

## **Ephesians 6:1-4**

### Introduction

- I. Eph 1-3: the gospel that we can have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ
- II. Eph 4-6: how can the church present that gospel in the world through it's relationships and actions

### Passage

#### I. Paul's words to children (v. 1-3)

- A. Notice that children are the people Paul is speaking to
  - 1. Paul addresses children themselves, assuming they will be present when his letter is read.
  - 2. That means children are a crucial part of the congregation
  - 3. Children are not just the future of the church. They are the church right now.
- B. Children's behavior is really important to Paul
  - 1. "Obey your parents": simply put, this means that children are to do what their parents tell them to do.
  - 2. Parents need to hear this: in a culture that is getting lax on discipline, parents need to apply "disciplinary action" when their children openly defy their clear commands.
  - 3. They need to do this "for the Lord's sake." When we appropriately discipline our children, we model the importance of obeying God's commands.

#### II. Paul's words to fathers/parents (v. 4)

- A. Notice that fathers are the people Paul is speaking to
  - 1. Many Father's have assumed their role is to bring home the bacon and the wife's role is to raise the children, but clearly fathers have a particular responsibility for the spiritual upbringing of their children.
  - 2. This role does not end when their children turn 19 (even though it changes)
- B. Negative command: "Don't exasperate your children"
  - 1. Exasperate means to provoke to anger and jealousy (see Romans 10:19)
  - 2. What do we do that causes jealousy in our children
    - a. When we show favoritism to one child over another
      - 1) look at your calendar: do you spend equal time with your kids?
      - 2) pay attention to how you speak to each of your kids
    - b. When we love our work more then our children
      - this is a huge danger: finding our identity and worth in our work
    - c. When we give ourselves over to sports and entertainment
- C. Positive command: "Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord"
  - 1. Does not say that we are responsible to save our children
  - 2. Rather, to help our children live a life that is pleasing to God and to keep them from lives that are not pleasing to God
  - 3. How do we do this? (See Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

- a. Be an example to your children of a godly life
  - Don't watch too much tv, don't swear, don't scream, etc
  - Do pray, read Bible, be kind, give generously
  - Dt 6:6: "these commandments are to be on your hearts"
- b. In the every day living of life with your kids, connect the Bible to their everyday experience (Dt 6:7-9).
- c. Give your children a chance to respond to God (opportunities to serve)

### Conclusion

I. The cultural danger: that we mix a little Christianity with the pursuit of the American Dream: prestigious schools, perfect grades, great clothes, best athletes, high paying jobs, etc

II. Instead: we're called to help them embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ so that they can show the world what a reconciled life looks like "for Christ's sake."

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. The first point made on Sunday was that Paul was addressing the children directly as part of the congregation. The statement was made that "children are not just the future of the church. They are the church right now." What would it look like for a local church to make the children more central and to integrate them into the life of the church as a whole?
3. In discussion that children are to obey their parents, it was argued that, simply put, this means that children are to do what their parents tell them to do. What are your observations/reactions to this simple idea in your own parenting and others' parenting?
4. For those of you with children out of high school, how do you understand your role in "raising them up in the Lord" at this stage in your parenting? What does that look like specifically for you?
5. Of the three examples of how we can exasperate your children, which was most convicting to you and why?
6. Of the three examples of how we can raise our children up in the Lord, which would you like to work on most at this time in your parenting?
7. How have you fallen into the danger of raising your children up in success, prestige, image, etc rather than raising them in the instruction of the Lord?