

Who Decides about Family Values?

"DUTY OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS"

Eph. 6:1-4

Who decides family values? - church has values -

Family Sociologist - England "In another generation The Home As we know it, will be completely Vanish" disregard divine instruction
First institution God created in the world was home / spirit in the Church
We have just closed with the mystery of the church concerning Christ and his

church. And Paul extends his illustrating to need to be touched on in reference to the Christ of children and parents is a quite interesting did much for anyone - it was for woman. If it gave more help to children. Now that has all help but loving a little child. There is some you on.

It is a famous book that has played a tremendous role in Christian history. It is called Fox's Book of Martyrs. It is not easy bedtime reading because it documents, in several hundred pages, how Christians have been put to death in this world. There is a section in it that deals with the catacombs in Rome - those underground graveyards. In the book, the author states that the early Christians spent much of their time facing persecution above ground and saying their prayers below the ground. They have uncovered at least 600 miles of the catacombs, and there, row upon row, on both sides of the corridors you will find these little niches where Christian and pagan alike are buried, and on many Christian burial sites, there are Christian thimbles. When those graves have been opened, they have found the remains there with heads cut off and limbs removed from the torsos and bones that have often been calcined from fire.

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The Christians have faced, in history, suffering and death because of their witness, and Memorial Day should remind us not only of their suffering but the lives of many who have given themselves in service to God and country.

It is this section of the morning lesson, where the issue of division in families is raised, that I want to focus on today. I do so because "FAMILY VALUES" has become, and likely will remain, a legitimate issue among us. Any sensitive person today would have to be concerned about the condition of the family in America, and a part of what is hap-

Another thing about the father and parent of that day, his authority over the child was over his whole life. As long as that father lived - the son never became of age. And he had absolute power. Now of course, when the son was grown, the public opinion of course perhaps caused him to limit his powers.

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Under the regime of the Roman, the father's power was absolute. It was over the family. He could sell them as slaves. He could make them work in the field. He could put chains on them. He could take the law in his own hands and punish them and even to the point of inflicting a death penalty to his child.

And Paul extends his illustrating to take in some other subjects which need to be touched on in reference to the Christian and his welfare. The matter of children and parents is a quite interesting subject. If the Christian faith did much for anyone - it was for woman. If it was able to help at any point, it gave more help to children. Now that has always been true. Today you cannot help but loving a little child. There is something about a child that just turns you on.

we may be conveying to the children or the values of this family of faith, the church. We will be imparting to them the rules by which we live as Christians. Fred Craddock, in a rather amusing reminder, tells us that Leviticus 19:14 contains one of the oldest commandments in the Bible, "You are not to curse anyone who is deaf." The reaction is, "Why not? Who cares if I curse someone who is deaf - they can't hear? He does not know or care whether I have cursed or praised him!" Leviticus also tells us why we should not do it. It is because God is our God and all of us are His children, whether we can hear or not. Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Our rules of behavior, in the family of faith, are based on the love of God who God is

found sociologist - England "John another go completely Roman" disregard divine instruction first instruction God created in the OT. We

What Brethren do

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meant that he acknowledged him, and wished to keep him. If he turned to walk away, it meant that he refused to acknowledge the child, and literally - the child was thrown out. There was a letter from Alexander which was written about a home and domestic affairs. It had a greeting about the man who was away from home, and he also stated in that letter, about the birth of a child that was to be born shortly. If good luck to you, he wrote, you have a child. If it is a boy - let it live. If it is a girl, throw it out. And then he went on to close by saying - do not forget me - how can I forget you. I beg you therefore not to worry. Now that is a strange letter full of affection - and yet, it was a matter of fact that the Roman baby ran a risk. No wonder in Paul's time - marriages collapsed. Unwanted children. They were collected at night by people who nourished them in order that they might sell them as slaves. Or to stock the house of prostitute in Rome. Now these things are unthinkable now-a-days.

Another thing in that civilization was that if that child was sick or deformed, it is most likely that he was drown. They would not let him survive. I think it is in the light of this situation, Paul wrote these letters here. And we cannot forget this. That things do change. Customs and generations change. And that in our own age and time - there were things that we were never allowed to do. That children are permitted to do today.

