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Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "Why Children Should Obey Their Parents" (1977). *Vaught Sermon Notes: Ephesians*. 64. https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_ephesians/64

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WHY CHILDREN SHOULD OBEY THEIR PARENTS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 66
EPHESIANS 6:1-3

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EPHESIANS 6:1-3 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

The first word in this study is "children" and the word is "teknon." This is the basic word used for children in relationship with father and mother. It doesn't speak of any particular age. The word "brephos" means a little baby that can't yet walk and is still nursing. Then we have the word "pais" and this refers to a child, a child in the pre-puberty age, a child under discipline. Then we have the word "huios" and this means a child who has become an adult son. But the word "teknon" means a child from the age of birth until he leaves parental authority. We have had words for men and words for women, now we have the word for children. This is addressed directly to them, but both children and adults need to hear this instruction so all will know how children ought to act. And if you happen to be 45 or 50 and are still a child in the way you act, then you especially need to hear this.

Let us drop a word of warning here. Don't try to return to youth when your youth is already gone. This passage tells us what is required of young people. What is the real authority over children? That question is answered in these verses.

The Necessity For Authority And Discipline

Before you can exercise authority, you must receive authority. You must be trained in authority in order to hand out authority. No nation can long survive without authority and discipline. So here is the principle--"OBEY." Now, if there is anything in the world we despise instinctively, it is obedience. In our very nature, there is something in obedience that we feel is degrading. And the thing that makes us that way is the old sin nature. We are saved because the God-man became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. So remember this, it is not degrading to be obedient. It is not degrading to recognize the basis for authority. It is the basis for all real freedom.

The Revolt Of Youth

In our day we are living through the greatest teenage revolt of all history. Part of this revolt has come because so many youth have rather stupid parents. I mean that today we have a whole generation of parents who grew up under principles of expediency. They grew up under a psychological illusion that to discipline children would be to destroy their personality. This was taught everywhere throughout this land. This began in the education courses in Columbia University in New York City. This teaching spread into the colleges and universities of all the nation. The Bible has given the principle that if you spare the rod, you spoil the child. (Proverbs 13:24) Psychology has been saying in recent generations, "Whatever you do, be sure to spoil the child, so his personality will not be warped but will evolve naturally." The greatest genius all the way to the worst cluck in the world ought to know that if we are going to survive, obedience and authority must be recognized. You recognized authority when you drove here tonight. But our generation has been so brainwashed at this point that they actually

thought it was criminal to spank their children. So we now have millions of children who are growing up being catered to and who have received little if any real discipline. We have a generation that has never been spanked. Out of this kind of homes, they went to school and there they demanded there be no discipline. Parents took the attitude "My little son must not be touched, whether they are right or wrong." We have been catering to them all the way. Even when they violated the law and the parents heard about it, they said, "Why my little darling wouldn't do anything like that. I simply don't believe it."

We saw this happen in music and a generation turned away from good music to the stomping and beating type of music. Adults didn't like it, but they accepted it because they catered to the whims of their children. But remember this--ANY TIME THERE IS DECAY IN ANY GENERATION, IT IS THE LACK OF AUTHORITY. There is a greek word we translate "teach" and it is from "paideuo" and it means to instruct, to train with a belt or a paddle. This is a discipline word. Every generation must determine its own level. So this verse says, "Children, obey your parents--if you want a long life, then do it!" This means stability in living. The word for obey is a present, active, imperative of "hupakouo." It is addressed here to children. Here is a universal principle and it applies to the whole human race. It says, "Keep on being obedient as long as you are under the roof of your father and mother's house."

1. "Hupakouo" is a present, active, imperative and it means to be under the authority, and to respect authority.
2. Response to authority and respect for authority comes from the home. This is the basic authority in our society. When you have the majority of homes not teaching any kind of authority, then you have the beginning of the destruction of the nation.
3. Each generation determines its role in life on the basis of the recognition of authority in the home.
4. When children do not have respect for their parents, they lose respect for all other types of authority in life. They become misfits even before they become adults. We have many evidences of this in our land now. Lack of patriotism and lack of respect for the flag. We have athletes who shuffle their feet and turn their heads and look away and chew gum when the flag is unfurled and people sing the national anthem. They make wise cracks about the flag and the national anthem. It is just my judgment the athlete who does that ought to be thrown off the team. They desperately need self-discipline and team discipline.

Now when this verse says, "Children, obey your parents" this does not imply that parents are always right. But the principle of authority and obedience is always there. If you are willing to respect authority at all times, it will prove to be beneficial to you. Why should we have to teach manners at church? Because they were not taught at home. If manners are not taught at home, then they won't be taught at school. We have really magnified the lack of discipline in our day.

