

Norman C. Schwab  
Yacolt EVFree  
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**It's your turn Kids!**  
**Ephesians 6:1-3**

Kids you don't like to be told what to do. Do you? Nope. Adults don't like it either. None of us do. Your dad may be a Navy Commando with plenty of big muscle and a loud yelling voice. Your mom may know all the best tips and tricks on parenting, but there are times that you simply don't want to obey. It starts early doesn't it. Maybe you have watched your little brother or sister at the dinner table and mom is trying to get some food down her. She might start by putting some food on her spoon and playing the airplane game, hypnotizing the child until the mouth drops open and then landing the food inside. Of course now the child realizes she has been tricked and clamps her teeth down on the spoon refusing to give in. What happens next, she lets go of the spoon and spits out the stream of mashed peas onto the table. Then mom might use the threats of punishment or holding back an ice cream reward for desert until the little one obeys. Kids, the struggle to learn obedience starts early, but it doesn't stop there. Kids don't want to be told they can't watch a certain dvd. Kids don't want to be told they can't stay over at a friends house. Teens don't want to be told what they can or cannot wear or when they can use the family car or what time they need to be home on Friday night. Nobody likes to be told what to do.

Most of my sermons are directed to adults. But not this morning. This one is for kids because the Bible is talking directly to you. God is telling you exactly what it is He wants you to be doing that would please him. And we are going to be talking about that this morning. How you can be a great kid that pleases Jesus and enjoys a great life.

If you have your Bibles turn to the book of Ephesians chapter 6. We are in the middle of a section of the Bible that is talking about the

really important relationships of life and how to follow Jesus in them. In v.21 of chapter 5 the Bible says that one of the marks of someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit and following Jesus is that they will “mutually submit” to each other. That simply means they will work to serve and love each other. The Bible says love and service, will look differently depending on whether you are a wife or a husband, a parent or a child, a worker or a boss. But all of us are to take an example from Jesus who loved us and served us and submitted to what His father God wanted him to do. Simply, Jesus obeyed His Father so we too must take a lesson from that example and obey our parents. That is what God wants us to do.

So let me read this morning from the Bible, God’s message directly to kids. Ephesians 6:1-3 (READ) Now some of you kids might be thinking. Okay. The wives took their teaching a couple weeks ago. The husbands they took it last Sunday and now its our turn. Well...in a sense yep. Its your turn kids to hear from God. But this is not my chance as a parent to rub my hands in glee and (wahhhahaha) now I’m going to beat the kids up with God’s word and force them to obey all the parents. If that is what you hear, you’ve missed the point and missed God’s heart.

In calling kids to obey their parents He is not saying that kids had best be seen and not heard. He is not saying kids have no input into the family. No. I think a parent would be foolish not to listen to the dreams and desires , ideas and hopes of their children. I think if parents would listen a whole lot better and lecture a whole lot less they would be surprised what they can learn from their children. Am I right kids that you have some pretty good ideas at times?

This challenge for kids to obey their parents should never be abused by a parent. This doesn’t not ever, ever give permission for a parent to abuse a child. Discipline. Absolutely yes. Abuse no. God takes it very seriously when people abuse the power and authority that has been given to them by God. To obey does not mean that if your parents

are asking you to sin and do something evil that you must obey them. No. I certainly hope that is not happening, but if your parents ask you to do something that is sinful you must choose to obey God, If you are unsure about whether it is or not, you come talk to me or your Sunday School teacher. God wants to protect those who are most vulnerable.

V.1 says Children, Obey. To obey is to do what they ask you to do. To submit to their direction and authority. And hear the Bible is very clear the ones kids are supposed to obey is....parents. Your parents. The ones God has hand-picked and placed in your life to grow you up. The ones who hopefully are feeding you, clothing you, sacrificing and loving you and are committed to you.