And then of course, we find that injustices happen because parents make the mistake of maybe too much trust. As well, as in other cases, too much control. We forget our duty of encouragement. That we need to be to these in our families and homes.

First, we look at the duty of children to parents. V. 1-3.

And The Commandment to honor parents is described as the first Commandment with promise. V. 2. Probably Paul was thinking about the whole body of The Ten Commandments when he was thinking about this. And the chief primary things was the first Commandment. It had first importance. The promise itself is quoted in V. 3. That it may be well with Thee and thou mayest live long in the earth. In their original setting, Ex. 20:12 these words apply to the nation Israel.

If we understand these words right - obedience under God's blessing prolongs life.

For it implies the possession of principles of restraint, of industry, with secure a lengthened existence.

God's Plan is clear one man & woman! Not create Albert & Ethel in case not work out. No 8 men, see how work out created Husband Head, Ish Help for Man, Ish - Ah Help for woman, God Presented Eve to Adam - your helpmate. He looked her over & said you are like me, you are Ish + then he looked again more closely & said No you are not Ish But you are Ish - Ah! At that Ah makes woman. And of course this is providential - a general rule. To serve God for God's glory

and here we have long life. Guaranteed in the way of promise.

one wife said yes He is Head & I am the neck that moves the head He may rule the roost But I rule the rooster.

Don't criticize your wife's Judgment, look who He married - wife watching neighbor come home from work - kissed his wife, his wife said why don't you do that? Well when I get to know her better I will.

Now, let us see here that the child, as a child you are beneath and under. You are in submission. You are bowing with yieldedness to obey. And you are to honor.

And that word honor is a beautiful word in the language - it implies a preciousness and a dearness. It implies great value at a great price. And a child could obey his parent out of fear.

Marriage may be a mess - you can't unscramble eggs But God can make a beautiful omelette!

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Or he could obey out of reluctance. He could obey in an unwilling spirit - but God says to the child, you obey your father and your mother, in respect and honor

and reverence - and that brings something of the breath of Heaven upon him.

Now this is the pillar of society. And this is something that the end of which the family exists or is defeated, if authority is not exercised. Or if we do not have this obedience. Of honoring the father and the mother. I think of all the Jewish laws that Moses gave, this first one had the promise attached to it as a national one that was wonderful. That the parents would be blessed and honored - regardly of age, sickness, poverty, etc. It was declared that prosperity and stability would be theirs. The discipline of the family then relates to security. And we know bad children would make bad citizens. If there was a warrant of reverence and honor, we know there would be a lot of disorder in the nation. But if children honor their parents, then they are the elect of the nation.

This all fits together - and the husband and wife practice divine love in their marriage relationship. And they are not just praying - Mom and Dad. This important injunction for the children to obey, is that the parents will not provoke wrath.

Now we come to the next section which in the second place deals with the duty of parents to children. In that 4th verse - and he says, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. But bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. A Preacher went to Jacksonville, Florida, and was taken to a famous restaurant one of the most famous on the Eastern Seaboard. He walked into the lobby and beyond the cashier's desk was a large picture of a fine looking woman. The Pastor's friends said to him when we are seated - I'll tell you a story about that woman. After they were seated at the table, he brought to the attention of the man the story.

On a small, unprosperous farm in South Georgia was a father, a mother, and a son. The father died, the mother took the boy to Jacksonville. They opened a little eating place downtown. They were such fine people that God blessed them. Their little restaurant flourished. And they were persuaded to go to the edge of the city, and build a very luxurious eating place. Just before the restaurant was completed - the mother died. And before she went over across Jordan - she called her boy to her side and said, son, I want you to promise me one thing. When the beautiful restaurant is opened, you will promise me that in it - you will never sell wine, beer, or liquor. The boy replied, Mother, I promise. When the restaurant was opened and completed - and customers began to come, then all the representatives from the breweries and the wineries, and distillers came down to visit that boy. You cannot run a fine restaurant like this - unless you sell beer, wine, and liquor. Each man who came to try to persuade him - he took that representative to the lobby, and pointed to the picture of his mother and said - I promised my mother before she died, that I would never sell alcoholic beverages in this beautiful place. Before I break that promise, I go back to the plow handles on that Georgia farm. He honored his mother, and God blessed that boy. One of the finest restaurants on the Eastern Seaboard is that restaurant. And has one of the best reputations to serve some of the most delicious food. And that has to say a lot about honor.

