

What God Wants Every Child to Know

Blueprint: God's Design for the Family

Ephesians 6:

Wow, Mickey whispered when he was coming around, he said, "This is like Easter this morning!" I appreciate all of you being here. We really appreciate all of our children. Many of our children are with us this morning at our 9:15 worship service because we are studying the book of Ephesians. We're in a mini-series on the family that we started several weeks ago. We talked about the husband, we talked about the wife, and then last week I addressed parents and their parenting skills. This morning I get to talk to the children of our church. If you're a child this morning, still living at home under the authority of your parents, this message is for you. You may be a preschooler, you may be in elementary school, you may be in kindergarten, you may be in middle school, high school, college, you may be fifty years of age still living at home; this message is for you. But here's what I would like to do this morning, if you're a middle school child or under, would you come up here on the stage with Bro Ricky? Just come right over here, come on, come on up. Now, if you did not get a handout this morning as a family for your child, would you raise your hand as a parent because Mrs. Abbey has more sheets? We would like for every child living at home this morning to have one of these sheets. Usually we don't get to see all of our kids because they are normally in First Fruits Farm, but what a blessing we have this morning.

(Addressing kids sitting onstage)

Hey kids, I have a question for you this morning. Has anyone ever told you to go tell someone else something for them? For example, maybe it's your mom. You dad is doing something, mom's been doing something, and mom now says, "Hey, would you go tell dad to stop mowing the yard."

Supper is ready and I need him to come to the table right now so we can eat." Have any of you ever had anything like that happen before, where you got to go tell someone else something that someone else told you to tell someone else? Alright, everybody has; good, hands down. Now, I'm sure that when you went and told your dad what your mom said for him to do, quit mowing the yard and come to supper, I'm sure dad immediately turned off the mower and came in to eat supper. Now here's my question, did dad do that because you, the child, told your dad what to do, or did your dad do that simply because you were telling him what mom said for him to do? That's the way it was, right? Dad didn't listen to you because you told him, but you had authority, and dad listened to you because dad knew you weren't speaking on your own behalf; you were speaking on somebody else's behalf, your mom's, his wife.

Now this is really important, this morning I've asked all of you to be here. I've asked your parents to bring you into the worship service because I've got some really, really good news. Somebody else wants me to tell you what they want you to do. See, I'm Bro Ricky, I'm the pastor of the church, and each week this church lets me study the Word of God, the Bible, all week long because God speaks to us from the Bible. God's got a message this morning for all of us children, and guess who He has chosen to get to tell you His message? That's me. So this morning, you are going to hear me talking to you and I'm going to tell you some stuff that you need to do, but I want you to remember that Bro Ricky is just telling you what God is telling me to tell you to do. Does that make sense? So I want you to listen, but I don't want you to listen and do this because Bro Ricky told you. No, I want you to do it because God is telling you to do it, and Bro Ricky just gets to deliver the message.

Now, we've provided sheets, and some of you can't read and write yet, and that's cool, but I've made a handout that's got some blanks. While I'm teaching this morning, we're going to stop and fill this out together. What you will learn is when you learn to obey what people in authority tell you to do, usually, something really good happens in your life, because people in authority want what's best for you. So we're going to show you how this works. If everybody will fill this out while Bro Ricky's preaching, or if you

can't read and write, let mom, dad, or grandparents fill it out, but make sure you watch them write the letters. Then if you will take it over to the wagon in the foyer of First Fruits Farm, we've got a little blessing, a reward, something we want to give you for listening and doing what Bro Ricky wanted you to do this morning, but it's really not Bro Ricky wanting you to do this. Who is wanting you to do this? God does. So is everybody ready to listen to God? Alright, let's go back to our seats, get our sheet, our pencil, and we are going to listen to what God wants you to know this morning.

Now, when you get back to your seat, I want you to notice the first line says, "God wants Bro Ricky to tell _____"; I want you to write me in that blank. If you're a high school or college student still living at home and want one of these too, we'll give you one too. We don't want anyone to feel left out, amen! Now the rest of the sentence continues, "...what He (talking about God) wants me (talking about you) to do." Let's give our children just a few minutes to fill in those two blanks. Adults, let's open our bibles to Ephesians chapter 6 and keep them open there. All children still living under the authority of your parents, wave at Bro Ricky; I want you to turn to your parents, your grandparents, or the adult who is in charge of you this morning and say, "God wants Bro Ricky to tell me what He wants me to do." I hope you're excited this morning because God has a message for all of our children this morning. Let's stand together and open our bibles to Ephesians 6. We're going to be looking at the first three verses. To all the children here this morning, last week I talked to your mom and dad about how to rear you in the way of the Lord. Now this is your opportunity this morning to listen to what God wants you to know. Look at what the Bible says.