(Do you remember when they had the riots and people were photographed carrying out of stores furniture and all kinds of things that didn't belong to them? That's stealing and they should have been shot on the spot.) If people will not learn respect for law and order, then they have no place in our society. The only other alternative is civil war. (When those students attacked the National Guard at that university, some of those men in uniform fired on the students and killed some of them. Remember this--whether you like it or not, if you are allowed to attack a man in uniform, then all discipline in this country is gone and the foundation for our freedom is gone.) We need to teach our children to say, "Yes, sir!" and "Yes, ma'm!" and "No, sir!" and "No, ma'm!"

I am having this taped tonight and it will be in the tape room and it eventually will go out to many parts of the world. I hope many teenagers and many parents will listen to it and remember authority and obedience and discipline.

A FEW POINTS ON PARENTS

1. The greek word for "Parents" is "goneus" and it is dative of advantage here. Parents are the basic authority in a national entity.
2. It is to the advantage of children to have parents and to have their parents living during their childhood.
3. Children begin life helpless and ignorant. Even a genius is stupid at birth. Their survival depends on parents providing shelter and food and clothing and training.
4. Parents must train children in self-discipline, in respect for authority, in respect for the rights of others, in respect for the privacy of others, and in respect for the property of others. Then they must add to this teaching about how to care for their bodies, how to be polite, how to groom themselves, and how to respect their elders. Children should never be allowed to destroy property and get away with it.
5. Some additional responsibility for Christian parents. Christian parents are responsible for the evangelism of their own children. Don't leave this to others. Parents are responsible for the doctrinal training of their own children. Parents should teach their children respect for the pulpit and for the teaching of the Word of God. Now many children lose out at this point, for parents criticize the preacher right in front of their children. Parents have a right to be negative toward doctrine and parents have a right to criticize the pastor. But parents do not have the right to chew the pastor out and tear him apart with criticism in front of their children. In this way the parents can undermine the pastor's authority in their lives. If you run the pastor down and chew him up at the Sunday dinner table, then the children grow sour toward him and the church and they won't listen to his teaching and the reason is quite obvious.
6. Children should be trained in the doctrine of right man and right woman. They should also be trained in the knowledge of sex and marriage. Instead of X-rating sex, we should x-ray it before them and teach them these fundamental things in the home.

7. Consequently through this training and instruction it should not be too great a problem to teach obedience and discipline in the home. This is true especially when the parents are fair and just in their discipline.

Please notice that phrase in this verse "In the Lord." This is quite obviously an admonition to Christian parents. The preposition "en" plus the locative, and it means Christian children are to obey their parents as a part of their Christian service. Obedience to parents is the first obligation of Christian children. This verse then says, "This is right." The "is" is the present, active indicative of "eimi" and it means it keeps on being right forever. The word for "right" is a nominative, singular, neuter of "dikaiois." I love the fact that it is neuter gender and this sets it up as a principle and it is a principle that will last until the end of time. Obedience to authority is a Christian obligation and it will be forever.

EPHESIANS 6:2 "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;" By the time children grow up and become of age, what is to be their attitude toward their parents? It may be that their parents have faded physically and they are a bit old-fashioned, and possibly don't always dress in the latest styles. Now, what is to be the attitude of the grown-up children to their parents? Is there to come a personality conflict here? This verse answers that question. It says, "Honour your parents." The word now is not "hupakouo" any more but the word is honour and it is a present, active, imperative of "timao." This word means "To hold in respect." It is a beautiful thing to take the obedience of childhood and transfer it into the respect of adulthood. This is respect tempered with love. Do your parents have your honor and respect? Please notice--this is the first commandment with a promise attached. It always will be the first one with a promise attached.

Look at Exodus 20:12 for a moment. EXODUS 20:12 "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Now the first commandment is "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." This was a command to keep them out of idolatry. But this 5th commandment is the first commandment that has a promise attached to it. "Honour thy father and thy mother That" and the "that" introduces a result clause and the result is that your days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God has given thee. When you fulfill "hupakouo" as a child, then you can observe "timao" as an adult and this lengthens your life. The reason you lengthen your life is this--this kind of an attitude toward your parents brings character and stability to you and it means you will have good sense enough to live in all realms of life just as you have lived in the relationship to your parents.

EPHESIANS 6:3 "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." "That" introduces a result clause here. "With the result that it may be well with thee." "May be" is from "ginomai" and it means "That it may become this way in your life." You become what you receive in your parental training. This is an aorist, middle, subjunctive, and it is in the subjunctive for it means this is potential.

You can have this if you want it. It is not the educational system, or even the training at church, but the training in the home that can count the most. The home is the training ground for the history of the next generation.

