

THE WORDS OF OUR ELDERS ARE WORDS OF WISDOM CONCLUSION

Ephesians 6:1-4

I want to remind you of the results of the exercise we had in groups last summer. All the children comments were collated together and those of the adults were collated together too.

The results showed that both adults and children agree that there are challenges.

The Children felt that they are being treated harshly, accused of wrongs things, adults use the Bible to get their way, always referring to past events and never apologise when they are wrong.

On the other hand, the adults felt that children never take responsibility for their actions, do not do household chores, do not do their home works, get into troubles unnecessarily, always rude and interestingly, they quoted 1 Corinthians 13:5 ‘..Love keeps no record of wrongs’.

For me, there are two things. First, both groups agree there is conflict and second, both have a common ground of quoting from scripture and that will be our reference point.

Today we are bringing this series into conclusion by looking at what God says about the relationship between the two groups.

REVELATION TV NEWS REPORT OF HUCB:

What you see every day and everywhere in modern societies are antagonism, division, and rebellion. Husbands and wives are divorcing each other, fathers have left home, single mums are unable to cope with rearing children by themselves, children are rebelling against their parents; teachers are unable to discipline students because students are now in control in the classrooms and employers and employees are seeking for new ways to avoid strikes and keep the machinery of industry running productively.

We have tried education, legislation, and every other approach, but nothing seems to work. I believe that we lost it when we took God out of our education, legislation, public and private lives. What hope have we then for the future if the present is in such chaos?

A onetime famous Apostle Paul's answer to these problems at home and in society is *regeneration* - a new heart from God and a new submission to Christ and to one another. Paul indicated that this spiritual harmony begins in the lives of Christians who are submitted to the lordship of Christ and he wrote this to the Church in Ephesus chapter 6.

Eyasu:

Christian Children (Eph. 6:1-3)

Paul admonished the children directly here. Children were present in the assembly when this letter was read. Did they understand all that Paul wrote? Do we understand it all? Christian families attended the public worship together, and no doubt the parents explained the Word to the children when they were at home. He gave them four reasons why children should obey their parents.

They are Christians ("in the Lord," v. 1a). When a person becomes a Christian he is a new creation, old has gone and new has come. Therefore, he is not released from normal obligations of life. If anything, his faith in Christ ought to make him/her a better child in the home and the community.

Because s/he is a Christian and new creation, s/he has a new life, perspective, attitude and goals hence his/her obedience to the parents will be a testimony to his/her new nature.

Here's God's plan and command for harmony in the home: the wife submits to the husband "as unto Christ"; the husband loves His wife "even as Christ also loved the church"; and the children obey "in the Lord."

Obedience is right (v. 1b). In his wisdom from creation, God ordained order which stands for ever and any attempt to violate this in whatever form brings chaos. Our civilisation, public opinions and legislation have tried to overturn this order but we always pay for it, hence David Cameron refers to Britain as 'a broken society'. Since the parents brought the child into the world, and since they have more knowledge and wisdom than the child, it is right that the child obey his parents. Even young animals are taught to obey.

The "modern version" of Eph 6:1 would be, "Parents, obey your children, for this will keep them happy and bring peace to the home" but it will always lead to failure and misery and this is contrary to God's order. The very law that protect them from being disciplined convicts them when they turn 16 or 18.

Although it may suit you to use the law to get away with your indiscipline and have your way, but same law will convict you of the same offences you get way with the moment you turn 16. So what you refused to learn whilst young willingly, you learn as adults in a hard way. The question is, why not do the right thing from the start?

Obedience is commanded (v. 2a). Paul quoted the 5th commandment from Ex 20:12 and Deut. 5:16 and applies it to the New Testament believer. For the fact that this law is repeated in the New Testament makes it imperative to obey and points to its continuity. But the righteousness of the Law is still a revelation of the holiness of God, and the Holy Spirit enables us to practice that righteousness in our daily lives (Rom 8:1-4). All of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament epistles for the Christian to observe except, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." It is just as wrong for a New Testament Christian to dishonour his parents as it was for an Old Testament Jew.

To "honour" our parents means much more than simply to obey them. It means to show them respect and love, to care for them as icing as they need us, and to seek to bring honour to them by the way we live and behave.

A young couple came to see their pastor about getting married, and he asked if their parents agreed to the wedding. They looked at each other in embarrassment then confessed, "We were hoping you wouldn't ask about that." The Pastor spent the next hour trying to convince them that their parents had a right to rejoice in this event, and that to exclude them would cause wounds that might never heal. "Even if they are not believers," He said, "they are your parents, and you owe them love and respect." They finally agreed, and the plans were made together and both families were happy. Had they followed the couple's original plans, the two of them would have lost their testimony with their relatives, but, instead, they were able to give a good witness for Jesus Christ.

Obedience brings blessing (vv. 2b-3). The fifth commandment has a promise attached to it: "That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee" (Ex 20:12). This promise originally applied to the Jews as they entered Canaan, but Paul applied it to believers today. He substituted "earth" for "land" and tells us that the Christian child who honours his parents can expect two blessings. It will be well with him, and he will live long on the earth. This does not mean that everyone who died young dishonoured his parents. He was 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. But life is not measured only by quantity of time. It is also measured by quality of experience. God enriches the life of the obedient child no matter how long he may live on the earth. Sin always robs us; obedience always enriches us.

