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*On this week's episode of Chosen and Cherished, we talked about something that I hear a lot, but have such a hard time fully comprehending... We are One Body in Christ. What does that mean and how does that impact the way we live. If you'd like to listen to the podcast, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>*

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*Ephesians 6:1-4, Deuteronomy 6:4-7*

*As I look at these passages, my first thought is, "I'm a grandmother. My kids are grown. Do I need to study this?" The answer is first... absolutely yes... and second... I'm a lot more than a grandmother. First, I'm a child of God! I need to apply this to my own relationship with Him. It is no coincidence that the two most intimate relationships that exist are parent-child and husband-wife. Why would God do that? So that I can understand HIM as my Father with me as His child. And so that I can understand Jesus as the groom with me as part of His bride. Also, I'm a mom. My kids are grown, but I still have the privilege of being in relationship with them. I no longer tell them what to do, but I can support them, pray for them, encourage them, and even give biblical guidance to them when they ask for it. I'm also still a daughter with biological parents. Though I'm grown, I'm still called to honor my parents until the Lord takes me home. With that in mind, what can I learn and apply from these passages?*

*Ephesians 6:1-4 ~*

*Vs. 1-3 ~ "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.'"*

*Children... offspring...*

*Obey your parents... listen attentively in order to heed their command since they have authority over you*

*In the Lord... this is a MASSIVE part. Obey them and listen to them IN THE LORD. The reason a child is called to obey a parent is first out of obedience to Jesus Christ our Master. That has several implications.*

*First, if a parent isn't leading in a God honoring way, but isn't inciting the child to sin, the child still needs to obey... yes, honoring the parent, but even more so, honoring Jesus. I will know that I'm truly honoring the Lord when another person's wrong behavior toward me doesn't change, and I still honor that person. I'm not doing it for the person's glory, but for the glory of the Lord. I can trust that He sees all. He knows all. And if a parent is not treating the child well, God is not good with it. In Mark 9:42 Jesus says, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea."*

*Second, to obey parents IN THE LORD means that if they're telling the child to do something that goes against what the Lord's word says, the child must NOT obey. If a parent tells a child to lie, the answer is no. If a parent tells a child that he must hate someone and be rude to that person or cut that person out of his life, the answer is no... respectfully, no.*

*Then the call is taken from the 10 commandments in Exodus 20. Children, honor your father and mother. This is a big deal. As a child, obedience can be done WITH honor or WITHOUT honor. A child may obey but complain the whole time or talk badly about the parent. But whether we're an adult or a child, we're called to honor our parents... to show them respect... to value them. Ohhhhh... I'm very convicted. I have not always shown my parents respect. O Lord, please forgive me!!!*

*I could try to ignore the rest of this section... "that it may go well with you..." and say that it's from the Old Testament, so maybe this doesn't apply. But... Paul repeats it in the New Testament, so I can't ignore it. There IS blessing in obediently honoring our parents. How cool of God... to know that little kids are gonna think, "What's in it for me?" And so He encourages us with a promise of blessing.*

*Then the attention is turned to the fathers in vs. 4, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*

*Why does this only refer to fathers? Culturally and biblically, the responsibility of leadership in the home is on the father. Children ARE called to obey BOTH parents, though, and the wife partners with her husband in raising the kids. But ultimately, the father stands before God responsible for how well he leads. YIKES!!!*

*Well... how is the father (and in partnership and support, the mother) supposed to raise his kids? First, he is told not to provoke them to anger... either by enabling them in their sin OR by crushing their spirits with harsh treatment. Both being too permissive AND being too harsh are bad for the child's soul.*

*If I'm not to be too permissive, and I'm not to be too harsh, how AM I to be? Thankfully, we're given the answer right away... bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

*To "bring them up" is to nourish and feed them, to raise them to maturity. Wow. Let me not forget... This is how God raises me as HIS daughter through Jesus. He's so tender!!! So kind!!! So protective!!! It's about giving me, not just what will make me feel good in the moment... like letting my whole diet be ice cream so that I'm happily malnourished until I'm so sick that I need lots of help. It's about giving me everything I need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Isaiah 55 says it's about listening diligently to Him and eating what is good and delighting in RICH FOOD. That's how the parent is to raise the child. That takes a lot of love and intentionality and selflessness.*