But its' interesting the Bible doesn't say, "obey your parents...just because this is what your parents want you to do." It doesn't say obey your parents just because Pastor Norm is telling you to obey. It say obey your parents....in....the....Lord. We obey our parents first because this is what Jesus wants us to do. We obey not just because this is what your parents want for you (and they do) We obey because this is what Jesus wants. We are do obey our parents in the Lord. Just like the wives were called to be subject to their husbands "as to the Lord". Having a great faith that God can move the heart of their husband. Just as husbands were called to love their wives, "as Christ loved the church". Kids you are to obey your parents as if you were obeying Jesus himself, because that is exactly what He wants from you. That's your job. Your responsibility to Christ is to what? Obey your parents.

Kids do you love Jesus? Do you know that He is in your heart and you belong to Him. Do you know that He is your father and you are His child? Do you want to live for Him. Is that you really your desire??? Well heres how. Obey your parents. And each time you obey your parents you are really showing how much you love Jesus. Each time you do the dishes when your mom asks you to, and do it without dragging your feet or complaining you are actually showing how much you love Jesus and

want to follow Him because you are obeying your parents...in the Lord. Each time you clean up your room, each time you wear clothes that are in obedience to your parents wishes. Each time you come home at the right time. Each time you turn off the dvd when dad says its time to go to bed...each time you are demonstrating how much you really desire to reflect the light of Jesus in your life. So if you want to be a great kid for God, the first thing, or first finger is to “Obey Jesus” and by obeying Jesus you will obey the parents Jesus put into your life.

First you will need to obey Jesus. The second thing is you need to Listen up. This word for obey is a combination word in the Greek that mean to under-listen. It's a military term to describe how a private first class soldier is supposed to be listening well to his commanding officer. It's pretty impossible to be able to obey someone, if you never bother to listen them. To listen under means that you will be actively trying to hear and understand so that you can be ready to do it.

It is amazing how selective our hearing is. If you have ever been at school or a party with a lot of people talking and you happen to hear your name. Immediately your ears are intent and ready to hear what is going to be said next. Or perhaps, may be in the very back of the house on the computer but if the freezer door opens and the ice cream dishes are even slightly clanked together you are ready to hear and move your body to action to a place where you too can enjoy ice cream. Yet, when dad is giving instructions as to the chores that need to be done. If mom is yelling for you from the door to come in from playing outside...for some reason, the ears just shut down. To obey is to listen under. That means you will make an effort to listen to mom and dad when they are speaking to you. You will not ignore them or shut them out, but you will listen with the intent to obey, not listen with the idea in your head as to how you can try and get out of it, or ignore it or fight it.

You see the important thing is not merely doing what it is your parents want you to do. The important thing is obedience. Its not about

getting you to do a specific task. Obedience is a heart response. Your parents may be able to force you to comply and do the task, but if you are angry on the inside that's not obedience. Kids have you ever obeyed your parents on the outside, but inside you mind called your mom or dad ugly names? Have you ever done what they asked you to do, but did it with an ugly nasty attitude. That's not obedience.

A parent was getting fed up with little Johnnys wild and disrespectful behavior and so told him to go sit in the corner. Johnny said, "no. Nope not going to do it." Mom more strongly said, 'Johnny I want you right now to go sit in the corner. Again. Defiance. So mom led Johnny over to the corner by the hand and forced him to sit down in the corner. Johnny looked up and said. Well I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside. Forced compliance is not obedience. Biblical obedience go far beyond the action to the attitude. It is possible to obey with a heart that is boiling with anger and hatred. It is possible to obey with an icy coldness and perform the action requested perfectly but still be perfectly wrong in our attitude. It's possible to give the impression that looks like a willing obedient heart, but inwardly is simply waiting for an opportunity to revolt and break out and rebel. That is not the obedience that God wants from His children. God wants an obedience that obeys "in the Lord" and "listens up" with a heart ready to hear and understand and do. Simply because that is what Jesus would be pleased with.