Scripture

"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."

(Prayer)

Father, thank you for this opportunity to gather in Your house and share with Your children, who are still living at home with their parents, what You want every child to know. Father, I pray that these children will not only be examples to their brothers and sisters, but when they are at a friend's house, when they're running around and see their friends not doing what you want the friend to do, I pray that we would be a really good friend and say God wants you to obey your parents. He wants you to honor your father and your mother. Because Father, there is just a blessing that comes to children who understand the wisdom that their parents have in the key areas of their life while they are at home. Thank you Father for this opportunity to address our children and it's in Your Son's name we pray, amen.

Wave your sheet at me, children. Let me see your sheets. Do you have a pencil or pen? I'm expecting to see a lot of writing going on this morning, ok? Moms and dads don't go to sleep on me this morning. I need you reinforcing what God wants me to tell all of our children this morning. Notice the first word, "children." This word, child, literally means someone who is still living at home under the authority of their parents. So if you're still living at home under the authority of your parents, this message is for you. God wants me to tell you what He wants you to do. Here's what God wants you to know, it is the second sentence, "God wants children to obey their parents. God wants you, as a child, to obey your parents. Now, that's not a real big word, just o-b-e-y. I want every child to look at your mom, dad, or grandparents and say, "God wants me to obey you." Children, listen, in our English language, this is a little bitty word, just four letters. But in the Greek language that Paul wrote in, it is a big word. It's a compound word, where you take two words and put them together to form a new word. The two words that Paul put together that translate the thought of obey means 'to live under, to be under,' so you bring yourself under someone's authority. What the Bible is saying here is your parents are the authority in your life if you are still living at home, and you're

supposed to bring yourself under their authority in order for you 'to hear and listen' to what they say. Does that make sense?

Now here's what happens in our homes sometimes. If you've got a two story home, or you've got the children's room or the play room in another area of the house, away from where you are, sometimes the parents will tell the children to do something, like, "Stop playing and come to dinner; stop playing and brush our teeth and get ready for bed; I need you to get off the phone because I need you to..." Now, here's what every parent thinks, children listen; we think you're going to immediately stop doing what you're doing and do what we just told you to do because God wants you to obey us as parents. But then we don't see you at the dinner table, we don't see you in the bathroom brushing your teeth, so we assume you didn't hear us so your mom or dad is going to say again, "Honey, I said dinner is ready, stop playing, come to the table." But you still don't come, so they're going to probably say it one more time. Then you're going to say as they are walking into the room, "I heard you!" Now did you really hear them? Because if you heard them, and you're not doing what they said to do immediately, you are disobey them. And do you know who else you are disobeying? You are disobeying God, because do you know what God wants you to do? He wants you to obey your parents. Does that make sense?

Children, take one of your hands and touch your ear. Now take your other hand and touch your other ear. Let's count how many ears we have...one, two. Now take your hands off your ears, find your other ears, and count them. Does anyone have a third ear, or fourth or fifth ear? No, two ears is what you have. Now count our mouth. How many mouths do we have? One. Whoa, two ears and one mouth. Let me tell you why God made you this way as a child. You can't obey your parents unless you hear what your parents are saying. So God gave you two ears to hear. In case mom and dad is on this side of the house or that side of the house, if you didn't have an ear on this side, you might not hear what they wanted you to do and they would think you're being disobedient when you really just didn't hear them. So God has given you two ears and they are just like big old antennas. Look at how they are created. They are created to take sound

in, and when sound comes in and mom and dad are talking to you and telling you to do something, God wants you to open both ears, but close your mouth. Trust me; children struggle to hear when they're talking. Generally, if mom and dad are telling you (a child) to do something and you start talking, you are disobeying; you're delaying doing what they're telling you to do. Does that make sense? Now let me tell you how God made you and this is really cool. You can't see this but you know it's true, inside your head is a brain. You're an amazing person, you are smart, and inside your brain, you have a mind. So when your mom and dad tell you something in your ears, it gets inside your brain and your mind grabs ahold of it. Then your mind is going to tell your feet, your mind is going to tell your hands what your mom and dad just told you to do, and you're going to do it. Does that make sense? So listen, probably in your house, your mom and dad is not going to say that you better obey me. They might say this, "You better mind me." Write that down on your paper. Sometimes parents don't use the word, obey, in the home, we use the word, mind. What they're trying to tell you is this; when you hear what they say and it gets inside your brain and inside your mind, they know you've got a decision to make, and the decision you need to make is I'm going to do what mom and dad tell me to do. Why? Because God wants me to obey my mom and dad. Has everybody got that?