*Bring them up in the discipline of the Lord. The word for discipline means "instruction, correction, training." It's understanding that they need lots of practice. I can't just say something once and think they've got it. It will be training... do it like this. And it will be correction... not like this.*

*Bring them up in the instruction of the Lord. The word for instruction means "warning, encouraging." It's recognizing that sometimes they need to be warned, "This direction you're headed is not good." Sometimes they need to be encouraged, "I'm right here with you. I will help you. You can do it." Truly, these sound like two opposing words, but at the core, it's the same thing. It's caring so much for them that you want the absolute best for them.*

*Just like the motivation given for the child's obedience is from three words, "IN THE LORD", this verse gives those same three words for the parent, "IN THE LORD." This is so important. My job as a parent when my kids were growing up was NOT to teach them obedience to me in order to make my life easier and more comfortable. I am not the standard of behavior. My job was to help them learn to obey me ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD, so that they would be so familiar with HIM that they would grow up to choose obedience to HIM.*

*My job is to authentically model Jesus to them as I first obediently honor Him in true relationship, and then to help them transfer their dependence on me to a dependence on the Lord.*

*How do I do that??? Deuteronomy 6:4-7 is going to give me some insight.*

*Vs. 4 ~ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD Yahweh our God, the LORD is one."*

*What does this mean? It means, "I, Jonna, am NOT in charge." I answer to the Lord... Father, Son, Holy Spirit. He has all authority. He's in charge. So I raise my kids with the understanding that it's His will, His way. No ifs, buts or limits. That changes things!!!*

*Vs. 5 ~ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all*

*your might."*

*This command is called "the greatest commandment." What part of me is free NOT to love the Lord? What is left if every part of my heart is His, every part of my soul is His, and all of my strength is His? Pretty much nothing.*

*Throughout the Old Testament, the Hebrew word used to describe God's love is "chesed", which means "covenant loyalty love." His love for us is immeasurable, unconditional, unchanging, and eternal. That's not the word used here. The call for me to love Him with all I've got is the Hebrew word, "ahab", which means "friend, intimate affection for, beloved". Wow. It's so tender.*

*There is only one way to obey a command like that. Get closer to Him. The more I spend time with Him, seeking Him, knowing Him, the more this kind of love grows. And just in case I'm wondering, there are OT scriptures that say He loves me like this, too. That's just beautiful.*

*Vs. 6 ~ "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart."*

*Why does Moses (author) speak on God's behalf to tell us that the commands need to be on our hearts? The heart is the control center of my feelings, desires, and choices. The mind takes in the information and processes it, but the heart decides what to do with it. How many times have I declared in my MIND that I would or would not do something, only to have my heart override it and do the very opposite of what I said? God wants my HEART to be in on the plan.*

*Vs. 7 ~ "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."*

*If my heart is in on the plan of obedience to the Lord because I love Him and He's in charge, I will absolutely want to teach all of this to my kids. Why would I want to withhold so much good from them???*

*I will always be diligent to teach what I truly believe in. How many kids love the same football team that their parents do? How many kids follow a similar career path? Without even trying, when a parent is intensely passionate about something, he will model that to his kids and his kids will most likely follow.*

*Am I passionate about the Lord???* O Lord, please make it so!!! This is not about saying, "Okay... we're gonna do devotions every night and you kids are gonna listen and learn!" Devotions are not bad or wrong. But it's so much more than that!!! It's about making Jesus part of our whole lives... whether we're walking or talking or sitting or doing anything. We don't just set aside time for Jesus. We LIVE for Jesus. Why? Because He's so worth living for!!!

*Father, first and foremost, please help me to see Your love for me, the way You gently and tenderly parent me. And help me to make You the center of my life and my only passion. Help*

*me to honor You first and do EVERYTHING in the name of the Lord... genuinely, not just with my words. Thank You that You don't love just with words, but with tender affection and care. Help me to do the same even with my grown children and with my sweet grandchildren. And help me not to forget to honor my parents IN THE LORD. Amen.*