

Preeminent.

Christ's Place in Your Walk

WEEK 14

Everything

COLOSSIANS 3:20-21

EPHESIANS 6:1-2



These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deut. 6:6-9, NIV)

According to Paul's letter to the Colossians, children are obligated to obey "everything" their parents command, but what does that entail? What does the Bible say parents' duties are with regard to their children? Yes, there are certain commands and laws a child needs to obey simply in order for a family to function in a healthy manner. Clean your room, eat your vegetables, don't run in the street, stop juggling knives. . . . These are all necessary and important boundaries we must teach our children to obey. However, as parents, we have also been given the significant and awe-inspiring authority and responsibility to shape the spiritual lives of our children.

Parents are instructed by God to impress the commands of God on their children. Not just once a week by dragging them to church, but constantly, at all times. There are opportunities for shaping and forming our children to know and love God every minute of every day. When we're driving them to school, when we're eating dinner together, when we're waiting for a sibling to get done with soccer practice, when we spend all day at a baseball game, or even when we watch a movie together as a family.

On the one hand, this is overwhelming – why would God put me in charge of the spiritual well-being of a child, when I struggle just to keep my own spiritual life afloat and headed in the right direction? On the other hand, this is liberating – when we see all of life as a classroom for teaching our children about God, it removes the burden of trying to lump all spiritual instruction into a single "deep conversation" or special class or event.

However, perhaps most significantly of all, God has not abandoned us in this process. Sometimes people joke about the fact that children don't come with an instruction manual, and in one sense that is true. But God has actually given a vast amount of direction in the Bible. Pretty much everything we could need to know about how to raise our children to be healthy, loving, obedient worshippers of God living meaningful and significant lives in whatever career they choose can be found in the Bible.

Not only that, but God has also given us His Spirit – the Guide and Counselor who never leaves us and provides us strength, wisdom, direction and leading in everything we do.

Children are to obey their parents in “everything.” So where are you going to lead them?¹



OPEN IT

1. Which TV sitcom family below best describes your experience growing up? Why?

The Bradys (The Brady Bunch), The Huxtables (The Cosby Show), The Bunkers (All in the Family), The Barones (Everybody Loves Raymond), The Ewings (Dallas), The Cleavers (Leave It to Beaver), The Addamses (The Addams Family), The Waltons (The Waltons), The Andersons (Father Knows Best), The Bellamys (Upstairs, Downstairs), The Bradfords (Eight Is Enough), The Bundys (Married...With Children), The Carringtons (Dynasty), The Clampetts (The Beverly Hillbillies), The Crawleys (Downton Abbey), The Cunninghams (Happy Days), The Douglases (My Three Sons), The Evanses (Good Times), The Flintstones (The Flintstones), The Heffernans (The King of Queens), The Ingallses (Little House on the Prairie), The Jeffersons (The Jeffersons), The Keatons (Family Ties), The Nelsons (The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet), The Partridges (The Partridge Family), The Ricardos (I Love Lucy), The Sanfords (Sanford and Son), The Simpsons (The Simpsons), The Taylors (The Andy Griffith Show), The Winslows (Family Matters)

READ IT | Colossians 3:20-21; Ephesians 6:1-2

¹ Jonathan Ziman, *That You May Know How to Answer Everyone*, Wheaton Bible Church, www.goo.gl/cfxdsD, (Jan. 25, 2013)



EXPLORE IT

2. In what ways are children called to obey their parents?
3. What reason does Paul give that should motivate children to obey?
4. What are fathers called not to do?
5. What can happen if fathers fail in their calling?

GET IT

6. In Colossians 3:20, Paul addresses the children that were present within the Colossae church. What truths regarding children can we deduce from this fact?

How should this affect our present ministry to kids in our own church today?

*In the ancient world children were very much under the domination of their parents. The supreme example was the **Roman Patria Potestas**, "the law of the father's power," which granted the parent the right to do anything he liked with his child – the parent could sell the child into slavery, could make him work like a laborer on his farm and even had the right to condemn his child to death and to carry out the execution! In short he was a legalistic dictator! Some modern dads do an excellent imitation of "Roman Patria Potestas!" Such is the perspective of the unbelieving, depraved mind when the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has not delivered a pagan father! In pagan society, all the privileges and rights belonged to the parent and all the duties to the child.²*

7. While most parents would not be guilty of parenting the "ancient Roman way," in what ways do parents use their children as a means to an end – or how do parents meet their own needs through their children?