Why would God want you to obey your mom and dad? Children, listen to me. Your mom and dad have been where you are as a child, but you've never been where they are as a parent. You know those other people in your life that you love a whole bunch, granny and granddad, Memish and Papaw, or whatever you call your grandparents. You love your grandparents. They were your parents, parents, and there was a time when your grandparents were telling your parents what to do and what not to do, so the only reason they're telling you what to do and what not to do is because they are just telling you what your grandparents told them when they were your age. See, the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Now watch this, this is important. You don't obey your parents because your parents are always right. There will be some times your parents are going to be wrong on some things. You obey your parents because obeying your parents is always the right thing

to do, no matter what they tell you, while you're still living at home under their authority. But here's our problem; in your little mind, you think it's right to do what you're doing, and because if you're playing with your Legos and building something and you just lack a few more steps getting it finished, when mom and dad says, "Let's quit playing, it's time to go to bed, it's time to brush our teeth," you think that's wrong what they're telling you because you think it's right for you to get to play a little bit longer. Does that make sense? No, you don't keep playing. See, you don't say, "Mom and dad, I need ten more minutes and then I'll brush my teeth." No, the Bible doesn't say for parents to obey their children. Did you parents hear that? Authority in the home is parents, not children. So in your little mind, when you're thinking I really want to do what I'm doing, but mom and dad tell you to do something different, you stop doing what you're doing and do what they're telling you to do, not just because they're right, but because it's right to always do what your parents tell you to do. Because when you disobey your parents, you're disobeying God. Does that make sense?

Children, watch this; it says for us, as children, to obey our parents. There's going to be a sentence here that says, "The term, parents, stresses your mom and dad in their togetherness. That's a big word, so I will spell it for you, t-o-g-e-t-h-e-r-n-e-s-s. It stresses that your mom and your dad are parents. Let me tell you what happened. There was a time, you can't imagine this, there was a time when your mom and dad was the same age you are, and they loved to do their own thing just like you love to do it. they had parents over them who are your grandparents, and they were telling them what to do because they wanted them to grow up to be mature adults, and one day move out of the house and find a man or a woman and get married and give them grandkids, and that's you, you're the grandkid. Now get this picture. When mom and dad realized what marriage was, they came before God, and made a covenant together to love each other until death do them part. They made a covenant before God, and God put them together. In their relationship together, even though you see them as two different people, God sees them as one. God made them one. So your daddy left his mom and dad, your momma left her mom and dad, they got together and got married, and they're now put

together by God, and God doesn't want anything to divide them. So when it comes to parenting, your parents are going to be one because that stresses their oneness in how God made them. Does that make sense?

How many of you guys like to put Legos together? Legos are something, are they not? Yeah, how many of you have a little brother or a little sister? Now don't turn to your sister or brother and get on to them here, but I want to ask you this question? Have any of you ever worked putting Legos together and you worked for hours, maybe days, maybe weeks, and you got your Legos together just the way you wanted and started playing with it, and all of a sudden, your brother or sister broke it? Oh man! I've got a question for you, how many of you went, "Oh wow, that's awesome, thank you for breaking my Legos!" No, it hurt you. It hurt your feelings. It made you sad because you had worked really hard to put something together and then somebody broke it. Maybe you took something to school and somebody at school broke it. Now listen, God does not want you to ever tear apart what He's put together. That is the next sentence, put the words, tear apart, "I never want to tear apart what God put together." You say now, "Bro Ricky, I would never tear my mom and dad apart. Ok, let me ask you if you have ever done this. Have any of you children ever wanted to do something really, really strongly, and you knew one of your parents were more likely to let you do it because your other parent probably wouldn't want you to do it, so you went to that parent and said, "Mom, can I..." and mom was washing dishes, doing the bills, doing the laundry, running her company, talking to an employee, or maybe she was talking to her boss, and she really didn't fully realize what you were asking. At that moment she didn't remember that dad really wouldn't want you to do this, so she said, "I don't care if you do it, but go ask your dad." So you go to your dad now and say, "Dad, mom said I could, is it ok if I..." You just put your dad in a really bad spot because your dad knows your mom, his wife, knows he really want you to do that. Does that make sense? See, when you try to go to your mom or your dad individually to get what you want and use one against the other you're coming in between your mom and dad. God is working really hard to put them close together, and it's hard to be close together in the culture we live in. Now you are trying to pry them apart. Why? Because you think what you want to do is right, and you think

