**A Family That Honors the Lord**

Colossians 3:20-21

**Introduction**

When Paul applied the lordship of Christ to specific realms of life, he began with the home. New life in Christ makes life different first in the home. We have seen that a marriage that honors the Lord is one in which the wife is submissive to her loving husband. In the same way, a family that honors the Lord is one in which the children are obedient to their loving parents. This implies that the responsibility rests with both the parents and the children.

“The breakdown in authority in our society reflects the breakdown of authority in the home...Life is not easy for children, especially Christian children. Their problems might seem small to us, but they are quite large to them! Christian parents must listen carefully, share the feelings and frustrations of their children, pray with them, and seek to encourage them. Home ought to be the happiest and best place in all the world! Discouraged children are fair prey for Satan and the world…If a home is truly Christian, it is a place of encouragement. In such a home, the child finds refuge from battles, and yet strength to fight the battles and carry the burdens of growing maturity. He finds a loving heart, a watching eye, a listening ear, and a helping hand. He does not want any other place—home meets his needs. In this kind of a home, it is natural for the child to trust Christ and want to live for Him.” (Wiersbe) Let’s consider what it means to have a family that honors the Lord.

1. **Families today are troubled by the way things are conducted in the home.** 
   1. Spiritual life is neglected. Things other than the Bible receive more attention. They see parents living one way at church and different away from church.
   2. The relationship between husband and wife is not what God intended.
      1. Most problems with children are first a marriage problem. If the marriage is not operating on the biblical principle of love and respect, the home is built on the wrong foundation.
      2. They are presenting a wrong model to follow.
   3. Many homes are child-centered homes rather than God-centered homes.
2. In his book, The Heart of Anger, Lou Priolo compares the two: In a child-centered home, the child interrupts adults when they are talking, uses manipulation and rebellion to get their way, dictates the family schedule, takes precedence over the needs of the spouse, has an equal or overriding vote in all decision making matters, demands excessive time/attention from parents to the detriment of their other biblical responsibilities, escapes the consequences of their sinful and irresponsible behavior, speaks to parents as though they were peers, and is entertained and coddled out of a bad mood rather than being disciplined. The child perceives that the entire family exists essentially to please and make him or her happy. Mother and Father and siblings exist only to serve and meet the child’s needs and desires.
3. In a God-centered home, the child cheerfully obeys parents the first time, doesn’t interrupt parents who are speaking to each other, understands they will not always get their own way, works their schedule around their parent’s schedule, has input into family decisions but not necessarily an equal vote, understands that God has given their parents other responsibilities in addition to meeting their needs, suffers the natural consequences of their sinful and irresponsible behavior, does not speak to parents as though they are peers but honors them as spiritual authorities, joyfully serves others, fulfills various household responsibilities and chores, protects themselves from bad influences, does not divide parents over disciplinary issues and treats both parents with equal respect. The child perceives that the husband is the head of the family and the wife is submissive to her husband. Theirs is the primary relationship. It is permanent and exists to glorify God. Children have a secondary and temporary relationship.
   1. Parents are expecting others to do what they ought to do. They expect teachers and spiritual leaders to raise their children.
   2. Parents are disconnected from the lives of their children. They think it is sufficient to have their children in all the right places (enrolled in the right school, going to the right church, etc.). Children need connection with you as parents! They need you to teach them about God and His way of life (Deuteronomy 6:6-7) They need your presence, your attention and your affection!
4. **Central Idea: Paul applied the Lordship of Christ to the home, and made it clear that a family that honors the Lord is one in which the children are obedient to their loving parents.**
5. **Children are to be obedient to their loving parents. (v. 20)**
   1. This is not just to make life easier for parents.
   2. This is not just for select cultures or families. This admonition transcends time and culture; it is based on God’s order in creation.
   3. This is the way children can honor the Lord in their lives.
   4. God says that children are to obey their parents in everything. (v. 20a)
      1. Obey means to listen to; to submit; to yield to; to surrender to; as a doorkeeper, to hearken, answer a knock, and open the door (Friberg).
      2. Terms expressing the concept of “obedience” may frequently be rendered in some languages as “to do what one says” or “to carry out someone's orders.” (Low/Nida)
   5. Obeying your parents is not just about your parents. Children should obey their parents because it pleases the Lord. You should draw from the Lord what you need in order to obey your parents.
6. **Parents are to be loving to their children. (v. 21)** 
   1. It is significant that Paul addresses the fathers and not the mothers. Dads, you can’t punt the ball of parenting to your wife. God expects your involvement.
   2. Fathers should be careful to avoid provoking their children to anger (v. 21a). Provoke means to stir up. It means to cause someone to feel resentment; to make someone bitter; to irritate; to rouse to anger. Your anger does not help the situation.
   3. In his book, The Heart of Anger, Lou Priolo, lists 25 ways parents provoke their children to anger. A few include: Lack of marital harmony, modeling sinful behavior, habitually disciplining while angry, scolding, being inconsistent with discipline, not admitting you’re wrong and not asking for forgiveness, constantly finding fault, parents reversing God-given roles, not listening to your child’s opinion or taking his side of the story seriously, comparing them to others, not making time “just to talk”, not praising or encouraging your child, failing to keep your promises, chastening in front of others, not allowing enough freedom, allowing too much freedom, mocking your child, abusing them physically, having unrealistic expectations, practicing favoritism, and child training with worldly methodologies inconsistent with God’s Word.
   4. The reason parents should be careful not to provoke their children to anger is that they could become discouraged. To be discouraged is to feel like giving up; to lack motivation; to be broken in spirit; to be disheartened or to lose heart. Parenting that is not submitted to the Lordship of Christ can produce children who do not have a heart for the Lord. They may not have a heart to live right.
   5. God’s plan is for parents to draw from the fact that they are complete in Christ. They need to be Christ-centered. They need to be Christ-dependent. They need the fruit of the Spirit at work in and through their lives.
   6. God’s plan is that fathers and mothers are interested and involved in the life of their children.
      1. Your daughter wants to feel loved by you. She wants to be close to you. She wants you to be open with her; involved in conversation. She wants you to be understanding. She wants to know that you love her unconditionally.
      2. Your son wants to be respected. He needs you to appreciate his desire to achieve great things. He needs your help to prepare to be a leader. He wants you to value his insight. He needs that shoulder-to-shoulder relationship with you. He needs your guidance in God’s plan regarding sexual desires. You are needed as his guide!

**Conclusion**

As a child, you can’t honor the Lord without being obedient. As a parent, you can’t honor the Lord without being loving. Allow this quote by Abraham Lincoln to drive home the point: “A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting and, when you are gone, attend those things which you think are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states, and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities, and corporations. All your books are going to be judged, praised, or condemned by him. The fate of humanity is in his hands. Teach him well.”