Hold in reference, respect, preciousness the father and the mother. Which is the first Commandment with promise. Now the first Commandment says that thou shalt have no other Gods before me. The second Commandment, thou shalt not make any graven image. Neither shalt thou bow down thyself before it. The third Commandment, thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, Thy God, in vain. Fourth Commandment, remember the Lord's Day and keep it holy. And sacred for worship. The fifth Commandment is the first one with a promise. Honor thy father and thy mother - reverence, and endear them. What a promise. That it may be well with thee, that thou mayest live long on this earth. That promise magnifies the illustration of the value of the Lord.

That God places on family devotion and duty. And that Commandment gives us something to shape this nation with. And we know that if we do not use that, that bad children will make bad citizens.

Now let us come to say a word about fathers and parents. The word "father" here means the example like you use the word meet - it refers to something in the sense of parents. Ye parents, provoke not to wrath. To exasperation. Don't drive your children away in frustration or in despair. They turn to do most anything.

It is not unusual that a girl in a home will be so frustrated and in such despair that she will run off and marry the first boy that comes along - or offers her hope to get her away. And often a boy is driven out because of the uncompromising and sometimes uncaring attitude of his father or mother. Now he says to parents - do not drive your parents to extremes in bitterness. Provoke not your children.

Now, it is sometimes strange how the words translate here in Ephesians, the word nourish here - is translated "bring up". Nourish the children in discipline of act. It is an appeal which says by discipline and by act.

There are two things now to notice that Paul is writing here to the parents.

The first thing, is the authority and the discipline in the home. Now if children

are to honor - there must be authority and discipline in the home. As well as submission on the part of children. The home defeats itself, when it lacks discipline on the part of parents. And then we make so many concessions. Now the Lord gave this to the nation. And there is a necessity in the home and in the state - and when that is frustrated - then everything is hopeless.

That is one reason why I do not take up much time with these violent revolutionary militants today. That is why when they come along and say, we are going to destroy the establishment, we are going to over-throw it, and we are going to root it out. The thing is, they offer you nothing in place of what they have just destroyed. They ruin the nation - they plunge the nation into anarchy. They uproot the order of things - and whatever they substitute in its place, will be uprooted.

Their program means nothing. And of course, if children follow this idea, it is dangerous. Lev. 19:14 "you are not to curse anyone deaf!" Why not? who cares - they can't hear! Hodie our God & all are in children Jesus said By this men know you my disciple - self love one another.

The parents must represent the right kind of authority. I read a statistic where many children are killed every year by brutal discipline on the part of fathers and mothers. Now the Bible says, bring up, nourish the child in patience, love and sympathy. Do not beat the child to death. But it says bring the child up in discipline and in firmness.

When the baby is placed in your arms and is helpless and immature, without your guidance and your love, that child would perish. Now you can do with that child as you please. It is like a piece of metal, you can take it and polish it and engrave anything on it. It is like a page from a book - you can write anything. A child is

like a piece of clay - you can shape him. Now I am not saying that environment or heredity are at zero when it comes to influencing children. But, you really can teach a child how to cheat, how to steal, you can teach him how to lie, you can teach him how to drink or to follow any evil habit.

This is why the Lord said to Eli - there will be destruction in your house because you refuse to restrain your sons - Hophni and Phinehas - I Sam. 3.

The most unusual message that was given to Samuel. That he was to go and to tell Eli, the high priest at Shilo that he was going to destroy his boys. And both of them were killed by the Philistines. Because the Daddy had not shown any kind of responsibility in the Lord in the home.

Now the second thing about the parent is - not only does he have to offer the authority of discipline, in the home - but the second thing is - the authority and the discipline is before the Lord. Now this is said twice here in this passage to emphasize it. Children obey your parents in the Lord. And the fact is, that this is silent in American society today.

The fact that number one is, that the F. B. I. says that much of the crime today in America is done by young people. Twenty-five years of age and under. The largest figure being about 18. This is an astonishing thing. That the criminal element in America is young people. And to say that a million boys and girls began a crime career

last year. In America, mostly youth.

