

CHILDREN, OBEY
Colossians 3:20
By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. If you are a kid still living at home with your parents, then this sermon is for you. Most of my sermons are for the entire church; many are for adults like fathers, mothers, married people. Many sermons have to do with things that don't apply to you yet, such as how to live for Christ at work. But today is special because this sermon is directed right at you. But it is going to challenge you, so get ready.
2. Being a kid is fun. You don't have to worry about the responsibilities of marriage, parenting, and bills, and a job. But being a kid is not all easy. Today we're going to talk about one of the biggest challenges kids have to face.

II. TEXT

1. **Colossians 3:20-21** "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won't become discouraged."

III. THE IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S COMMAND

1. God places children under the authority of their parents.
 - i. Not the state.
 - ii. Beware of lawmakers who are concerned about "children's rights." Their ultimate goal is not the protection of children, but the destruction of the nuclear family and the elevation of the state to a place of complete control and influence over the upbringing of your children. This is one of the goals of Marxism, to "liberate" children from the home and make them wards of the state. When a politician speaks of "liberating" or "protecting children," they mean they want to decrease the influence of the parents, and increase the influence of the state. They want to make public school compulsory. They want to outlaw spanking. They want to control what you teach your kids.
 - iii. Children already have rights, as they should. It is illegal to physically and sexually abuse them. It is illegal to neglect their education.
 - iv. But parents, not the state, are to have authority over children.
2. Parents must exercise their God-given authority.
 - i. In 1946 Dr. Benjamin Spock wrote a book about parenting (*Baby and Child Care*) that changed the way Americans thought about the topic. It was an international best-seller, selling 750,000 copies the first along. It has since sold more than 50 million copies. It is considered one of the most influential books of the twentieth century. Life magazine named him one of the 100 most important people of the twentieth century. It became the defining text for raising the Baby Boomers.
 1. He taught against physical punishment, arguing that it teaches the child to be violent, and to be bullies.

2. He believed that people are innately good, positive, and loving, and that children would turn out well if parents just provided a good example.
3. Norman Vincent Peale, a preacher, characterized Dr. Spock's parenting ideas as "feed 'em whatever they want, don't let them cry, instant gratification of needs."
- ii. The Bible teaches that human beings are innately sinful, and that children need strong parenting to grow up right (Rm 3:23).
- iii. **Proverbs 22:15** "Foolishness is bound to the heart of a youth; a rod of discipline will separate it from him."
- iv. God has put parents in charge. Therefore, parents must take charge. They do this with...
 1. Commands. Just as God gives us rules and boundaries to teach us how to live, you are to do that for your children.
 2. Correction. You are to correct your child verbally, and when necessary, physically, especially for deliberate disobedience.
- v. **The Minnesota Crime Commission** issued a report which said, in part: "Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toys, his uncle's watch, or whatever. Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He's dirty, he has no morals, no knowledge, no developed skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, but all children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self-centered world of infancy, given free reign to their impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist."
- vi. **John MacArthur** "Parents who do not fully and tirelessly commit themselves to the godly teaching and training of their children are likely to wake up one day to find their sons and daughters inextricably enmeshed in the ungodly and immoral philosophies and practices of the world. Despite what the world may say, children are to obey and honor their parents. They are not to be liberated from their parents and enabled to choose whatever they want to do and the way they want to do it."
3. God cares about your relationship with your parents.
 - i. **Colossians 3:20** "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."
 - ii. Notice the phrase "for this pleases the Lord."
 - iii. How you interact with your parents matters to God. When you obey and honor your parents, this pleases the Lord. When you disobey and dishonor your parents, this displeases the Lord.
 - iv. If you are a Christian, then your goal is to please the Lord. **2 Corinthians 5:9** "Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to him."

- v. If you want to please the Lord, then obey your parents.
- vi. Since children are commanded to obey their parents, it is a sin to disobey your parents.
- vii. How important is this to God? In the Old Testament it was a capital offense to dishonor your parents.
 - 1. **Exodus 21:15** "Whoever strikes his father or his mother must be put to death."
 - 2. **Exodus 21:17** "Whoever curses his father or his mother must be put to death."
 - 3. **Deuteronomy 21:18-21** "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father or mother and doesn't listen to them even after they discipline him, his father and mother are to take hold of him and bring him to the elders of his city, to the gate of his hometown. They will say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he doesn't obey us. He's a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his city will stone him to death. You must purge the evil from you, and all Israel will hear and be afraid."

