

Sermon Notes & References  
The Family Walk  
Ephesians 6:1-4  
November 16, 2008

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D. Conclusion – what I need to do is ...

<sup>A</sup> 1 John 5:19

<sup>B</sup> Romans 2:15

<sup>C</sup> Exodus 20:12, Deuteronomy 5:16, Leviticus 19:1-3

<sup>D</sup> Acts 16:31, Colossians 3:20, Luke 2:51-52

<sup>E</sup> Hebrews 11:23; cf Romans 15:20–16:17

<sup>F</sup> Colossians 3:21

<sup>G</sup> Proverbs 19:18, 29:17, Hebrews 12:6

<sup>H</sup> Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

A. Introduction

1. Obeying God as a family

a. there are a lot of obstacles in our way as we seek to walk in submission one to another

- (A) I know that I have encountered them and wish that I knew years ago when my children were young what I know now – but don't we all!
- (B) our 'me first' culture exalts the opposite to submission
- (C) we live in an anti-God surroundings in an anti-God country in an anti-God world
- (D) this world in which we live is out of our control; 1 John 5: 19 tells us, *'We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.'*
- (E) this seems to be especially true concerning the family

b. here are four quotations for you to try and place—{3}.

- (A) One: 'Our youth loves luxury, has bad manners, disregards authority and has no respect whatsoever for age. Today's children are tyrants; they do not get up when an elderly man enters the room ... they talk back to their parents ... they are just very bad.'
- (B) Two: 'I no longer have any hope for the future of our country if today's youth should ever become the leaders of tomorrow because this youth is unbearably reckless ... just terrible.'
- (C) Three: 'Our world has reached a critical stage. Children no longer listen to their parents. The end of the world cannot be far away.'
- (D) Four: 'This youth is rotten from the bottom of their hearts. The young people are malicious and lazy. They will never be as youth happened to be before. Today's youth will not be able to maintain our culture.'

c. Give up? ... well here they are, in the same order: the Greek, Socrates (470-399 BC); the Greek, Hesiod (ca 720 BC); an Egyptian priest (ca 2000 BC); Babylonian ruins (ca 2500 BC or earlier)

d. so, the generation gap is not new; but in there are some frightening aspects to it abroad today. In mid-June this year the Toronto Globe & Mail published this notice: —{4}.

- (A) 'First, the father banned his 12-year-old daughter from going online after she posted photos of herself on a dating site. Then she allegedly had a row with her stepmother, so the father said his

girl couldn't go on a school trip.

- (B) 'The girl took the matter to the court — and won what lawyers say was an unprecedented judgment.
- (C) 'Madam Justice Suzanne Tessier of the Quebec Superior Court ruled on Friday {June 13} that the father couldn't discipline his daughter by barring her from the school trip.'
- (D) Dr R. Albert Mohler Jr, commenting on this story goes on to say, 'Parents are supplanted by professionals who are "experts" in raising other people's children. ... The logic of this ruling is not limited to Canada. In 1970, Hillary Rodham, then a young lawyer (and later Sen. Hillary Clinton), wrote a law review article, "Children Under the Law," in which she argued that minors should be treated as "child citizens" who should, under at least some conditions, be able to challenge their parents in court over parental decisions.'

## 2. What is the world we can influence?

- a. I frequently conclude my messages by asking that you take the truth of Scripture and live it out in your world
  - (A) the world in which you move and have influence
  - (B) at your work, at your school, in your community
- b. well, today's passage tells us live out our Christianity in that most intimate part of our world, our family
- c. God's purpose is that the family be a mini-cosmos where the Heavenly Fathered is glorified in earthly relationships

## B. The Responsibility of Children

Ephesians 6:1-3

### 1. these words are addressed to children:

6:1

- a. 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.'
- b. now, this in itself is very important
  - (A) just as wives and husbands were addressed directly
  - (B) so are the children
  - (C) and the implication is unmistakable
  - (D) the children of Christians were expected to be present in the assembly of Christians, to worship with parents and to hear the reading of this letter of Paul's, the preaching of the Word of God