Another fact is, that something like 14 or 15 million children in America - between the age of 14 and 4 - have no religious education whatsoever. Now that does not mean they are not Romans, Catholics, or Jews. That means they are not anything. That in their homes, they do not have anything of the wisdom of God. When he addresses the fathers and the mothers to nourish the child and bring the child up in discipline in the Lord.

Quite often we see a parent who will say - well, I do not propose my child to be influenced Godward, or Christ with her up Heavenward. I'll just let my child choose for himself. Whether he loves God or not. Whether he wants to read the Bible or not. Whether he wants to go to church or not. And there is no inclination on his part to influence the child.

Coldridge was looking at his garden one day - it was full of weeds. A man said to him - why don't you dig up those weeds and plant flowers. He said, I don't want to prejudice the garden in favor of flowers. We just let it grow up as it is.

If you do not guide your children, Heavenward, Christward, churchward, you will be only one who is neutral. Who is not influencing them. Do you think that is wise - do you think the world will not influence them. The infidel will not have any influence on them. The criminal element. The chisler, the dope-pusher, and these

people on the streets. Will not have influence on them.

Take the child and encourage him to pray. To love the Bible, love the church. You ask me why I go to church, I give my mind a careful search because I need to breath the air where there is an atmosphere of prayer. I need the hymns that churches sing - they set my faith and hope on wing. They keep old truths and memory green. Reveal the work of things unseen. Because my boy is watching me, to know whatever he can see. That tells him what his father thinks. And with his eager soul he drinks - the things I do in daily walks, the things I say in daily talks. If I with him the church will share, my son will make his friendship there.

The duty of the parents to children - then is that of training, and not provoking that child with unreasonable demands or needless restrictions, or punishing too severely.

But we are going to bring them up in nurture, in education, in training, in admonition. That is advice, counsel, training in the Lord. These two phrases are safeguards for the Christian home - then it will never be materialistic or humanistic. The phrase is -- (in the Lord). Nurture or admonition of the Lord. The disposition of such a family working together in one - the parents are working together to include their marriage relationships. And they are sharing with their children. And I believe that Christian education is a function in the home. This is the business of the home. It is not the professional job of the church - but it is one of the greatest things that can be done in the home. When there in the counsel of the parents, they teach what is in the Lord - these needed things.

When we are thinking about parents and children - in conclusion, we are thinking about immortal souls. When we work, help, pray, guide, and nourish, and appeal to the life of a child, literally we are touching humanity for eternity. The soul of that child is immortal. Once the child is born - his life never ends. A soul and the life of a child are forever immortal. They are eternal. And they live on. I want to close with briefly some thoughts from a letter. That was written to Dr. Criswell, First Baptist Church, by Ethel Davis. And it is a factual letter and here is what she wrote - it happened about 10 years ago. In January, of this year, in 1971, she wrote I was in Baylor Hospital with my six-year-old grandson. He was fighting a losing battle with cancer. We were listening to a Sunday morning message concerning a new world and a better world up in Heaven, which made a great impression upon the little boy, Kerry Lee. So much was he impressed - that it caused him to ask many questions. He asked, how anyone could get to this better world. I explained the best I could. Later he asked, if he might come to God all by himself. The next day he said, that "God had talked to him." And asked him not to be afraid and told him that he would be coming for him soon. The lad smiled as he told how warm and soft God's arms felt around his shoulders. As God spoke to him. He wanted me to tell his mother, Mommie, please don't cry when I go away. He asked that we give his clothes to his little friend. His art supplies to the church. And please don't give my little shoes away. He assured me that everything was alright and he talked about God coming for him calmly and unafraid. He was laid to rest on Easter Sunday, in Palmer, Texas. After two years and two months battle with pain and suffering. I want to thank you so much for that message. And I am thankful for a loving God that was able to help a little boy and accept God's plan for his life. If you have a copy of Sunday's message - I would appreciate one very much. May God continue to bless you in your work. Sincerely, Ethel Davis.

As I read a copy of that letter - I thought about that little boy facing death,

and finding in the Preacher's message about Heaven, comfort, hope, and trust - that he could calmly and unafraid accept God's will for his life. I thought how mothers and fathers today hold in their hands the lives of children. And they are turning and holding on to eternity, destiny, and mortality. That is why we have, I think, this inspired word in Ephesians. And ye parent, nourish, bring up the children in the discipline, in the word of appeal in the Lord.