dad not letting you do that is wrong. Do you know who you really hurt? You hurt God because God feels like you feel. He worked really hard to work your mom and dad's life to where He could bring them together, and now you're tearing them apart in how they parent you. No, God doesn't want us, as children, tearing apart what He's put together. Does that make sense? Tell me you kids get this.

Now, here's what we're going to do. Children, turn to your mom and dad, or if you are with your grandparent, turn to your grandparent and say, "I'm never going to divide my parents again." Go ahead and say it. I want you to mean it because all of us have done that, right. Parent, this is your part, are you ready? Parent, look down at your child and say, "And we're never going to let you divide us again." Go ahead and say it. Everybody got it?

The next point. Look what else the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right, for this is the first commandment with a promise." This is referring to the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, the fifth commandment. God knows when He gives children to parents, those parents know what's best for those children, and if they will listen to their mom and dad, they will have a better life and they will live longer, because there is just some wisdom in being a parent. So the Bible says, "Honor your father and your mother." The next line says, "To honor someone means to make them weigh more." So when you see this word, honor, I want you to think about this; it's my responsibility as a child to honor my mom and dad. It's my responsibility to make them weigh more.

Let me tell you kids what I did yesterday morning. How many of you kids in the Farm know Memish? Memish has this routine that she does. A couple of mornings a week, she goes into the bathroom and into the closet in our bathroom, steps up on the weigh scales, and weighs herself. There's a certain weight she kind of wants to stay at. She's got this little range that she gives herself, between this and this, but I'm not going to tell you what that is! So yesterday morning we were getting ready in the bathroom and I saw her go into the closet, and I knew what she was going to do, so I was really quite. I had my socks on, not my boots on yet, and I walked into the closet behind her and she didn't realize it. I saw her touch the scale, it zeroed out, she stepped up on the scale, and when she did, I stuck my big

toe on the scale and pressed down on it, and whoa! She jumped off the scale! She was shocked at how much she weighed! But when she jumped off, she saw me right behind her and she grabbed me and pushed me back! I just grinned. 😊 What I did was try to help her weigh more by putting my foot on the scale and making her appear heavier than she really is.

That's what it means to honor your father and your mother. It means you cause them to be heavy in your life. You make a decision that my mom and dad are the most important people in my life. They're special to me. God not only gave me to them, but He gave them to me, and I'm going to honor them. What they tell me is not going to be just light like a feather. That's not going to just blow away. It's going to be heavy. I'm going to take it in my mind. I'm going to listen to it because I know God's given them to me so that I'll have a better life, and I know they've been where I am, but I've never been where they are. So while I think I need to keep playing and I think it's not time to brush my teeth, and I don't think I need to go to bed, and I think I really want to talk longer on the phone, and I don't think my curfew should be this time, I'm going to know not to dishonor my mom and dad; I'm going to honor them.

Kids, did you notice when the Bible tells us to obey, we obey our parents, but when he tells us to honor, He doesn't tell us to honor our parents, He tells us to honor our father and our mother. Whoa, this is big! Bro Ricky has been doing some investigating because I want to make sure I represent God correctly here, and here's what I want you to know. When it comes to obedience, your parents are one. Mom and dad, you should be on the same page in parenting. Make this as easy for your kids as possible. Be one; do not be divided. But when it comes to honor, you don't honor them just in their togetherness, you honor them in their singleness. That's our next sentence, "The terms father and mother stresses the singleness of your parents." Let's catch this; God gave you a father and He gave you a mother. Your mother, while she's one with your dad in their marriage, and while your mother is under the authority of your dad and he's the head of the house, and your dad sacrificially loves your mom like Christ loved the church, God made your mom the way He made her and the world looks