Children, obey your parents...in the Lord....for this is right. First thing is for you to obey Jesus. Second is to listen up and the third thing is to do the right thing. Why obey? "It's the right thing to do" Children obey your parents in the Lord....for this is right. In our society today it seems like children are expected and even encouraged to be disrespectful and disobedient and rebel against their parents. Just watch the movies and TV shows. Kid tell the parent off, disobeys a parent and makes a snide joke and listen for the laugh track...al designed to think that is

natural that is the right thing for the kids to be running the household. People make excuses for teens poor behavior. Oh their just teens...that's the way they are. Some teens think that is what they are supposed to do, be disobedient and rebel, like its in some teenager handbook for messing with your parents. Wrong. Kids are not to be telling the parents what to do. The Bible says children are to obey their parents for this is the right way that God has planned for life to work. This is one of the basic laws of life. If you do this, then things will turn out right, if you refuse to obey your parents, kids everything you do will get all messed up. That is the way God has set things up. When you refuse to obey your parents you are actually rebelling against God's plan. But when you obey your parents things will work out better then you could imagine right now. And perhaps you may simply need to take it on faith that God's plan is right and good for you, because God is right and good.

Erma Bombeck wrote a story and it went something like this: I had the meanest parents in all the world. When I was seven years old they dared to spank me just because I told them I would not do what they asked me to do to help around the house. My friend next door never got spanked. He didn't have to help at home. He had nice parents. I had the meanest parents. I had to eat all my broccoli and carrots before they would ever let me have dessert. My friend next door never had to eat vegetables. He had fast food brought in with burgers and shakes and brownies with all kinds of ice cream. I had the meanest parents. They made me go to church every Sunday as long as I lived under their roof, sit there in that boring worship service. My friend next door could do as he pleased. He never went to church. Sunday was a play day for him. I had the meanest parents. They made me work for my allowance. I had to get a job helping an elderly old man with chores around his house. My friend next door never had to do anything and he was given four times as much allowance as I could ever earn. He had nice parents. I had the meanest parents. When I turned sixteen, they made me earn points

before I could drive the family car. My friend next door was given a brand new luxury automobile. My folks had bought an old junker for me to get back and forth to school, My friend had it made. Or so I once thought, but, when we reached age thirty, I had a change in perspective. I had learned that my parents were not so mean after all. I was experiencing: the pleasure of work, the reward of recreation, the strength of a healthy body, the bonds of a strong marriage, the inward confidence that comes from faith and the wonderful supportive fellowship that comes from the Church as a community of believers. As for my friend, things were not going so well: he was not finding his place at work, nothing seemed to satisfy him, he was having difficulty getting along with people who were not willing to do everything just as he thought he knew it ought to be done, his marriage had not lasted even two years, his body was getting out of shape, and he evidenced a cynical outlook without any undergirding that comes from the assurance of faith. Do you wanna be a great kid – first, Obey Jesus, listen well to God’s word about listening and do the right thing and things will turn out right.

Verse 2 God challenges kids to an even deeper more radical level. Almost to the level of “you’ve got to be kidding.” While v.1 calls for obedience. V.2 calls for children of all ages to honor their Father and mother. This take the attitude of obedience to a far deeper level doesn’t it. To honor. The Bible is saying its not only important to obey your mom and dad, what God is calling us is to go even further and have an attitude of honor toward them. Wow. Now this section applies to all of us in this room. For we are all children of parents and many of us have mom’s and dad who are still living. Some of us have may outgrown our call to obey our parents, but we never outgrow our obligation to honor them. May we who are grown up children never dishonor our parents by forgetting, ignoring or neglecting them.