That it may be "well" and the word for well is "eu." It means a life of happiness and prosperity based on obedience and authority. We have to respect the rights of others in order for happiness to ensue. "And that thou mayest live long on the earth." The word for long life is "makrochronios" and it means many long years added to your life because you learned how to respond to discipline and authority.

Next time--"THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS"

(So, young people--bring your parents next Wednesday night.)

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 67
EPHESIANS 6:4

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EPHESIANS 6:4 "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Last week in our study we saw the responsibility of children. This responsibility is obedience to parents. In this study we are to look at the responsibility of parents.

The first phrase here is translated "And ye fathers" and this comes from "hoi pateres" and it doesn't mean just fathers but it means both fathers and mothers and should be translated "You parents." The basic principle of authority in human relationships is the parent.

Teaching Norms and Standards

Children all come into the world as totally helpless creatures. Now this helpless creature may go in the right way and become a useful Christian and citizen, or he may grow up to be a law breaker or a draft dodger or a totally rebellious person. Let us remember that in the mentality of the soul there are two lobes. One is the lobe of perception and the other is the norm and standard lobe. Our perception varies as differing human I.Q. testifies. Our norms and standards may be the same, but our norms and standards are determined by parental training. As far as the believer is concerned, norms and standards originate from the understanding of grace. When Bible doctrine becomes understood, it is what we call "gnosis," which is the noun meaning "to know." When this "gnosis" is transferred over into the human spirit, it becomes "epignosis" and this means that this knowledge has now become a norm or standard, it has become a principle with us. This Bible doctrine we have deposited in the human spirit gives us our form of reference and these are the norms and standards on which we operate. From these norms and standards, we can express our love for God and can erect the edification complex in the soul.

Nations And Homes That Fall Apart

What really happens when a nation or a home falls apart? Let's turn to Isaiah 59 and see what really happens when homes and nations decline.

ISAIAH 59:6 "Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands." "They shall not cover themselves with their works" is an idiom for lack of respect in a national entity. Failure to respect the authority of parents or teachers or the police can bring breakdown all along the line. But we have become so permissive in our society today we don't even want the one who employs us or the one who provides our pay check to have anything to say about our conduct or the quality of our production. These same weaknesses have spilled over into our military life in this nation also. Authority is of major importance in the military. In our permissive society today, we are training our military leadership in sensitivity courses, and if this is allowed to continue, it will greatly impare our military effectiveness.

A Strong Sense Of Responsibility

In order to develop leadership ability, one must have a strong sense of responsibility and very strong norms and standards. These are the qualities that made men like Robert E. Lee and Douglas McArthur. Leadership comes from norms and standards in the soul and respect for authority arises from qualities in the soul. If we derive these norms and

standards from Bible doctrine, then we can be assured of the right results. But the quickest way to destroy these norms and standards is to develop mental attitude sinning. Alcohol in a life will also do this and alcohol is so powerful it can destroy norms and standards in a person even in a single night. Dope and all kinds of drugs are also destructive to all worthwhile norms and standards in a life and in this way a person can be reduced to the animal level in short order.

ISAIAH 59:7 "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths." The reason their feet run to evil is their norms and standards have been wiped out. This is the destruction of character and when character is destroyed, then we have to fall back on the perceptive lobe. So in our day of weakness and decline, the first requirement for leadership is--"Does he have personality? Will he be popular with the crowd? Will he be able to produce?" But you can't bypass norms and standards in the soul without reducing the person to the animal level. This is what happened to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel's time. "Wasting and destruction are in their path" means that their norms and standards have been blacked out. This leads to mobs and riots and law breaking. ROTC buildings have been burned and in some sections of the nation, military drills have been cancelled because of hostile public opinions. If in the next twenty-five years this breakdown in authority continues when the year 2,000 dawns, we will no longer be a free America.

This Has Greatly Changed The Youth

Many youths today have lost their standards of cleanliness, and if you live in a garbage can, you don't smell yourself. Norms and standards move you out of garbage cans. But when morals stink, then the body that adheres to those low morals begins to stink. In music and in the movies and television, we have been striking at the very fiber of the norms and standards of this nation and this moral blackout is bringing destruction to the homes of the nation. "Wasting and destruction" in this verse 7 refers to the destruction of property. We have gone so far in this country that nothing is safe or sacred in this nation. It is a disgrace to everything we stand for in America that violence has gone so far in this country that we now must spend millions of dollars ever year just to protect the physical life of our president.

ISAIAH 59:8 "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." "No judgment in their goings" means their norms and standards have broken down and the "crooked paths" describe the reckless lawless living, living with no authority.

ISAIAH 59:9-10 "Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men." This is probably the most accurate picture of the United States of America we can find in all the Bible. Now, remember this--it doesn't have to be this way. It isn't necessary for our nation to continue to flow in this path.

