God's Plan for Children & Parents

Ephesians 6:1-4
7-19-2023

*** <u>WE MUST CHOOSE TO OBEY GOD'S PLAN FOR PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS</u>.** What is God's plan? (two-fold)

I.CHRISTIAN CHILDREN MUST <u>RESPECT</u> THEIR PARENTS - GOD'S WAY (v. 1-3)

A.GOD REQUIRES <u>RESPECTFUL ACTION</u> (your duty is obedience) (v. 1)

B.GOD REQUIRES A <u>RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE</u> (your disposition is honor) (v. 2-3)

1.Such an attitude results in a <u>top quality</u> life - "well with thee . . ." (v. 3a)

2.Such an attitude results in a <u>long quantity</u> of life - "live long . . ." (v. 3b)

II.CHRISTIAN PARENTS MUST <u>RAISE UP</u> THEIR CHILDREN - GOD'S WAY (v. 4)
God requires us to:

A.NEGATIVE COMMAND: "Don't provoke your children to wrath" (v. 4a)

B.POSITIVE COMMAND

1."Raise them in the <u>discipline</u> of the Lord" (v. 4b)

a.Why to discipline

b.When to discipline

c.How to discipline

2."Raise them in the instruction of the Lord" (v. 4c)

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INTRODUCTION: ILLUS: of boiling a frog in water. Beginning with cool water, the heat is gradually increased. The rise in temperature is so gradual that the frog doesn't even notice it. He simply adjusts to the heat as it rises, and eventually boils to death.

The changing values and standards of society have been so gradual that countless families who should have jumped out of the world's pan a long time ago have now adjusted to the heat and are in the process of being destroyed.

The world's humanistic, so called "futuristic" ideas on parent-child relationships are destroying our country.

One popular speaker even says that he looks for a world where there will be no schools, no families, and no parent-child relationships. He says, "To free the child, we must do away with parenthood and marriage. We must settle for nothing less than the total elimination of the family."

One of the major goals of Marxist socialism is to liberate children from the home and make them the property of the state. A child out of the home will not be taught any moral, religious, social, patriotic, or political standards or attitudes that are contrary to what the state wants (MacArthur, p. 309).

Gal. 6:7 - Whether you are a parent or a child, your present circumstances are a result of past choices. Are you pleased with your present situation? Your future circumstances will be a result of your present choices.

God has a plan for parent-child relationships. And it works! Trust Him!

It doesn't matter how your parents did it, how your friends do it, how the child psychologist advises. The question is: "What saith the Scripture?"

Paul in Eph. chap. 6 begins with admonitions to children, then to parents. Why this order? He is teaching a principle which began in 5:21 - submission.
wives to husbands (5:22-24)
children to parents (6:1-3)
servants to masters (6:5-8)

WE MUST CHOOSE TO OBEY GOD'S PLAN FOR PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS. What is God's plan? (two-fold)

I.CHRISTIAN CHILDREN MUST RESPECT THEIR PARENTS - GOD'S WAY (v. 1-3)

To respect is to honor and obey and to honor and obey is to respect.

A.GOD REQUIRES RESPECTFUL ACTION (your duty is obedience) (v. 1)

"Obey" = implies a readiness to hear; a humble listening so as to do what you're told.

God told Saul: "To obey is better than sacrifice" (I Sam. 15:22).

Delayed obedience is disobedience.
Incomplete obedience is disobedience.

"In the Lord" - shows that the children being addressed are Christians.

"In the Lord" = for the Lord's sake, to please the Lord; as you would obey the Lord.

Everytime you obey your parents you are pleasing God.

Col. 3:20 - "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

Children are to obey their parents just as all believers are to obey the Lord. Why?
Because parents are the authority, just as the Lord is your authority.

The only time you can disobey your parents is if they ask you to do something sinful (Our Lord would never ask this of His children).

The reason to obey parents is brief and simple: "For this is right" (correct, just, righteous).

He didn't say "Obey . . . for this is popular (the "in" thing); easy (indeed, it is often very

difficult); or "Obey . . . for they are worthy" (many are not!)

If a contemporary (modern) Bible was written, Eph. 6:1 would say, "Parents, obey your children, for this will keep them happy and bring peace to the home" (Wiersbe, p. 150).

One problem - This is not right! Contrary to God's order in nature (even baby animals are taught to obey their parents).