different to her than it does to your dad. She's feminine; she's a female. She's a lady. She's a woman, and there are just a lot of neat things your mom thinks and believes that's different for your dad because your dad can't think like she thinks because he's not a woman. He's not a lady. He's not female. He's not feminine. If we could pick a color, we'd make her pink, but there is another color that doesn't look anything like pink, and that's blue. That's the color of your dad. He's not feminine; he's masculine. He's a man. He's a gentleman, and there are some things in life that your dad has a different view on. He sees it differently because he's a man. God wants you, whether you're a boy or a girl, to have both views, not just one view. That's why God didn't make your parents the same. He made them different, male, and female. Because God wants you to see life and have the perspective of the man even though you're a girl, and the way you get the perspective of the man is from your dad. When you understand how your dad is and learn to honor him, then one day you're going to grow up and be a wife and marry a man and know how to love your husband because of the way you honored your father. Does that make sense? For you young boys, there will be a lot of things you're going to be just like dad in, but God wants you to honor your mom too. God wants you to make her special. God wants you to love her. And as you honor your mom, one day when you grow up, leave home, and enter into a covenant of marriage with a wife, the way you honored your mother is going to give you a head start on how to know how to love, appreciate, and value your wife. Did that make sense? Honor them in their individuality, but obey them in their togetherness.

Now, some of you older middle school kids and some of you high school kids are going to hold it, aren't you really saying the same thing. Yep, except this; obedience is a matter of my outside actions, honor is an inward attitude I have, an inward value system I have. So here's my last point and we're done, "God wants my inside to match my outside." Get this picture; you're finishing up whatever you're finishing up, you're almost done and it is suppertime and you're really frustrated. You just need five more minutes on the phone with your best friend, but mom says it's time to come to supper. You really want to keep talking, but you know you're supposed to obey, so you obey. You quit talking, you quit playing, and you come to the

dinner table. But when you come to the dinner table, you stomp down the hall, sit down at the table and huff, and everyone can see it on your face. You had rather be playing, talking, or doing something else, but on the outside you are at the table doing what you're supposed to be doing, which is obey your mom and dad because that's what God wants you to do. But on the inside, you're not really wanting to obey. See, you're obeying, but you're dishonoring at the same time. What God wants to happen is when you're in your little world doing your thing and seeing your life as a seven, nine, thirteen, or sixteen year old and mom and dad break into your life with something to do or not to do, if you have special importance for your parents in your life, your inside is going to quit doing what you're wanting to do and you're going to do what your parents want you to do, and when you come down the hallway and take your seat at the dinner table, or brushing your teeth, or getting ready for bed, or getting up in the morning, it's not going to be a fight, it's not going to be a fuss because you honor your mother and you honor your father, and your inside matches your outside. That's what God wants.

Now I have to close with a little story that I've told ever since I've been at Hardin because I heard this story a long, long time ago and I love it. It's about a mother who took her little boy grocery shopping and they got the groceries and put them in the car. She strapped him in the car seat and started home. She looked in the rearview mirror and saw him out of the car seat jumping up and down. She kept driving and said, "Son, get back in your car seat and buckle up." With her looking in the rearview mirror, trying to drive, he continued to jump up and down in the back seat, not getting in the car seat. She said, "Son, I said get in the car seat, buckle up." He continued to jump up and down; she could see him in the rearview mirror. Patiently, she said, "Son, I'm telling you for the last time to get back in your car seat and buckle up, and if you don't obey me, I'm going to stop the car, spank you on the side of the road, and I'm going to put you back in the car seat and you will stay in the car seat until we get home." He just continued to jump up and down in the seat. Now moms, when you tell your kids something, you had better do what you say you're going to do. So she stopped the car, patiently and kindly got him out of the seat on the side of the road. She explained to him this was disobedience and then

she spanked him, put him back in the car seat, buckled him in, and told him he had better stay in the car seat or we would do this again. She gets back in the car and starts driving down the road, and nothing within her, as a mom, wants to look in the rearview mirror. But she hears him sniffing, holding back tears, so she looks in the rearview mirror and his eyes catch her eyes. When his eyes caught her eyes, he said to her, "Mom, on the outside, I'm sitting down, but on the inside, I'm still jumping up and down." Kids, that makes a cute story, but it is not funny at all. God wants me to tell you to obey your parents. He's put them together, and He wants you to mind them. He wants you to obey them in their togetherness, yet honor them in their singleness, and He wants your inside to match your outside. Would every child now look at your mom and dad and tell them, "God wants me to obey you." Now say this, "I've made up my mind, and I'm going to mind you from now on."

Kids, look at me one more time. I'm going to talk to God this afternoon; can I tell Him that all of you kids listened to Bro Ricky this morning? Did you hear what I was supposed to tell you? Alright, I'm going to tell God to watch because you're now going to mind your parents. God bless you all, and let's give our kids a big hand.