IV. HOW TO OBEY YOUR PARENTS

- i. **John MacArthur** "*Hupakouo* (obey) literally means 'to hear under,' that is, to listen with attentiveness and to respond positively to what is heard. Children are to put themselves under the words and authority of their parents."
- 1. **Completely.**
 - a. **Colossians 3:20** "Children, obey your parents in everything...."
 - b. Not just some of their commands; not just the commands you agree with, but all of their commands.
- 2. **Constantly.**
 - a. **Psalms 119:44** "I will always obey your instruction, forever and ever."
 - b. Not just when your parents are watching, not just when you are with your parents, but all the time.
 - c. Do you have to obey your parents for life? No. When you become a legal adult and move out of the house, you are no longer responsible to obey your parents. But you will have to honor them for life.
- 3. **Currently.**
 - a. **Psalms 119:6** "I hurried, not hesitating to keep your commands."
 - b. Delayed obedience is disobedience.
- 4. **Cheerfully.**
 - a. **Philippians 2:14 (ERV)** "Do everything without complaining or arguing."
 - b. It is not enough to just obey; you must obey with a good attitude.
- 5. **Considerately.**
 - ii. **Ephesians 6:2-3** "Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land."
 - iii. Remember that obedience is only one part of God's larger command to children, which is to honor their parents.

- iv. “Honor” means to have inward respect and reverence for your parents. It is not enough to honor them outwardly; you must honor and respect them inwardly.
- v. **MacArthur** “The right attitude behind the right act of obedience is honor (*timao*), which means to value highly, to hold in the highest regard and respect. In both its verb and noun forms the word is often used as a term of reverence, preciousness, and honor regarding God the Father and Christ... Children are to honor both their father and mother, to hold them in the highest possible respect.”
- vi. To obey your parents considerately means to be considerate of them in everything you do. To always ask, “What would honor my parents?” And do not do anything that would cause your parents shame and sorrow.
- vii. You may encounter situations where your parents did not give you a direct command. But if you consider, “What would honor my parents?” then the choice will become clear.

6. Christianly.

- a. **Ephesians 6:1** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord”
- viii. “In the Lord” does not modify parents; otherwise the command would only apply to children with Christian parents. It means to obey those commands that are in line with the Lord’s will.
- ix. You must never obey a human being at the expense of disobeying God.

7. Combinedly.

- x. **Colossians 3:20** “Children, obey your parents.”
- xi. Not just parent, but parents.
- xii. **Ephesians 6:2** “Honor your father and mother”
- xiii. Not just your father, but your mother also.
- xiv. Kids usually fear one parent more than the other. My mom used to say, “Wait until your father gets home.” They often respect or like one parent more than the other. But when it comes to obedience and honor, you are to treat both parents the same.

V. WHY OBEY YOUR PARENTS

- i. Obeying your parents is not easy. It can be very challenging. So let’s talk about some reasons to obey your parents.

1. To please God.

- a. **Colossians 3:20** “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”
- b. If you are a Christian, then this is all the reason you need. You love God, and you want to please Him more than anything else in the world.

2. To do what is right.

- a. **Ephesians 6:1** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right.”
- ii. MacArthur “*Dikaios* (right) refers to that which is correct, just, righteous – to that which is exactly as it should be.”
- iii. Why is it right to obey your parents? Because without your parents you would not exist. Your mother carried you in her belly for nine months. She

endured labor pains for you. She nursed you from her own breasts. Your parents brought you into this world. They fed you. They clothed you. They taught you. They loved you. They encouraged you. They brought you to church. They protected you. They bought you toys. They brought you on vacation. They paid your bills. They gave you shelter. They put up with all your sins and mistakes. It is only right and just that you give them your obedience. It is a great injustice to then in turn disobey and dishonor your parents.

3. To benefit yourself.

- iv. **Ephesians 6:2-3** “Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.”
- v. When you honor your parents, you benefit yourself. This passage contains two promises. First, a high quality of life (“that it may go well with you”). Second, a long life (“that you may have a long life in the land”).
- vi. Listen to what the Bible says about children:
 - 1. **Proverbs 22:15** “Foolishness is bound to the heart of a youth; a rod of discipline will separate it from him.”
 - a. You are naturally sinful and foolish. You don’t know what is right. And even if you know, you don’t always have the desire to do what is right. And even when you desire to do what is right, you don’t have the willpower to choose what is right in moments of temptation. This is why God has given you parents.
 - 2. **Proverbs 29:15** “A rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a youth left to himself is a disgrace to his mother.”
 - a. Let’s be honest. Sometimes kids just want their parents to leave them alone. Let me do what I want to do. But the Bible says that you aren’t ready for that. If your parents were to leave you to yourself, you would turn out to be a disgrace. A failure. An embarrassment to yourself, your family, and your community. You need parents.
- vii. Your parents are God’s gift to you. They are smarter, wiser, more experienced, and more mature than you. And they are crazy about you. They would die for you. God has given you parents to protect you, provide for you, teach you, and guide you to the best path for your life. When you obey them, you only help yourself.