B.GOD REQUIRES A RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE (your disposition is honor) (v. 2-3)

"Honor" = to view as very valuable, precious.

Today, children treat their parents like garbage. No respect for those who brought you into this world, fed, clothed, and schooled you.

How do you show honor?
1) By obeying them (right attitude will produce right action)
2) Provide for parents (when they cannot) (Mt. 15:3-6) (NOTE: Money is no substitute for love)

Even if they are not believers, they are your parents, and you owe them love and respect.

A child is to respect based on the position of the parents, more than because of parent's personal character. EX: We submit to a police officer because of his position. We submit to our elders because of their position. We submit to our teacher because of his position.

1.Such an attitude results in a top quality life - "well with thee . . ." (v. 3a)

Paul is quoting one of the 10 commandments (Ex. 20:12). This is the only one of the 10 that deals with the family. Why only one! Because if this command was kept, a child would learn the most important lesson of his life - respect for authority.

From this would flow respect for others, for leaders, and most of all for God!

"Well with thee" - they will stay out of things that shorten life and that take the real fun out of life!

2.Such an attitude results in a long quantity of life - "live long . . ." (v. 3b)

"This does not mean that everyone who died young dishonored his parents. Paul is stating a principle: When children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger and thus avoid the things that could

threaten or shorten their lives" (Wiersbe, p. 152).

Respect for parents is so serious that God told Moses: "He who strikes (physical disrespect) his father or his mother shall surely be put to death"; and "He who curses (verbal disrespect) his father or his mother shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 21f:15, 17; cp. Lev. 20:9).

As a boy:
Samuel walked with God, Josiah became king and started a spiritual revival, David fought Goliath, Daniel stood up for God and would not eat the king's meat or drink wine.

Young people - God can use you if you will respect your parents!

II.CHRISTIAN PARENTS MUST RAISE UP THEIR CHILDREN - GOD'S WAY (v. 4)

Our children are like wet cement - they take the impression of whatever you do to them.

Our children are like unhardened clay - pliable to the way you shape them.

Our children are like a tender twig - that we want to bend toward a certain direction. The twig "is to be bent with caution, not broken in the efforts of a rude and hasty zeal" (Eadie, p. 262).

God requires us to:

A.NEGATIVE COMMAND: "Don't provoke your children to wrath" (v. 4a)

"Fathers" = shows headship and ultimate responsibility of the dad. The father sets the direction and the wife supports the direction.

Ways parents provoke children to wrath (MacArthur, p. 318):

1)Overprotection (never trust them to do things on their own)

2)Favoritism (EX: Isaac who favored Esau over Jacob and Rebekah preferred Jacob over Esau).

3)Pressure to achieve (nothing they do pleases you)

4)Discouragement ("You never do anything right") Praise your child for his/her character (not his intelligence, or beauty, etc.). Praise your children

for doing right (EX: "A" on a test, being honest, taking initiative to do something without being told, for doing an exceptional job). This will encourage them to continue to do right.

5)Feeling unwanted - Paul said in Col. 3:21, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." The quickest way to discourage a person is to neglect him.

6)Physical or verbal abuse

7)Unbiblical discipline (inconsistencies).

Be consistent. A very important part of parenting is not to just do it when you feel like it.

ILLUS: If the traffic laws or laws of nature changed every day, you'd be very frustrated and confused. So are our kids when we are inconsistent!!

If both parents are not in agreement with how a child is to be brought up, this will frustrate your children.

*Never have a disagreement in front of your child.

*Never waver in the moment of confrontation on a rule or standard you have set. If it is right - then over your dead body do you let your child win. When a child pushes against the rules, it doesn't mean you should move them! They push to have security. They push so that: 1) they can be assured that this rule is legitimate; and 2) they can be assured that you never will bend on what is right.

*Never let someone else (with differing standards) raise your kids. Beware of permissive grandparents!

8) Spoiling your child.

A child will ask himself basically 3 questions: "Who am I? Where do I fit? What are the rules for life?"

Beware of "child-centered" parenting! All our relationships, activity, etc. should revolve around God, not our children.

Children shouldn't dictate whether you go to church, have company, etc.

If you build your family only around your children, and neglect your priority relationship with each other -- you will raise self-centered kids. They are already self-centered from birth - don't feed it.

They must do what you want; you don't do what they want.

