

CHILDREN AS GROWNUPS

WILLIS 10/30/11

Ep6:1-9

We are continuing our series in the Book of Ephesians this morning, but before we go there I wanted to remind us of another one of those seemingly impossible expectations for which Jesus gives us extraordinary provision.

- Ps144:12 says, “Let our sons in their youth be as grown up plants and our daughters as pillars fashioned as for a palace.” The timing of this verse is what makes the expectation so impossible.
- The Psalmist says, **In their youth, we can expect our children to be as grownups.** Natural reasoning would say to act like a grownup you must first be a grownup. But the Psalmist says the children of the redeemed don’t have to grow up to be like grownups.
- But...**Won’t children be children? Apparently not if parents will be parents. If parents will parent Biblically apparently our children will be like grownups while still in their youth.**
- Unfortunately the Psalmist never tells us how. However as we read the rest of the Bible we are given some pretty important clues as to how this impossible expectation is met with an extraordinary provision...our text in Ephesians is exactly that...

Ep6:1-9 Not wanting to be redundant let me remind you that Ep6:1 is a continuation of Ep5:1 where Paul exhorted us to “Be imitator’s of God.” Now 34 verses later he is still explaining how that imitation is to be done.

- Having dealt with believers in general, Paul went on to speak of the wives expectation of imitation, he then spoke of how the husband was to imitate, now he breaks it down on behalf of the children, the fathers, the master’s and the slave.

He begins with an exhortation directed to the children. He says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord...” then what seems like a redundancy he says “Honor your father and mother.” Let me explain 2 possible explanations for what seems like Paul repeating himself:

1. **“Parents in the Lord” refer to spiritual parents in the faith:** As Paul said to the Corinthians “You have many guardians but not many fathers; I became your father

through the gospel.” Paul is exhorting us to obey the spiritual fathers and mothers in the Lord God has put in our lives...because it is the right thing to do.

2. Honor your father and mother was a validation of the mother’s right to honor: In the culture to which Paul wrote the father held all power and was the only position to reckon with. Christianity comes on the scene to not only validate the role of the woman and the wife but also to authorize the position of the mother. **To imitate God we must honor Father and Mother and when we do it goes well for us and we will live long.** Not only do we grow up early but we live well and live long.

- Please note there is no age restriction put on the command. I say command because this is a command that takes us all the way to the original 10. Command #5 was “Honor your father and mother that your days may be prolonged...”
- **Obedience and honor of our parents are not virtues that stop at 12 or 18. Though they change in expectation and application...in principle they are ageless.** (With obvious qualifications and specific limitations)
- IKings2:2-3 Though Solomon is King, David is still parenting and Solomon is still honoring. Though parents must recognize the limitation of their sphere, obedience and honor are virtues that come with a promise of success and longevity of life.

In v.4 Paul underscores what Father’s must do to work out their imitation. He say’s “Father’s do not provoke your children to anger.”

- In light of v.2 perhaps Mother’s are implied but by way of specific mention it is evident Paul is placing the primary responsibility on the Father to lead not the Mother
- **By not provoking Paul means, do not anger, irritate, discourage, embitter or exasperate.** Being our primary responsibility is that of imitating the Fatherhood of God any action that doesn’t imitate God is a misrepresentation of our position.
- **Fathers provoke their children through overprotection, withheld affection, religious demand, rejection, ambition, hypocrisy, performance love without the giving of heart.**
- Provocation robs a child of life and prevents them the premature growth promised in Ps144.

Instead Paul say’s “We are to bring our children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” As you have heard Marc teach, the “discipline and instruction of the Lord” has to do with this Greek word “Paideia.”

- **To imitate God is to step into the depth of God in whatever area we happen to be imitating Him in.** This is a fact especially true in raising our children up in the way they should go.
- The Paideia of God has to do with the way of God. **One of the most important ways fathers will ever imitate God is to bring their children up in the way of the Lord.**
- Paideia: An entire system of education. The paideia is the way of forming, shaping and molding our children through a cultural saturation in Kingdom citizenship, self government, character development, calling enrichment and Christlike deployment.
- Paideia is a God defined process for the making of the whole man...spirit, soul and body not just the educating of the academic man. **Paideia is how you get children in their youth being as grown up plants.**
- Paideia is so much more than public or Christian school. You can't do paideia in public school but you couldn't do it in so many of our Christian schools either. **It takes a father and a mother together with the supply of the Covenant Community to do paideia.**
- It takes a father to be the driving force to make sure it happens. And when father, mother and covenant community work together...our children in their youth will be as grown up plants.

Our text ends with a very interesting discussion about the relationship of master and slave. It is quite obvious the slave/master relationship in the Bible was quite different than how we would define slave/master from the south...what we know of slave/master the Bible in no way supports.

- Being that slavery is in no way something we are trying to support, let me jump to the bigger picture so we can glean a present day application.
- The fact of the matter is we all have some kind of authorities over us. According to Rm13:1-7 all authority is from God. One of the ways God exercises His authority is through the faculty of delegation.
- Paul's point in v.5 and following is **how we related to delegation is how we related to God.** Matthew Henry said, **"Service performed with conscience and from a regard for God though it may be to unrighteous masters, will be accounted by Christ as service done to Himself."** All our serving is to be "as to the Lord" not to man.
- At the end of the day it is the Queen Esther spirit that is remembered and celebrated not the Johnny Paycheck spirit that says "You can take this job and shove it cause I ain't workin here no more."

The take home for us in 2011 is not the right and wrong of slave and master (that is clearly wrong) the take home for us is doing the will of God from the heart. **Many buy into part A of v. 6 “not being performers or men pleasers” but they stop short of part B “doing the will of God from the heart.”**

- No one wants performance for the sake of pleasing man, but the answer to performance is not self indulgence in the name of not wanting to do it for man. The answer Paul says is doing the will of God from the heart...obeying and honoring “because it is right.”

When the imitation of God is done from the heart...we can fully expect us and our children to be in our youth as grown up plants.

If you are here today sideways with your parents, get it resolved now, it will not go well with you until you do.

If you are here sideways with one of God’s delegated authorities in your life...get that right ASAP