

The Role of Children in the Family

The Home and the Family: Part 4

Introduction

1. In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, He designed all things in creation so that they functioned perfectly. As the scripture says, "...indeed it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).
 - a. The orbit of the earth around the sun is positioned perfectly.
 - b. Species on earth co-exist, dependent on one another. There is a balance.
 - c. The human body, with all of its complexities, is a great wonder.
 - d. All things are so beautiful and function so perfectly because they adhere to the design given them by God.
2. The God that designed this great universe is the same God that created the pattern for the family and the home.
 - a. It has the ability to function perfectly, just the like creation.
 - b. But in order for this to happen all the parts of the family must follow the pattern given them by God.
3. We have learned about fathers and mothers in the family, now we will look at the role of the children in the family.
 - a. Fathers and mothers have their roles, but so do children.
 - b. God purposed that children should dwell with their parents during their early years for a purpose—a good purpose.
 - c. It is not meant to be torture, as so many young people see it today. Rather, when all members of the family are fulfilling their roles, it can be a great blessing.
4. Children need to be taught about their role in the family. There is a purpose for it.

Discussion

I. Listen to Parent's Instruction: Prov. 1:8-9

- A. Children are in training to be adults.
 1. As children, we are not capable of living as adults, independent in the world.
 - a. "*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child...*" (Prov. 22:15).
 - b. "*But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother*" (Prov. 29:15).
 2. Therefore, according to God's pattern, parents must be teaching, training, and instructing their children in the ways of maturity, truth, righteousness, and faithfulness to God so that when they are grown they may know how to function as mature, responsible adults.
 - a. "*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*" (Prov. 22:16).
 - b. "...bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).
- B. Thus the need for children to dwell with their parents.
 1. The first eighteen or so years of our lives are not meant to be torture, but a blessing, a gift from God, to help us in our adult years (Prov. 1:8).
 2. Sometimes, it is hard for children to appreciate such a gift.
 - a. In their minds, parents are just people trying to get children to do things they don't want to do.
 - b. But children, remember the description Jesus gave to those who reject something as precious as the instruction of parents.
 - c. "Dogs" and "Swine" (Matt. 7:6).

3. Without our parents, we would be lost, destitute, clueless—children would have no home, no instruction, and no one to tell them when they are embarrassing themselves.
 - a. Many children are embarrassed by their parents, they think they are clueless.
 - b. But the only reason you think that is because you don't know anything.
 - c. Think of all that your parents have been able to do with their lives, then think about where you would be if they tossed you out and left you to fend for yourselves.
 - d. It would not be a pretty picture. You need your parents for more than just a roof, a bed, and food. You need them to teach you how to grow up and how to live in this crazy world.
 4. For this reason...
- C. There is great wisdom in listening to instruction of parents: Prov. 13:1
1. For those who have never experienced life, who have not yet made the mistakes that most people make, who do not fully know the challenges and heartaches of adulthood, there is great wisdom in listening to what parents have to say about those things.
 2. Just as there is great wisdom in listening to the instructions of parents, there is great foolishness in rejecting that instruction.
 - a. Prov. 1:7: "...but fools despise wisdom and instruction."
 - b. Prov. 5:7-14: Those who reject the instruction of their parents and kick at their training like stubborn mule will only have a life of hardship and heartache.
 - c. Prov. 12:1: Therefore, God says in no uncertain words, "*he who hates correction is stupid.*"
 3. Children, do you want to have a good life? Do you want a stable life?
 - a. Listen to the instruction of your parents and to the instruction of the Lord.
 - b. Parents have been where you are. They have made their mistakes because they have lived through the things that you are living through.
 - c. They can offer the wisdom that they have gained from experience, but the treasure of their instruction is useless to you if you are foolish enough to disdain it.

II. To Obey their Parents: Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20

- A. To obey means to "heed or conform to a command or authority" (Strong's).
- B. This is good and right in the sight of God.
 1. Even the hosts in heaven live in obedience to the will of the Father.
 2. Men were created with the need for such obedience (Eccl. 12:13).
 3. Yet many children feel as if this does not apply to them, that they should be able to do their own thing.
 4. But when they grow old they find that there are many consequences for not living on obedience to parents, to teachings, to the law.
 5. Some learn the hard way that when we do not obey we will suffer.
 6. Therefore it is best to learn of God's pattern for obedience.
 - a. Learn the benefits of foregoing our own arrogant "understanding" and submitting to our parents.
 - b. Children will find that there is much to benefit from accepting the rules and guidelines their parents place upon them, even though they may not be able to see those benefits at the present time.
- C. Obedience to parents is not arbitrary. There is a purpose.
 1. The purpose of man is to "*Fear God and keep His commandments*" (Eccl. 12:13).
 2. It is no wonder that God integrated the need for obedience into His pattern for the family.