B.POSITIVE COMMAND

1."Raise them in the discipline of the Lord" (v. 4b)

"Nurture" = to train a child by discipline; to correct; to chasten (I Cor. 11:32; II Cor. 6:9; I Tim. 1:20; Heb. 12:6f, 10; Rev. 3:19; Lk. 23:16, 22)

a.Why to discipline

1)Your child needs to learn the difference between right & wrong

Many are living in the depths of sin today because of parents that didn't care enough to say: "No!" and restrain their children by discipline. One girl gave this testimony: "I never knew how far I could go . . . because my parents never cared enough to discipline me. I figured that if it wasn't important to them, why should it be to important to me?" (Wiersbe, p. 155).

2)Your child needs to learn the price for sin

Physical discipline teaches that sin always has consequences. Sin will always sting! There is a price for sin. The child sees himself as a law-breaking sinner in need of God's grace.

The result of discipline is that the child will be brought back into line with what he should be.

Spanking is not punishment (to pay back), but discipline (to teach) right from wrong and to change attitude and action (Heb. 12)

Spanking is an at of love (Heb. 12:6; Prov. 13:24 - "Hateth" - not an emotion, but an action, a lack of positive action; "betimes" = early = 1) young in life (diligence from day 1); 2) early in the offense (right away in the offense).

Prov. 19:18 - "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

b.How to discipline

Is spanking child abuse? No - not if it is done in the Bible way.

(Actually, a lack of spanking is permanent injury to their character and thus true abuse)

A spanking should sting, not damage. It is pain for the purpose of healing. (EX. a doctor cuts a person with a knife; an attacker does the same thing -- but the motive (purpose) and method is different.

Never slap a child's face or strike other parts of the body, pull hair, or drag by an arm.

Abuse of physical discipline: In superstitious Dark Ages (8th - 12th cent.), it was believed that crying children were possessed by demons and that beating them was the only way to exorcise those demons. Hence the phrase: "Beat the devil out of them" was born (Ezzo, p. 52).

"Nurture . . . of the Lord" - we are to discipline our children the same way the Lord disciplines his children.

1)Out of love (for our own good)
2)Consistently
--Discipline must be fair and consistent. Someone once said: My father would use a cannon to kill a mosquito! I either get away with murder, or get blamed for everything" (Wiersbe, p. 155).
3)Effectively (you know it when God is dealing with you)

1.Before spanking, make sure that the child knows what he did wrong.

2.Spank with a thin, flexible rod (or wooden or plastic spoon) that will sting not damage. (5-7 spanks usually enough) (make sure you are not spanking out of anger; or in a violent manner)

3.After spanking, a) talk to him about what he did wrong (explain it as sin against God; warn him not to repeat the offense) b) Pray with him;
c) affirm your love for him; then d) consider the issue solved and over (providing the child's attitude and action conform to what you desired)

4.The child should then willingly do what you asked; or not do what you prohibited (a repentant attitude is your goal)

c.When to discipline

Answer: For every act of rebellion against authority.

Examples of Rebellion:

1)Rebellious Attitude

When the child pouts or whines (throws fit).

Never call sin "cute" or view it as "funny". Disobedience is nothing to laugh at. It seems small now, but this attitude will manifest itself on a

greater scale later.

2)Rebellious Action

a.When the child disobeys by omitting right action

When a child consistently says, "I forgot" - this shows he rebelled against putting an effort into learning the lesson.

When you give instruction - say what you mean, and mean what you say (Ezzo, p. 43). (Don't speak rashly, because you must hold them accountable for whatever you said)

If I ask my child to do something, and he does not respond (assuming he heard me), he/she is in sin. But if I call him twice, **I** am the one in sin! Why? By repeating my request, I am reinforcing and encouraging my child's disobedience. This is, in fact, training them in unrighteousness. (Ezzo, p. 43)

For obedience to be real obedience, it must be:

1. Immediate - Delay is disobedience. Children are to obey the first time you ask (immediately). The reason they don't respond until the fourth time is because you have trained (conditioned) them that they don't have to until then (that you aren't going to do anything about their disobedience until then).

After God teaches us something from His Word, what percent (%) of the time does God want immediate and complete obedience? 100%

As parents, if we expect less than 100%, we are teaching our children disobedience.

When we tell our children to be quiet, and they are quiet 80% of the time, we put up with it. What will you do when you tell your children, "Don't sleep with your girlfriend" and they only obey 80% of the time??