God desires children of all ages to honor their parents. This means we give them the respect that is due to them because of their place as

mother, as father. This is a radical command for some of us because we have very imperfect parents. To honor hurtful, abusive, neglecting parents is a radical step of faith and love in God that drives us to our knees to depend on God because we feel the anger and hurt and disappointment and loss of having been letdown. Why should I have to honor them when they have hurt me so? Haven't they forfeited that honor due them? That is where faith must kick in, trusting Christ with our pain, our unfulfilled longings for drawing on an unconditional strength and acceptance that only God can give. This is an opportunity to forgive knowing that we too have been forgiven much. This is an opportunity to refuse resentment knowing that is a meal we eat that only devours ourselves. The less integrity a parent has, the more difficult it is to honor him or her. At times this honor might be reduced to honoring the "office" of mother or "office" of father rather than the person. He are not called to distort the truth, but rather speak the truth in love. All of us can at least honor the fact that they choose to bring us into the world and many of us can find much, much more to honor if we set bitterness and hurt aside. Perhaps there are some adult children here today that need to write a letter of honor, a tribute to a parent that needs to hear from their child this week. This whole obedience and honoring thing doesn't end after you graduate from High School. Adults are under authority just as much as children and if they have not learned obedience and honor as a child its very unlikely it will be learned as an adult.

To honor your mother and father is one of the 10 commandments and the first one that carried a promise with it. V. 3 Honor them that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. This doesn't mean that everyone who died young on this earth did so because they dishonored their parents or that those who lived long were great at honoring parents. This is not a guarantee, but a general principle that is true. When children obey their parents, they will escape a good deal of

sin, danger, hurt and avoid things that will threaten and shorten their life. I hear Bill Cosby saying, "Boy I brought you into this world and I can certainly take you out of it." For a child who obeys his parents will develop healthy character traits like humility, integrity, self-discipline and enjoy the best things that God has for your life. A disobedient child will not even be able to enjoy the good things that come his way and will likely develop harmful patterns that could cost him his life. Proverbs 4:10 "Listen my son and accept what I say and the years of your life will be many." Proverbs 10:27 "the fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short." Proverbs 30:17 "The eye that mocks a Father, that scorns obedience to a mother will be pecked out by the ravens in the valley, and will be eaten by the vultures." Pretty serious stuff. Following God will enrich the obeying children no matter how long he lives for sin always robs us and obedience always benefits us.

So practically for kids. How can one honor and obey their parents if you don't think what mom or dad is asking you is wise? Or how can you disagree with them and still honor them? Perhaps you might try something like this. "Mom, I love you. I want you to know I will cheerfully go along with whatever you decide, but I would like you to consider listening to my ideas of what I'd like to have happen. Would you consider listening to them? (At this point there are very, very few parent who would say. No I've made up my mind go away kid. But even if they do kids you must trust that God could change the heart of your parent if he wanted to.) perhaps mom will come back and listen once she sees that you really are serious about cheerfully obeying her even when she says "No". If mom says yes. Tell her why you feel the way you do and ask her to reconsider and reaffirm you will cheerfully go along with her whatever her decision. That is very honoring to your parents and also that honors the Lord. For in your obedience you are actually obeying the Lord and in your honoring your parents you are actually honoring the Lord.

Heres a test for kids to see how well you are obeying and honoring

your parents which is really a check on how much you have grown spiritually.

1. When I think back this past week when my parent asked me to do something, did I respond in words of cheerful obedience doing so as to the Lord?
2. Do I usually listen well when my mom has something she would like me to work on?
3. Do I usually do what my parents say but deep inside keep anger and frustration boiling thinking ugly things about them?
4. Have I been the one to start a conversation with my parents?
5. When was the last time I wrote a note thanking them for what they have done for me?
6. At least two times this week, I did my chores without being asked.
7. When my dad comes in to talk to me, I turn off the tunes, turn to face him and make an effort to understand and listen until he is finished.
8. When I disagreed with my mom this week I still made it very clear that I still loved her and would cheerfully go along with her decision even if I didn't agree with it.
9. I prayed for my parents each day this week that God would give them the wisdom to parent well.
10. On a scale of 1 to 10 how would I rate the way I show honor to my parents with my words and actions