

“Child, Please”
Colossians 3:20- 21
Min. Jordan Washington

I. Obedience is Not Optional

Obey- to intentionally and habitually follow the instruction of someone or something in authority.

“Obedience is an expression of honor when recognition meets appreciation.”

1. Honor and Authority

- Children have a responsibility to submit to the teaching and wisdom of their parents as unto the Lord in all areas of life —Your obedience to your parents reveals your commitment to the ultimate authority, God.
- Parents are responsible for providing sound teaching in humility and love. — Your wounds can heal your children if we are humble enough to show our scars and talk about what God has done.
- Inconsistency in authority creates distrust and disregard for authority and makes obedience unnecessarily difficult.
- This does not absolve the child from being obedient (unless something ungodly is commanded) or from living in harmony (love your neighbor and being at peace with everyone).
- Obedience that honors the structure God put in place satisfies God.

“When there is no practical role model that demonstrates what followship and obedience look like, it leads to poor applications of obedience, often conditional obedience. It is in this space that we see more external and performative obedience rather than sincere obedience.”

2. Pleasing God Is the Priority

- We were created for good works that glorify God.
 - If we lose sight of pleasing God in obedience, our actions lack purpose.
 - The desired response is not mindless obedience but mindfulness of God’s structure which leads to submission in all things.
- A household where disobedient and undisciplined children don’t submit to their parents is unacceptable to God.
 - Children do not prioritize your needs and views and need at the expense of the home
 - Respectfully communicating the needs of others within the home; we place our family in a position to grow.
- Obedience and gentleness builds trust
 - For the child, trust is developed in the tough moments when grace and love are present
 - For the parent, trust is developed when in the tough moments, a child chooses obedience
- As a child/youth your obedience to their parents becomes a part of their journey and spiritual maturity, reflecting Christ.

- This is why it's imperative that the rules and the structure of the home are consistent with the scriptures.
- Conflict and time in that tension are a helpful context in that we can challenge our youth with the Word.
- We also can demonstrate how as a parent, we are practicing and growing in various areas,
- Humility is contagious, and when it is observed, others in the home are compelled to love well.

II. Parent Without Provoking

Exasperate- To provoke or irritate someone to the point of becoming bitter or disheartened (this word is only used 2x in NT). Used here in a negative connotation of stirring to anger, nagging or agitating your child.

1. Don't be Hard Hearted and Heavy Handed

- Any parent who wishes to have a harmonious relationship with their child must examine the message they intend to communicate through their discipline.
- It is always wise to discuss with your child why they are being disciplined and what the hope for them is.
 - Encourage them by explaining how this relates to their relationship with Christ and others.
 - Inspire them to believe in the work Christ is doing in them.

- If corporal punishment is necessary, it should not occur while the parent is still physically angry.
- It is unwise for whopping to occur under the influence of anger as it doesn't achieve the righteousness of God.

2. Agitation Has a Negative Impact

- Through habitual provocation, a child grows embittered, which can show itself in a bunch of destructive actions and perspectives.
 - Discouraged/disheartened.
 - Losing motivation for obedience, honor, and in extreme cases, life.
- Youth are pushed to embitterment when discipline is administered in ungodly ways.
 - Emotionally, Mentally, Physically, Spiritually through legalism.
 - Anger sown into the hearts of these children is hard to get out. Often, these children abuse others because of their anger. · Parents who do not wisely manage their emotions raise children to have low emotional intelligence.
 - The parent becomes angry and curses at them, criticizes them, or even harshly disciplines them.
 - The child learns, “When I am angry, it is OK to curse; it is OK to hit somebody; it’s OK to go crazy.” They never learn how to properly control their anger
 - fighting everybody, or holding grudges against anybody who failed them , because that is how he was trained.

- Do not dominate your home under the influence of sinful and fleeting emotions.

3. The Human Heart is Rebellious

- A child's natural disposition of rebellion to authority is no different than an adult's . In fact, the Bible is clear that foolishness (impulsive and prideful resistance) is unmistakably attached to their desires. Disobedience is an expression of their heart. (Proverbs 22:15)
 - Obedience is not simply a behavior issue; it is a heart issue.
 - An undisciplined and irreverent child will struggle to maintain all other relationships.
- Disobedience is listed as a consequence of sin's presence in human nature, a byproduct of rebellion against God in Romans.
- Obedience and faithfulness are tied to spiritual maturity
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This is why a parent must operate in humility when administering discipline in a Christ-like manner.

