**hearken**’ as Peter knocked on the door (Acts 12:13).
 - b. The similar command in Col. 3:20 says “Children, obey *your* parents **in all things**: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” The child is to submit to all his parents’ commands provided they don’t violate the supreme will of God (Acts 5:29).
 - c. ‘parents’ = observe that both the father and the mother are put on an equal level. Obedience is to be rendered to both Mum and Dad. Parents need to be on the same page otherwise it will be confusing and difficult for the children to obey properly! Remembering Dad’s headship and that he has the final say can help in resolving small differences of opinion.
 - d. “in the Lord” = “the sphere in which the obedience occurs. It is a Christian obedience fulfilled in communion with Christ.” (Wuest) It “shows the spirit in which the obedience is to be accomplished.” (Hoehner) It brings again into focus the obedience to earthly authorities is ultimately obedience to Christ. “This obedience should arise out of the conviction that such obedience is the will of the Lord.” (Hodge)
 - e. Remember children, you need the help of God’s Holy Spirit and a close walk with God to fulfill your duties in the home just as much as Mum and Dad need God’s help to fulfil theirs! And the very start of this means accepting Christ as your Saviour.

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- f. Remember that learning to obey your parents will help prepare you for a life of obedience to Christ.
 - g. Beware of the various forms of disobedience:
 - i. Blatant disobedience – “No, I’m not going to do that for you Mummy!”
 - ii. Partial obedience – doing a part of what is required.
 - iii. Delayed obedience – doing what is required in your own time. Or being asked multiple times before you obey. Remember, to delay is to disobey!
 - iv. Disobedience is a feature of the last days (2. Tim. 3:1).
 - h. Illustration: Jesus Christ was subject to His parents as a 12-year-old boy. Luke 2:51 “And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and **was subject unto them**: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.”
 - i. Parents, remember that training our children to obey is NOT a small matter to be treated lightly. Illustration: Mother who asks Johnny 5 times to come to dinner.
2. The Motivation – “this is right”.
- a. Obedience is the right thing to do in the eyes of God. Obedience is right and disobedience is wrong.
 - b. Col. 3:20 further adds “...for this is **well pleasing** unto the Lord.” Obeying your parents pleases Christ. Again, we see that Christ is to be our focus when obeying an authority.

B. Honour Their Parents (Vs. 2-3)

1. The Mandate – “Honour thy father and mother”
- Paul now quotes the 5th of the 10 commandments to reinforce the command he has just given in verse 1.
- a. ‘honour’ = deals with the inner heart attitude behind the obedience. The word means “to estimate, fix the value” (Wuest). Expositors says, “Obedience is the duty; honor is the disposition of which the obedience is born.” Hodge says honour “has reference to the inward feeling as well as to the outward conduct.”
 - b. “father and mother” = equality of mother and father again emphasized. Both are to be honored equally in the family.
 - c. “the first commandment with promise” = this command is the first in the Decalogue with a specific promise attached to it.
2. The Motivation – “That it may be well with thee”. Two blessings are promised for those who honor their parents introduced by the word ‘that’. They touch a child’s...
- a. Quality of Life – “that it may be well with thee”. The word ‘well’ is translated “well done” (Matt. 25:21, 23) and ‘good’ (Mark 14:7). Children who do the right thing by their parents can expect to know God’s blessings in their lives. It doesn’t promise a life without trials but it does promise well being for the child.
 - b. Longevity of Life – “and thou mayest live long on the earth”. Faithful children can expect as a general principle that they will enjoy long lives if they graduate well from the school of the home. Prov. 3:1-2 “My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart

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keep my commandments: For **length of days, and long life, and peace**, shall they add to thee.”

- d. Note: As parents we need to remember that the period of training in the home is to prepare our children to be able to make wise decisions on their own when they reach adulthood and eventually leave home (i.e., when married). So as children grow older into early adulthood, we should be careful not to keep treating them like they are 10-year-olds. In Psalm 127, it ends with the children speaking with the enemies in the gate. God did not give you arrows (children) to hoard in your quiver but to prepare for God to send out to do His will.