- c. it also shows the transforming power of the gospel
  - (A) under Roman law the father was a law unto himself in the family, with the result that at his command, an unwanted baby could be abandoned to die, so that archeology has discovered a sewer channel in Italy clogged with their tiny bones <sup>-(5)}</sup>.
  - (B) and, if that upsets you, don't forget the many millions of unborn babies whose lives have been terminated in this country and the U. S. in the past 25 years or so
- d. these words are specific on the form of submission that is required of children
  - (A) it is the submission of obedience – literally, 'to listen under' – to listen with a submissive attitude and the intention of carrying out what is said
  - (B) and, it is particularly to the parents: to father and to mother, the equal objects of obedience in the family
  - (C) here, then it is clear that the form of authority of the parents over the children is stronger than that of the husband over the wife; John R. W. Stott, in 'God's New Society' is of the opinion that the compilers of the Marriage Ceremony in the 1612 Prayer Book were in error and discord with the Bible in including 'to obey'

2. the grounds for this obedience of children to parents are

- a. three-fold in this passage in Ephesians
  - (A) from Creation
  - (B) from Revelation
  - (C) from Expectation
  - (D) from Regeneration
- b. from Creation – 'for this is right' or 'righteous'
  - (A) the word righteous in Scripture takes its meaning, in part, from what relationship is in view:
    - (1) when it is in respect to our relationship to God, we find that sin has put us at such a disadvantage that our righteous acts are insufficient before him
    - (2) when it is in respect to our relationship to other human beings, we find that it means that we are doing that which is correct, that which is in accord with natural justice, 'the law written on their hearts' as described in Romans 2: 15
    - (3) so we find that ancient moralists of various nations (as implied by those quotations we gave)

saw the obedience of children necessary to the preservation of their society

- (B) each summer we have swallows nest in our barn. When Maureen or I enter that section where the young are being fed, Ma or Pa swallow will twitter a warning and the young will be silent and hunker down in their nest. Obedience of the young birds is needed for survival.
- (C) God has made youngsters, at first helpless, and then dependent, so that obedience is a natural part of life

c. from Revelation

6:2a

- (A) <sup>2a</sup> 'Honour your father and mother'
- (B) Paul here quotes from Exodus 20:12, as well as taking some words from Deuteronomy 5:16
- (C) this is the last of the first tablet of the law, of one's duty to God – because, you see, parents represent or stand in a position like unto God to us when children
- (D) so to honour parents is to honour God, for in so doing we acknowledge that their authority is given by God; this is tied together in (Leviticus 19:1-3 NAS): <sup>1</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup> "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. <sup>3</sup> Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the LORD your God.'"

d. from Expectation

6:2b-3

- (A) <sup>2b</sup> (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> 'so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.'
- (B) the various expositors have quite a time explaining that 'first' and most conclude that it is first in terms of rank, rather than order, as 'a foremost command, and one that has a promise'
- (C) but I wonder if, taking into account that this is not the first time that some of the other commandments were revealed to mankind, if the meaning could be 'a primal command, and one that has a promise' – a command that goes back to mankind's first family.
- (D) in any case, there is here attached a promise
- (E) a promise which had a special application for Israel as attached to their installation in the land of promise
- (F) but which now is made applicable under the NT to the church, God's people, a two-fold expectation
  - (1) that it may be well with you – a declaration of God's general blessing upon His people, probably with both spiritual and material blessing being in view

(2) **that you may live long** – taken by some to refer to eternal life but note that Paul adds '**on the earth**'

(G) and the practical truth is this, that like those baby swallows in our barn, obedience to parents has as one of its designs the protection of children from danger (as the Quebec father sought for his 12-year old daughter)

e. from Regeneration

6: 1

(A) this obedience is '**in the Lord**' and Lord here, as it is generally throughout the NT is the Lord Jesus Christ

(B) the expectation in this passage

(1) and elsewhere, as in Acts 16:31, **They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'**

(2) is that the children of believers will themselves become believers; the norm, not the inevitable

(C) and, children who know Jesus as their own personal Saviour, will want to obey their parents, because Colossians 3:20 says, '**this is well-pleasing to the Lord**'

(D) and to do so is in keeping with Jesus' own example, of which we read in Luke 2:51-52: <sup>51</sup> **And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all *these* things in her heart.** <sup>52</sup> **And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.**

3. so we see, then, that children should obey their parents

a. from creation

b. from revelation

c. from expectation

d. from regeneration

e. and, as we look at the next verse, the scope and sphere of that obedience, '**in the Lord**' shows itself more clearly