“Legitimate obedience cannot be bribed or coerced, although most parents attempt to win their child's faithfulness with gifts. Even in our relationship with God, the primary motivator for obedience is love, not “blessings”

4. Lack of Discipline Communicates a Lack of Love

- Discipline is also not an option for the believing parent, and lack of discipline reveals a lack of love. (Proverbs 13:23)
 - There are a multitude of ways a parent can stimulate a child to negativity, ironically beginning with not disciplining them as previously discussed.
 - By not correcting harmful behavior, you are actually rotting your child's conscience . “Spoiling your child” has little to do with what you do or don’t give your child and more about how you teach and discipline them in managing what is given.
- An undisciplined and irreverent child will struggle to maintain all other relationships.
 - Failure to discipline endorses negative behaviors.
 - By not correcting harmful behavior, you are actually rotting your child's conscience .
 - “Spoiling your child” has little to do with what you do or don’t give your child and more about how you teach and discipline them in managing what is given.
- Parents are held accountable for how they treat their kids; the concerns and disposition of children and youth matter to God
- Please remember that Christ is the hope for saving, sanctifying, and the glorification of your children and the only means of heart change, not your discipline.

“Your discipline is only a medium to bring forth the wisdom of God, correcting the foolishness that the heart desires. Thus, any

exercise of authority or discipline disconnected from Christ's love and inconsistent with His word will prove ineffective.”

“This means discipline for discipline's sake doesn't achieve the intended response, which is holiness and spiritual maturity. Godly discipline brings harmony, comfort, and positive balance to a home that demonstrates the will of God for families. (Proverbs 29:15, 17) Improper discipline creates unhealthy fear in the heart of your child”

- We are living in the aftermath of the days of mindless obedience. Where parents gave kids commands without disclosure of need and purpose, and any resistance was met with harsh discipline.
 - The current generation has learned to resent the “rules without relationship” philosophy and, at its worst, crave the inverse, intimacy without structure or dictates.
 - Truth is it is impossible to facilitate and cultivate healthy relationships in the home if there aren't any guidelines.
 - Parents must discover to operate within the bounds of God's given authority to correct and comfort their children.

5. It Is Ungodly to Be Unavailable

Love is spelled T-I-M-E.

- Don't Conceal yourself in your work and passions.

- Be present and reveal yourself through your presence and show your heart to your children.
 - Many children grow up bitter because their parents aren't around—Absence impacts obedience and receptivity.
 - They lack love and affection and grow bitter because of that.
 - Some parents neglect their children for work. They work long hours to achieve a certain amount of success, which keeps them away from home. Ultimately, this hurts children both emotionally and spiritually.
- Parents must be careful not to neglect their children.
 - many parents turned to youth ministry, extracurricular activities, and the school system to compensate for their lack of relationships and guidance.
 - It is not God's will for teachers, coaches, or babysitters to be the primary disciple of your child... That is why He gave them to their parents.

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Certainly, these people should play a role, but it is important for parents to be the primary influence of their children's lives.

“Parents do not embitter your children. Prioritize them over your work, your church, your entertainment, and your social life. Let only God and your spouse come before them.”

6. *Love Conquers All*

- Study your child to discern the way that they desire and receive love, not just the way you give it.
 - It's difficult to experience the love of God when you don't initially encounter it through your parents.

- Love is primarily an action, a decisive choice that a parent makes to intentionally and purposely put the needs of a child before their own.
 - Practically speaking, although each child is treated differently, the love should be consistent among them all, thus demonstrating the love of Christ.
 - Just as there is no partiality with God, there should be none within your home.
 - Just as the Lord commanded not to treat those within the synagogue differently based on their talents, income, or resources, you should not have a heart of favoritism towards your children based on whether their interests mirror yours. - Consider the story of Joseph and how through acting in bias can lead to a chaotic home life.

- Love is demonstrated through sacrifice, gentleness, and servitude.
 - As you grow more aware of your youth's particular needs, instruct them in the wisdom of the Lord.

- Learning the child's bent goes a long way in cultivating their life. This principle is also true for extra-biblical things as well as athletic and academic endeavors.

Four action items

Be Present

Invest Time

Be Relatable

Train them in the instruction of the Lord