2. Without Question (can ask "What" to clarify command, but never "Why") We are to ask God "Why" about trials, but never about obedience. Sometimes God provides a reason, but we have no right to ask Why.

3. Without Complaint. Attitude is just as important as action. Grudging compliance reveals a heart that is not willing to obey.

4. Complete - Partial obedience is not obedience.

b.When the child disobeys by committing wrong action

When a child talks back, he has rebelled.

If a dad gives a command, and the child appeals to mom. That child has just undermined Dad's authority.

Another example of challenging authority: The reply, "Why can't I" or "Do I have to?"

How long to spank?
By 5 years - 85% spanking should be completed 5-10 years - 95%
10-13 years- 99%
13-15 years-100%

(Normally, parents should not spank a teenager - this form of correction is too late then) (Ezzo, p. 55)
Four Stages of Maturity:

1.0-5 years - Disciplinary Stage - must establish parental authority

2.6-13 years - Training Stage - must give what & why info.

3.14-19 years - Coaching Stage - give more responsibility (train toward independence)

4.19 & up - Friend Stage - Adult to adult. Give advice when it is requested.

"How to Raise a Brat" -
--When an infant, always feed on demand.
--When crying, always pick up.
--When having trouble sleeping, always rock to sleep.
--When throwing a fit, say, "Isn't that cute?"
--When the child disobeys, overlook it.
--When he/she has a conflict with a little friend, always defend your child.
--When the child wants something, always give it right away. NOTE: A good parent always gives the child what he/she needs!--But what he/she sometimes needs is a NO!
--When the child sins, never spank or teach.
--If you do spank, do it inconsistently.
--When you want obedience, barter for it (EX: "If you're good, I'll give you this") The child learns to be a manipulator.

"A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame"

Years ago, the then Duke of Windsor (who referred to the rod as a switch) said, "Everything in the American home is controlled by switches -- except the children!"

2."Raise them in the instruction of the Lord" (v. 4c)

Discipline is more than spanking.

Two parts to discipline (Prov. 29:15): "The Rod and Reproof" --
physical chastisement (negative)
verbal instruction (positive)

"Admonition" = lit. "to put into the mind" (not merely factual information, but right attitudes and principles of behavior)

Prov. 22:6 - "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is an axiomatic, eternal principle from God (NOTE: context describing causes and resultant effects)

"Train" = to begin, or initiate a young child in the right direction. To start out right.

Same word as when Solomon initiated/dedicated the newly-constructed Temple (I Ki. 8:63; II Chron. 7:5)

The word originally meant to "rub the palate" of a child with chewed dates to get it to acquire a taste for food; EX: midwives would rub palate with oil before child began to suck. The word means to make experienced or accustomed to what you want (as a horse gets accustomed to being directed by a rope in its mouth) (BDB, p. 335)

If we get our children accustomed to what is right, they won't depart!

"The way" = the proper road

"Old" = mature

"It" = the way (road) we trained them on

Teach your children God's standards for purity, money management, ethics, etc. (The best way to teach = by precept and example!)

Turn to: Deut. 6:4-7 (**v. 7)

How to teach God's Word to your children:

1.Apply it to yourself first (v. 4-6)

2.Teach repetitiously (diligently = lit. to repeat. The word described the sharpening of

arrows by repetitious striking [Is. 5:28; Ps. 45:6]; ILLUS: sanding metal objects)

3.Teach specifically (the commands of God (v. 6)

4.Teach continually (not limited to specific time periods) (from sunrise to sunset)

a.Simultaneous training - "When . . ."
b.Informal training - (While sitting, lying down in house; while walking outside of house)

CONCLUSION: Is there hope for parents who have been delinquent in training their children? Yes. it's never too late to make corrections. This is a giant step toward successful re-parenting.

First - call a Family Conference; explain you have made errors in their lives; apologize for them.

Second - explain what God requires in the areas of obedience and respect.

Third - explain new course of action from this time forward. Join in prayer for wisdom to do what is right (Ezzo, p. 81)

The best way to insure that your kids turn out right is for you (as parents) to be right.

If you are tolerant of sin in your life, you will tend to be tolerant with your children.

If you are overindulgent - your kids will generally get whatever they want.

If you are selfish - so will your kids be.

You will feel like a hypocrite trying to correct something in your kids that you are.