The idea of "obey" (gk. hupakouo) is that one is under the authority of another and thus conveys the meanings of a calling for compliance (disposition to yield to another) with the demands or requests of another. Submitting to that which is heard involves a change of attitude, forsaking the tendency of the fallen nature to rebel against parental or Divine instructions and commands and seeking God's will, not self will. "All things" means no exceptions. . . . The principle involved in his admonition is that children are not the judges of what they should or should not obey in parental precepts.³

8. Describe your current relationship with your parents. Do you have a track record of honor, respect, and obedience to your parents?

Would you be pleased with your children if they treat you like you treated your parents?

Will you be pleased with your children in 20 years if they treat you like you currently treat your parents?

² http://preceptaustin.org/colossians_320-25.htm#3:20 & William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series - Colossians*, The Westminster Press, 1975

³ http://preceptaustin.org/colossians_320-25.htm#3:20 & John Eadie, *A commentary on the Greek text of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians*, T. & T. Clark, 1884

9. In what way does obedience prepare a child for everyday life in the future?

For spiritual life in the future?

A child's obedience pleases our Lord Jesus, the One who is appointed to exercise absolute ownership and supreme authority in every believer's life (both Christian parents and children). The way children obey their parents' authority reflects their obedience to Jesus and ultimately represents submission/acceptance of God's design for familial order.⁴

10. How can Paul's words about the result of a child's obedience help him to endure a difficult upbringing or ongoing tension between him and his parents?

***"Fathers"** is placed first in the Greek for emphatic effect! This should get every father's attention! Fathers are spoken to since training is their duty, and because this peculiar sin which the apostle condemns is one to which they, and not mothers, are peculiarly liable. . . . Our English word **exasperate** means to make resentful, to cause annoyance, to irritate to a high degree, to provoke to anger, to rouse to rage, to inflame to an extreme degree, to irritate intensely, to infuriate. To cause (an unpleasant feeling or condition) to worsen or be aggravated. Exasperate suggests galling annoyance and the arousing of extreme impatience. Exasperate is used as an adjective in botany to describe something having a rough prickly surface because of the presence of hard projecting points.⁵*

11. What is it about the role of fathers that makes them susceptible to this unique parenting problem?

12. In what ways might a child become discouraged due to an overbearing parent?

13. How does lackadaisical parenting impact the child? How does it impact the family? Society?

⁴ http://preceptaustin.org/colossians_320-25.htm#3:20

⁵ http://preceptaustin.org/colossians_320-25.htm#3:20 & John Eadie, *A commentary on the Greek text of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians*, T. & T. Clark, 1884

John MacArthur lists nine ways we can bring harm to children.⁶

- (1) **Overprotection**
- (2) **By showing favoritism**
- (3) **By depreciating their worth**
- (4) **By setting unrealistic goals**
- (5) **By failing to show affection**
- (6) **By not providing for their legitimate needs**
- (7) **By lack of standards**
- (8) **By destructive criticism**
- (9) **By neglect**

14. Take a moment and think about how each of these can cause harm to the family. Draw a circle around the two that you struggle with the most.

What causes these struggles?

What practical steps can you take to address these shortcomings?

15. At the beginning of Chapter 3, Paul speaks of living life with a “heavenly” mindset or an “earthly” mindset. How does parenting from an “earthly” mindset differ from parenting from a “heavenly” one?

16. How does the role of parenting change as children get older? How does parenting become easier? Harder?

17. What is the role of grandparents when it comes to raising children?

⁶ John MacArthur; *Colossians and Philemon MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Chicago:Moody Press, 1992

What tendencies of grandparents can undermine the role of mom and dad?

In what ways can they uniquely bless the family through their actions?

18. What are two areas for which you could use prayer when it comes to your family life? Take some time to pray as a group for some of these concerns.