II. THE EXHORTATION TO FATHERS (VS. 4)

A. What fathers are to Avoid (Vs. 4a)

1. ‘fathers’ = while the command can apply to both parents, the emphasis is upon the father who is the head of the home. Like in the marriage relationship, he bears the greater responsibility for the oversight of his children’s upbringing. His wife is his helper but he must with God’s help set the vision and direction for the family. Prov. 17:6 “Children’s children are the crown of old men; and **the glory of children are their fathers.**” The father’s role is so important in the child’s life.
2. ‘provoke’ = to irritate, arouse to wrath, exasperate, anger.
3. The parallel command in Colossians 3:21 adds “lest they be **discouraged.**” The word ‘discouraged’ means to be without courage or spirit. To lose heart, be disheartened & broken hearted. It has the sense of being listless, sullen, discouraged, or despairing.
4. There are many ways a father can do this:
 - a. Unrealistic expectations that he never had to live under as a child (e.g., almost expecting perfection).
 - b. Idealistic expectations (e.g., ideas picked up in books on parenting).
 - c. Excessive discipline or discipline with a harsh, ungentle spirit. (e.g., the punishment doesn’t fit the crime). There is a difference between being firm and harsh.
 - d. A lack of proper balance between negative correction and positive encouragement. Illustration: Martin Luther.
 - e. Trying to interact with a child on an adult level (e.g., teasing or concepts the child cannot understand properly).
 - f. Issuing complex commands that are above a child’s understanding. Failure to understand the stage the child is at in his/her development.
 - g. Engaging in favoritism. The example of Isaac’s favoritism of Esau and Jacob’s of Joseph are warnings on this point.

B. What fathers are to achieve (Vs. 4b)

Fathers are responsible for:

1. The Education of their Children – ‘nurture’
 - a. Fathers are the primary ones responsible for the education of their children! Of course, the mother plays a vital role in that process as the husband’s helpmeet but the responsibility lies

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with the husband to ensure the children are educated in the things of God.

- b. The word '**nurture**' is a comprehensive word and means "tutorage, that is education or training; by implication disciplinary correction: - chastening, chastisement, instruction." (Strong) Put another way, it refers to "the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of **mind and morals**, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment). It also includes the training and care of the body. So, we are to be concerned about the development of the whole person – spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically.
 - c. The same Greek word (παιδεῖα) is translated 'instruction' (2. Tim. 3:16) and 'chastening' and 'chastisement' (Heb. 12:5, 7, 8 & 11).
 - d. So, we could summarise by saying there are two main concepts in the word:
 - i. Instruction
 - ii. Correction
 - e. Proverbs contains much helpful information for parents on training children.
 - i. Prov. 13:24 "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
 - ii. Prov. 22:15 "Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."
 - iii. Prov. 29:15 "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame."
2. The Correction of their Children – 'admonition'
- a. The word 'admonition' means "to call attention to, that is, (by implication) mild rebuke or warning" (Strong). It is made up of 'nous' (mind) and 'tithemi' (to put/place). Hence, it has the "sense of exerting influence on the mind." (Hoehner) It means "to put in mind" so is the "act of reminding one of his faults or duties" (Hodge).
 - b. Godly parenting involves loving the child enough to bring correction into his life.
3. The Christianization of their Children – "of the Lord"
- a. This means the education and correction given to the child is to be that which is according to the truth of Christ. We are to ensure our children receive a Christ-centered education. It refers to "Christian training. That is, the whole process of instruction and discipline must be that which He (Christ) prescribes and which He administers, so that His authority should be brought into constant and immediate contact with the mind, heart and conscience of the child." (Hodge)
 - b. 2 Tim. 3:15 "And that **from a child** thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

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- c. There is a strong emphasis on the spiritual education of children in the Old Testament. For example:
1. The Passover – Exodus 12:26-27 “And it shall come to pass, when **your children shall say unto you**, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It *is* the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.”
 2. The Mosaic command to parents – Deut. 6:4-9 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: **And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children**, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”
 3. The Psalmist's resolve – Psalm 78:1-7 (1) **Maschil of Asaph**. “Give ear, O my people, *to* my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. (2) I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: (3) Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. (4) **We will not hide *them* from their children**, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. (5) For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should **make them known to their children**: (6) That the generation to come might know *them*, **even the children which should be born**; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children: (7) That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:”

Conclusion:

1. Children, are you saved? Do you have a day by day walk with God that helps you obey Mum and Dad?
2. Parents, are we training our children in the Word of God? Fathers, are we taking our God-given responsibilities seriously?