

When I was a little kid and my dad was at his first church, I had a Big Wheel. The church sat at a top a mill hill and the parsonage was just across the parking lot from the church. There were only a couple of other houses on top of the hill and their driveways were on the other side of the parking lot. So our driveway spilled out into this large parking lot.

Oh, how I longed to take my Big Wheel out into that parking lot and just cut loose. I could see myself building up an insane amount of speed and then pulling up the brake as I turned the big wheel and doing a 180°. But I couldn't.

My mother had given me very specific instructions. I was not to take my Big Wheel on adventures that lie beyond the big crack that ran across the driveway.

To this day, my mom tells the story of how she would watch me pull my Big Wheel up to that line, the edge of the wheel resting on the crack, a longing look in my eyes. And then I would turn around to see if she was watching or if anyone would notice if I disobeyed. She has told me that she could see the war that was being waged inside my little head and heart.

"The parking lot has been empty all day. No one has driven through here. It'll be safe. I can just dart out there and do one killer 180°. No one will know. Should I obey my mother or should I disobey in the thirst for adventure?"

I was only 4 or 5. But I was already struggling with obeying my parents or fulfilling my own desires. And I continued to struggle with it.

The Bible simplifies the matter so that while there may continue to be a struggle, that struggle doesn't include knowing what is right and what is pleasing to the Lord.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Col. 3:20; Eph. 6:1-3

I. Children Obey

A. Inclusion of Children

1. Assumption that children would be present
 - a. Part of the Christian family
2. Specific attention given to children
 - a. Priority is given to the subordinate group
 - i. Wives before husbands
 - 1) Eph. 5:22-31; Col. 3:18-19
 - ii. Slaves before masters
 - 1) Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:20-21
 - iii. Children before parents
 - 1) Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:22

B. Instruction to Children

1. Obey your parents
 - a. Obey
 - i. Obedience which springs from a sense of duty toward, and dependence upon parents
 - ii. Involves:
 - 1) Hearing
 - 2) Understanding
 - 3) Responding
 - iii. Present tense indicates habitual or ongoing continuous action
 - b. Your parents

- i. Both of them
 - 2. In everything
 - a. Everything
 - i. Parental authority is based upon God's created order not the character of the parents
 - b. Exception
 - i. Command is immoral or illegal
 - 1) Acts 5:29
 - 3. In the Lord
 - a. You are to obey your parents as you would obey the Lord
 - i. When you disobey your parents, not only are you disobeying God, you are also actively questioning his wisdom and his authority
 - b. It is an act of worship
- C. Encouragement for Children
- 1. This is right => this is pleasing to the Lord
 - a. The Lord has clearly commanded obedience
 - b. Obedience is the right response
 - c. When we respond rightly to God's commands we are living righteously and thereby pleasing God
 - 2. Quality of Life
 - a. It may go well with you
 - i. Mutual love
 - ii. Harmony
 - iii. Peace
 - 3. Quantity of Life
 - a. Your days may be long
 - i. The full measure God intends

Parents, you do not get off scott free today. The Bible is very clear on our responsibility to the children whom God has entrusted to us. We cannot be lazy. We are not to exasperate or provoke our children to anger. We are to instruct them and teach them. And nothing is more disobedient to both of those commands than punishing our children for disobedience or improper behavior. We are not instructed to punish our children but to discipline them. The difference between punishment and discipline is instruction.

Taking away privileges when they disobey is punishment. It is Pavlovian. We are being lazy. We are assuming that a continued removal of television, cell phones, internet, and other such things will condition our children to behave properly. The problem is that we are assuming that they know how to behave properly and what we expect from them. We are much better served spending time with them and talking them through the situation so that they understand where they erred and how they can better honor God the next time a similar situation arises. The removal of privileges to drive home the point is fine, but without the instruction it is an ungodly abuse of our God given authority and power.

So whether you are a child or a parent, our time of invitation this morning is intended to give you the opportunity to come before the Lord and confess: disobedient behavior, a rebellious attitude toward your parents, a lackadaisical or lazy approach to instructing your children, or exasperating them.