So, the child must learn early to obey father and mother, not only because they are his parents, but also because God has commanded it to be so. Disobedience to parents is rebellion against God. The sad situation in homes today is the result of rejecting God's Word (Rom 1:28-30; 2 Tim 3:1-5). By nature, a child is selfish, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, a child can learn to obey his parents and glorify God.

Proverbs 14:18 "A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent." and Proverbs 12:1 "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid."

Rev Dayo

Christian Fathers (Eph. 6:4)

If left to themselves, children are naturally rebellious, so it is necessary for the parents to train their children. In our country (Britain) today, we take pride in being liberal, and we are so liberal in every aspects of our lives that we entangle ourselves in submitting to our children wishes and failed to discipline them. What results do we expect from an undisciplined child?

Fathers are no more at home today for various reasons which are beyond this sermon, but the ones at home have no authority to discipline their children and yet research shows that male children need father's role model to grow and behave well.

I want say that majority of parents are together and have done very well to discipline their children and I want to say well done to them.

Experience shows that even the children that are brought well can choose their own rebellious ways and when children become adults (18) the parents cannot do anything about them anymore except prayer and counsel when they ask for it.

The Bible records the sad results of parents neglecting their children, either by being bad examples to them or failing to discipline them properly. David pampered Absalom and set him a bad example, and the results were tragic. Eli failed to discipline his sons and they brought disgrace to his name and defeat to the nation of Israel. In his latter years, even Isaac pampered Esau, while his wife showed favouritism to Jacob; and the result was a divided home. Jacob was showing favouritism to Joseph when God providentially rescued the lad and made a man out of him in Egypt. Paul tells us that the father has several responsibilities toward his children.

He must not provoke them. In Paul's day and many parts of the world today, the father had supreme authority over the family. My mum will always tell me when I do wrong 'your father will soon come' and same thing my wife told our children when they were young.

Paul told the parents "Don't use your authority to abuse the children, but to encourage and build them up." Otherwise, they will be discouraged.

Warren Wiersbe told a story of a minister who was addressing a group of Christian students on the subject of prayer, and was pointing out that our Father in heaven is always available when we call. To illustrate this, He told them that the receptionist at their church office has a list of names prepared by him, and these people could get to him at any time, no matter what he was doing. They are his family even if the matter seems to him inconsequential; he wants his family to know that he is available. After the service, one of the students said to him, "Would you adopt me? I can never get through to my father, and I need his encouragement so much!"

Fathers provoke their children and discourage them by saying one thing and doing another - by always blaming and never praising, by being inconsistent and unfair in discipline, and by showing favouritism in the home, by making promises and not keeping them, and by making light of problems that, to the children, are very important. Christian parents need the fullness of the Spirit so they can be sensitive to the needs and problems of their children.

There was a story told by Eyasu. A boy always asked his father to play with him, help with school work and outings but the father always said 'he has not got the time.' The boy grew up and now the father needs his help, he said to the father, 'Dad, I' like to help but I have not got the time' and this went on and on.

He must nurture them. "But nurture them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord." The verb translated "bring them up" is the same word that is translated "nourish" in Eph 5:29. The

Christian husband is to nourish his wife and his children by sharing love and encouragement in the Lord. It is not enough to nurture the children physically by providing food, shelter, and clothing. He must also nurture them emotionally and spiritually. The development of the boy Jesus is our example: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Here is balanced growth: intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social. Nowhere in the Bible is the training of children assigned to agencies outside the home, no matter how they might assist. God looks to the parents for the kind of training that the children need.

He must discipline them. The word "nurture" carries with it the idea of learning through discipline. It is translated "chastening" in Heb 12. Some modern psychologists oppose the old-fashioned idea of discipline, and many educators follow their philosophy. "Let the children express themselves!" they tell us. "If you discipline them, you may distort their characters." Yet discipline is a basic principle of life and an evidence of love. "Whom the Lord loves, He chastens" (Heb 12:6).

Proverbs 13:24 "He who spares his rod hates his son. But he who loves him disciplines him promptly." NKJV

We must be sure, however, that we discipline our children in the right manner. To begin with, we must discipline in love and not in anger, lest we injure either the body or the spirit of the child, or possibly both. If we are not disciplined, we surely cannot discipline others, and "flying off the handle" never made either a better child or a better parent.

Also, our discipline must be fair and consistent. "My father would use cannon to kill a mosquito!" a teenager once told me. "I either get away with murder, or get blamed for everything!" Consistent, loving discipline gives assurance to the children. They may not agree with us, but at least they know that we care enough to build some protective walls around them they can take care of themselves "I never knew how far I could go," a wayward girl told me, "Because my parents never cared enough to discipline me. I figured that if it wasn't important to them, why should it be important to me?"

He must instruct and encourage them. This is the meaning of the word "admonition." The father and mother should not only use actions to raise the children, but also words. In the Book of Proverbs, for example, we have an inspired record of a father, sharing wise counsel with his son, our children do not always appreciate our counsel, but that does not eliminate the obligation we have to instruct and encourage them. Of course, our instruction must always be tied to the Word of God (2 Tim 3:13-17). The Word of God is the standard for all.

Later in life they will see and understand what we are saying and doing as the writer of Hebrews 12:11 "No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way."

Years after I left home I wrote my father how I cherished his discipline, words of encouragements and love because it took almost 15 years before I could see the results of those early years of nurturing.

Conclusion:

On this note we bring this to rest for the moment with this closing remarks. Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do.

"Honour your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honour your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

If we all play our part, our relationships, lives, homes, schools and society will be better.