- a. It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children not only the need for obedience, but the blessings of obedience so that they have grown they will know to obey the commands of God.
 - b. Children need to see the blessing in this.
 - c. True, under our parents we cannot do everything we want to do. That is because many of the things we want to do are foolish and damaging.
 - d. We learn that as children so that when we are grown we will understand that if we go beyond the instruction of God our works are foolish and damaging.
3. That is why Paul commanded, “*Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord*” (Col. 3:20).
 4. And again, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right*” (Eph. 6:1).
 5. If parents are not teaching their children obedience, and if children are not learning obedience to their parents, then their lives will become like a universe out of tilt: instead of *cosmos* (order), there will only be *chaos* (disorder).

III. To Learn of God and Cleans their way: Eccl. 12:1; Ps. 119:9

- A. Even with the instructions of Parents, children make mistakes.
 1. They make bad decisions.
 2. They do things that are harmful, many times because they did not heed the instruction of their parents.
 3. As is the case with all men, “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23).
- B. Therefore children need to learn the principles of repentance.
 1. This is something that is learned, in large, by observing the penitent attitudes of parents.
 2. But arrogant and impenitent parents make for arrogant and impenitent children.
 3. Therefore parents need to teach their children how to cleanse their ways by going to God’s word and heeding the instruction and commandments provided
 4. Therefore, in the divine pattern for the family it is the responsibility of the parents to teach the children about God, so they will know to see Him, so that they will know why they need to cleanse their way.
 5. “*Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’*” (Eccl. 12:1).
 6. “*How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word*” (Ps. 119:9).
 7. All men make mistakes, but those who have true wisdom will cleanse their ways.

IV. Honor Father and Mother

- A. This is something we learn when we are young and fulfill when we are older.
 1. If a child has disdain for their parents it is an abomination to the Lord.
 - a. Under the old law, rebellious children were to be stoned (Deut. 21:18-21).
 - b. God does not expect us to do this today, but this passage teaches us the evil of being “stubborn and disobedient” children.
 2. On the contrary, children must learn to honor their mother and father.
 - a. Learn to value their instructions as well as the home they provide for you.
 - b. Develop an attitude of appreciation for the sacrifices that they make to give you the life that you have.
 - c. Thus we have one definition of the word “honor”: “value, respect” depicted in the honor done by Christ to the Father (John 8:49).

- B. When we learn to honor our parents when we are young, then we will be able to honor them when we are old.
1. Honor is more than lip service. It is a combination of thought, words, and action.
 - a. If we hold a person in honor in our thought,
 - b. We will also honor them with our lips.
 - c. If we truly honor them as we say then we will show them honor with our action.
 2. As children under our parents we show honor in submission and obedience.
 - a. When we take their instructions seriously.
 - b. When we fulfill God's pattern for children in the family.
 3. When we have grown we are not longer under our parents, but we still give them honor.
 - a. The honor that we developed as children is culminated in our care for our parents they are older.
 - b. For example, children are to show honor to their widows (mothers) according to 1 Tim. 5:3, 4.
 - c. Notice what it says, "*let them repay their parents...*" For what? For all the sacrifices they made to make sure we can make it in this world.
 - d. "*...for this is good and acceptable before God.*"

Conclusion

1. Children, understand that while you live with your parents, it is not a waist of time, and it is not torture.
 - a. The only thing that makes it so is when you kick and buck at their instruction.
 - b. To do so only shows foolishness and narrow mindedness.
2. God has given us a tremendous blessing in our parents.
 - a. In our limited understanding we may not be able to see all that they do for us, but if we trust God's divine pattern and heed the instruction of our parents we will see the benefits with time.
3. If you value your life at all then you will consider God's pattern for you in your family, you will be obedient to your parents, learn to fear the Lord, and learn how to cleanse your ways.
4. When we do this then our lives will have great joy indeed.

By David Phillips

Avondale church of Christ
1606 Glen Willow Rd., P.O. Box 421, Avondale, PA 19311
(610) 268-2088, gospelstudies@verizon.net
www.avondalechristians.com