4. To avoid God’s discipline.

- a. **Proverbs 3:12** “for the Lord disciplines the one he loves, just as a father disciplines the son in whom he delights.”
- b. Remember that disobeying your parents is a sin against God, and when you sin against God, He will discipline you to get you back in line. Obey your parents to avoid God’s discipline.

5. To avoid parental discipline.

- a. **Proverbs 13:24** “The one who will not use the rod hates his son, but the one who loves him disciplines him diligently.”
- b. God commands your parents to discipline you, even with physical punishment, when necessary. If your parents love you, and if they are good parents, then they will discipline you. And it ought to be painful. So for your own benefit, don’t disobey your parents.
- c. When I was in the fifth grade my parents caught me smoking cigarettes with the kids down the street. My dad told me, “Andy, I’m not going to spank you this time, but if I ever catch you smoking again, you are going to get the biggest spanking of your life.” So I never smoked again!

6. To be a good witness.

- a. **Matthew 5:16** “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”
- b. God has called you to be his witness to the lost world around you. When you call yourself a Christian and disobey your parents, it turns people away from Jesus. But when you obey and honor your parents, with your words and your actions, your lost friends will see that there is something special about you, and they will respect you more.

7. To learn submission.

- viii. To submit is to follow the authority of another person. To obey. You will have to submit all through life. If you are a woman, you will have to submit to your husband. You will have to submit to your boss at work. You will have to submit to the government by obeying the law. You will have to submit to the pastor of your church. You have to submit to God. If you want to be happy and successful in life, then you must learn to get along with and submit to authority. Where do you learn this? From your parents.
- ix. **John MacArthur** “When God first introduced His written law in the form of the Ten Commandments, the first law relating to human relationships was, ‘Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you’ (Ex 20:12) – and this is the law Paul reiterates in this text. It is the only commandment of the ten that relates to the family, because that one principle alone, when obeyed, is enough to secure the right relationship behind all right human relationships in society. A person who grows up with a sense of respect for and obedience to his parents will have the foundation for respecting the authority of other leaders and the rights of other people in general.”

8. To show love to your parents.

- x. It is cruel to rebel against your parents. Notice what a rebellious child does to his parents.
- xi. **Proverbs 10:1** “Solomon’s proverbs: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son, heartache to his mother.”
- xii. **Proverbs 17:21** “A man fathers a fool to his own sorrow; the father of a fool has no joy.”

- xiii. **Proverbs 17:25** "A foolish son is grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him."
- xiv. **Proverbs 19:13** "A foolish son is his father's ruin"
- xv. **Proverbs 23:24** "The father of a righteous son will rejoice greatly, and one who fathers a wise son will delight in him."
- xvi. I know you love your parents. If you want to show them love, to take care of them, to repay their kindness, then obey them.

9. To be like Christ.

- a. **Luke 2:51-52** "Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people."
- b. Even Jesus obeyed His parents. He was smarter, wiser, and more godly than them. He knew the Bible better. He knew God better. He created Mary and Joseph. But even Jesus obeyed His parents.

VI. CONCLUSION

1. Let me close with some good news. You don't have to obey your parents for the rest of your life. When you grow up and move out of the house on your own, then you don't have to obey your parents (but you still have to honor them). From the time you are born until you turn eight, you only have to obey your parents 268 months. When you think about it like that, it's not very long. But your choices as a kid will impact the rest of your life. If you choose a life of obedience and honor, then you will be blessed for it the rest of your life. But if you choose a life of rebellion and disrespect, then you will suffer the consequences for the rest of your life.
2. **JC Ryle** "what young men will be, in all probability, depends on what they are now, and they seem to forget this. Youth is the seedtime of full age, the molding season in the little space of human life, the turning point in the history of a man's mind. By the shoot, we judge of the tree; by the blossoms, we judge of the fruit; by the spring, we judge of the harvest; by the morning, we judge of the day; and by the character of the young man, we may generally judge what he will be when he grows up."
3. The child who obeys, will become the adult who succeeds. The child who rebels will become the adult who struggles.

VII. INVITATION

1. Everyone has been disobedient to their parents. And that is a sin. The punishment for sin is hell. That is what you deserve. But God sent Jesus to die on the cross for your sins so that you can be forgiven and have eternal life. But to receive eternal life you must turn to Jesus. Believe in Him, and commit yourself to living according to His will.