

SERMON FOCUS: I must be honorable.

SERMON FUNCTION: Fathers will pay attention to their example.

BACKGROUND:

This letter which Paul addressed to the church at Ephesus was written from prison sometime between 57-62 A. D. He is addressing a church that he previously planted on his second missionary journey and later spent two full years there.

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 6:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

I have read recently about a growing phenomenon, which is people going “no contact” with their family members. This means that they cut off communication with those (often parents) who they deem toxic. Often, but not always, these people had childhood trauma that their parents refuse to acknowledge. Or maybe their parents are still engaged in bad behavior. Broken families are not what our Lord wants, but they are the result of sinful attitudes and actions. Let’s take a look at a bit of God’s plan for our families today for Father’s Day.

MESSAGE:

1. CHILDREN ARE TO OBEY PARENTS

- a. God felt that this command was important enough to include it several times.
- b. Obedience is taught and learned. When parents fail to teach obedience, their children become lawless.
- c. Specifically, parents are to teach their children obedience to God.
 - i. This is how disciple-making works.
 - ii. This is church growth and Kingdom growth.
- d. Children are to be held accountable.
 - i. They must be taught that actions have consequences.
 - ii. They must be taught that inaction has consequences.
 - iii. They must be taught the proper attitude.
- e. There is an exception “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right.”
 - i. Parents are not to instruct their children to sin.
 - ii. Parents are not to encourage their children to sin.
 - iii. By obeying parents, children are learning obedience to God, even in situations they do not understand yet.
- f. Children who are properly taught to obey parents, and by extension God, have a much easier time becoming adults who honor their parents.

2. ADULTS ARE TO HONOR PARENTS

- a. Honor means to *regard with great respect*.

- b. We are to treat our parents with love, kindness, and compassion.
- c. Certainly, this is something that is learned in childhood. As adults, however, we must make the choice to honor our parents.
- d. Nowhere in the Scriptures is the command to honor father and mother found to be optional or conditional.
 - i. It doesn't matter if your childhood was terrible.
 - ii. It doesn't matter if your parents are not honorable.
 - iii. It doesn't matter if you *feel* morally superior to your parents.
 - iv. Our treatment of our parents is a direct reflection on our walk with Christ.
- e. As adults, we are given this command because there often comes a time when we must care for parents as they cared for us.
- f. Adults, when we honor our father and mother, we set the example for how our children should treat us later in life.
- g. While the command to honor father and mother is with promise and without exception, it behooves us to be the kind of people that earn honor and respect. Particularly, fathers should be a Christian example.

3. FATHERS ARE TO BE A CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE

- a. How might we stir up anger and wrath in our children?
 - i. Being abusive.
 - ii. Being hypocrites.
 - iii. Putting ourselves first.
- b. Jesus modeled the example of servant leadership. Fathers should be serving and leading in their households.
 - i. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, we can wash the children.
 - ii. Jesus got by himself to pray and listen to the Father. We must do the same.
 - iii. Jesus called sin what it is. We must do the same thing.
 - iv. Jesus demonstrated sacrificial love. We must demonstrate that love.
- c. Jesus demonstrated obedience to the Father. Fathers, we must also demonstrate obedience to the Father. We cannot expect our children to follow an example that we do not give them.
- d. It is very hard to see God as a good Father if your earthly father is abusive, demeaning, hypocritical, aloof, lazy, etc.
- e. Our example, Fathers, must point people to Christ.

4. THE GOSPEL IN SIMPLE FORM (adapted from Dr. James Merritt).

- a. Bad News: We are all sinners separated from God.
- b. Worst News: There is nothing we can do about our sin problem.
- c. Good News: Christ did for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
- d. Best News: Salvation and eternal life are a free gift, but you must receive it.

INVITATION HYMN # 310 Out of My Bondage