Look down in ISAIAH 59:19 "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."

Here is your answer to the lack of norms and standards. When Bible doctrine is taught, the Holy Spirit takes this truth and builds within us the character and stability that produces happy Christian living.

Now turn back to our Ephesian passage. Authority in the nation depends on parents. The test of parenthood is this--Do you parents have Biblical norms and standards and do you have a sense of justice and fairness? If discipline is based on fairness and facts, then order and relaxed living is the pattern of the home. Parents too often handle their children emotionally instead of on the basis of fairness and justice. If the discipline of the parents are hampered by mental attitude sins, and if they live by their emotions and have no norms and standards from which to make decisions of discipline, they are not capable of rearing children. Remember this--mental attitude sins are the greatest enemy of discipline in the home. Anger, hatred, bitterness, envy, jealousy and all such mental attitude sins can destroy children and children in this kind of environment never grow up normally.

This scripture says, "Provoke not your children to wrath," and the word for "provoke" is "parogizo" and it means to exasperate. It means to arouse anger by unjust treatment. Children have no respect for authority if they are not treated fairly and justly. Children who are punished must know why they are punished. Parents can't blow up around children and lose their temper and go screaming at them and in that emotional state carry out their punishment. No child should be disciplined until the parents explain why they are being disciplined. If it is a fair and just punishment, then it will be a character building experience. If a parent runs around and screams all the time at the child, this is a good way to destroy the principle of authority. Usually this is the type of parent who demands a big young people's program to take up the slack where they fail. This word "Provoke" is a present, active, imperative and it means "Stop exasperating your children." The parents were already doing this and Paul was here commanding them to stop it. Parents can have norms and standards in their lives, but mental attitude sins can quickly wipe out all these standards. Alcohol can also obliterate any basis for respect and authority from parents. Parents who drink around the house get irritated at their children for no reason at all, then in just one evening of drinking, all respect and admiration can go down the drain. Once norms and standards are gone the parent becomes just another animal to their children and all respect is gone.

Patient Training Is Necessary

This verse says, "But bring them up" and this "but" is a conjunction of contrast. "Bring them up" is a present, active, imperative of "Ek trepo" and this means to train to maturity. This means that parents have to be mature themselves in order to impart maturity to their children. I listened to the problems of a teenager recently and he said the trouble in his home was the immaturity of his parents. Children can't rear children. So "ektrepo" says, "Always keep on training toward maturity."

Let us glance at the three areas of parental responsibility.

1. The physical realm.

This means that parents are to provide food, shelter, and clothing for their children. They provide proper food and adequate shelter and proper grooming. Recreation is an important part of this physical realm.

2. The mental realm.

Parents must provide their children a vocabulary with which they can think. If this vocabulary is profanity and worthless and idle talk, children aren't going to grow very much toward mental maturity. In this area parents must teach self-discipline to their children. No child ever has self-discipline on his own. They have to be taught how to concentrate. The original academic training is in the home, not the school.

3. The spiritual realm.

If parents have taught their children respect for the volition of others, and respect for the rights of others and respect for the property of others, then the way has been paved for spiritual training. Parents should assume the main responsibility for the evangelism of their own children. Don't leave this to the Sunday School teacher or the pastor. To be sure, these will play a part in their Christian experience, and these can be brought in for counsel and help at this time, but the basic responsibility for the conversion of children is the parent. Parents should select the church where the family is to worship and not leave this decision to children. Parents should select the church where the family is to worship on the basis of the importance that church gives to the teaching of the Word of God.

Preparing Young People For College

The young people who will make it through college and then make it when they move on out into life are those who took Bible doctrine into their minds during their youth years. Entertainment and recreation has its place, but it should never be the major thing in a youth program in a church.

Straight Talk To Parents

Maybe this is the place to talk straight to parents and remind them that if they allow their young people to cut Sunday School and Church Training and roam around the church and "goof" off, then they are contributing to the weakness of the spiritual life of their children. Parents who permit this have nobody to blame but themselves. Responsible parents know where their children are and know the activities in which their young people participate. If the parents won't assume this responsibility, then there is no staff member or worker in the Sunday School or the Church Training program who can do it. The young people who have doctrine in their minds make it, and those who don't have these inner resources don't make it. This is why this passage says to parents: "Bring them to maturity in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The Meaning of "Nurture"

The word for nurture is "paideia" and it means to train by discipline, by punishment, by spanking.

(Once I reached clear over the table to get something and my father slapped my hands and said, "Sit down." Then he moved what I wanted farther from me and said, "Now, you say please pass whatever you want and we will get it to you." So I did and he passed it. Now that's "paideia.")