C. The Responsibility of Parents

Ephesians 6: 4

1. **Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**

- a. now, this verse is addressed to fathers
    - (A) this is in keeping with the fact that the husband is the head of the woman, particularly in a spiritual sense
    - (B) but let me point out that the gender in relationship terms in the Bible is not always as rigorous as for us
    - (C) e.g., in Romans 15:20 and 16:17, Paul addresses his audience as 'brethren' but in the intervening verses he sends greetings to them, of which a number are women
    - (D) and, in Hebrews 11:23, the plural, 'fathers' can only be understood as parents: 'By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.'
  - b. so fathers – and in today's world of many single-parent families, even in the church; and mothers – have a duty
2. the responsibility is clear, as is the way it is to be carried out:
- a. as in other relationships, the stronger have obligations to the weaker; parental responsibility takes feelings into account; this was a revolutionary concept in the societies where the father's authority was absolute.
  - b. Barclay tells us: **A Roman father had absolute power over his family. He could sell them as slaves, he could make them work in his fields even in chains, he could take the law into his own hands, for the law was in his own hands, and punish as he liked, he could even inflict the death penalty on his child.**<sup>{6}</sup>  
– he could expose newborn to die
  - c. so once again we perceive the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ
  - d. **do not provoke your children to anger**
  - e. Colossians 3:21 puts it, '**do not exasperate your children**'
  - f. Jean Calvin: **Let them be fondly cherished**
  - g. in Christian home education there are two aspects – '**bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord**'
    - (A) discipline – correction by action
      - (1) **Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.** (Proverbs 19:18 NAS)
      - (2) **Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul.** (Proverbs 29:17)

NAS)

- (3) and this we find is the mark of a loving father, our loving Heavenly Father, 'For those whom the Lord loves he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives.' (Hebrews 12:6 NAS)
- (B) instruction – correction by word – <sup>6</sup> These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. <sup>9</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 NAS)
- (C) all this is 'of the Lord' – what we are talking about is not simply fatherly advice and truisms, but imparting spiritual truth and conveying eternal realities

### 3. This exercise of discipline is not easy

- a. We see how Satan is arrayed against it in Madame Justice Tessier's ruling that we read of in the Globe and Mail
- b. even with careful explanation, children aren't always ready to accept discipline as just; take Calvin and his Dad <sup>—{7}</sup>.
  - (A) Dad is working at his desk. Calvin, carrying a clipboard, says, 'Dad, your polls took a big dive this week.'
  - (B) Your "Overall Dad Performance" rating was especially low.
  - (C) (He hands the clipboard to Dad.) See? Right about yesterday your popularity went down the tubes.
  - (D) (Dad protests vehemently) Dad: '**Calvin, you didn't get dessert yesterday because you flooded the house!!**' (Calvin walks away as he replies.) Calvin: I'd suggest a new line of work, "**DAD**"
- c. Though lowers your 'overall dad performance' rating, the imposition of discipline is a must. In the words of Dr. Alberta Siegel, a professor of psychology at Stanford University: 'When it comes to rearing children, every society is only 20 years away from barbarism. Twenty years is all we have to accomplish the task of civilizing the infants who are born into our midst each year. These savages know nothing of our language, our culture, our religion, our values, our customs or our interpersonal relations. The infant is totally ignorant about communism, fascism, democracy, civil liberties, the rights of the minority

as contrasted with the prerogatives of the majority, respect, decency, honesty, customs, conventions, and manners. The barbarian must be tamed if civilization is to survive.<sup>1-8</sup>

D. Conclusion

1. despite the onslaught against it – both in history and today
  - a. the basic building block of society is the family
  - b. and God's plan is that the Christian family be the building block of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our extended, spiritual family
  - c. and for our families to achieve God's purposes, we would pray that each child and each parent may put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and seek to obey Him in their lives
  - d. particularly in carrying out the responsibilities of the family relationships we have looked at this morning

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
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NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. Some valuable source material for this message was from
  - a. The Expositors' Greek Testament, Principal Salmond, 1903, Hodder & Stoughton
  - b. The Expositors' Bible Commentary, A. Skevington Wood, 1978, Zondervan
  - c. God's New Society, John R. W. Stott, 1979, InterVarsity Press
  - d. 'Children & Parent' by Rev David Holwick, Jan 26, 1992 – Kerux sermons #949
3. Taken from 'Humor Your Father And Your Mother?' by Rev. Dave Wilkinson – Kerux sermons # 687

4. Quoted by Dr R Albert Mohler Jr – Kerux illustrations #35357
5. From the Biblical Archeology Review cited by Pastor Holwick, *op cit*
6. The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians, William Barclay, p. 208
7. The Essential Calvin and Hobbes, p. 49, Andrews and McMeel © 1988
8. Stanford Observer, October 1973, p. 4, quoted in Kerux illustration #2305