

**First Baptist Church Merritt Island**  
**Senior Pastor Titus Green**  
**June 22, 2025**  
**COLOSSIANS – Hope of Glory**  
**In Relationship with Christ – part 3**  
**Colossians 3:18-4:1**

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Years ago, I heard about a mother who was having trouble with her young son because he would constantly make up wild stories and insist that they were true.

One morning it reached a breaking point. He came out to breakfast and said, “Mom, you’ll never believe what happened last night! A spaceship landed in our backyard, and I went to check it out, and these little green men took me on board their ship, and we flew around in space all night long—it was awesome!”

His mother had finally had enough. So, she said, “Son, I’m taking you to the pastor right now, and I’m going to have him teach you not to lie.”

So, they went to see the pastor and the pastor said, “Tell me what happened.” The little boy said, “Last night a spaceship landed in my backyard, and I went to check it out and these little green men took me for a ride in space and brought me back before breakfast. That’s the honest truth, Pastor.”

The pastor thought for a second and decided to use a little reverse psychology. He thought if he could tell the boy a totally unbelievable lie it would make the kid admit he was lying too.

So, the preacher said, “Son, that reminds me of something that happened when I was preaching up in the mountains years ago. Right in the middle of my message a huge grizzly bear burst into the church and started growling and snarling—people started jumping out windows and making doors where there weren’t any doors. But I was so frightened that I froze. That old grizzly came creeping toward me to eat me, and all of a sudden, a little yellow dog came running into the church, and that tiny, little dog jumped on that grizzly bear and killed it and ate it on the spot and saved my life.”

The pastor smiled and said, “Now, son, do you believe that?”

The little boy’s eyes were as big as saucers and he said, “Pastor, of course I believe it. That was MY dog.”

My point is that it’s not always easy to know how to parent your children. My mentor in ministry, Pastor Bob Bateman used to say, “They don’t come with manuals.” And that’s the truth.

When Emily and I left the hospital with our first child, I remember driving home and realizing that I had absolutely zero preparation. The closest thing I’d ever done to being a parent was having a fish tank. Within 6 months, my fish tank was just a bowl of dirty water. The fish had literally jumped out rather than live any longer under my care.

But it isn’t just hard to be a parent. It’s pretty tough to be a kid. When it comes to raising children, parents aren’t the only ones with responsibility. Children have their part to play. They can make a parent’s work dramatically more difficult by the choices they make and the way they live.

But thankfully, God has a plan to keep our homes from spiraling into chaos. He has clearly defined roles for each member of the family. And that's what the section we have been studying in Colossians is all about.

### **Colossians 3:18–21**

***Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.***

Over the past two weeks, we have looked at the call of Jesus for husbands and wives. This morning, we want to focus on His desire for children.

And before we dig into the Bible's teaching for children, I want to acknowledge something that might be easy to overlook. Verse 20 is written directly to children. Paul doesn't talk **about** them to the church. Paul talks **to** them as part of the church. Paul treats them as full-fledged members of Christ's body. I love that.

When our children come to faith in Jesus, they aren't second-class Christians.

And church, I hope we value the young people who are part of this church family. I pray our senior adults and empty-nesters, and 30-somethings will love and **respect** our teenagers and children. When you see a young person serving, holding a door or leading worship or serving food, I really hope you encourage them and praise the Lord for them.

Young people, if you are trusting in Jesus, you are the church of Jesus Christ – today.

And that means you have a calling in Christ for how you live. You don't have to grow old to live the Christian life. You only need to be born again, whatever age you are. If you trust in Jesus, He will live in you. And as He lives in you, He will empower a role for you to fill in your family.

Verse 20 says it pleases Him when you obey your parents. The primary calling of Jesus in the lives of children is to obey their parents.

In Ephesians 6, Paul says a very similar thing but with a few more details.

### **Ephesians 6:1–3**

***Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."***

Here, Paul says we are to obey our parents in the Lord, or by His power. He also says we are to honor them because it's the right thing to do and God will bless it. And, when you put all of that together, you get the big idea for this morning.

**Big Idea: Children who desire to please the Lord will obey and honor their parents by Christ's power.**

Now, let's unpack that a little at a time.

1. Children should desire to please the Lord.

### **Colossians 3:20**

***Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.***

*Ephesians 6:1*

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

In both passages, Paul does something really important: he places our relationship with the Lord ahead of our relationship with our parents. He doesn't say, "Children, obey your parents because this will please them." He doesn't say, "Obey your parents because it will make them happy which will make them more likely to increase your allowance." He doesn't say anything about the impact our obedience will have on our parents. In Colossians, he says that obedience will please the Lord. In Ephesians, he says the Lord has determined that obeying our parents is right.

What that means is that our relationship with the Lord is more central to our lives than our relationship with our parents. We don't obey our parents because they deserve it or have earned it. We don't obey our parents because they are always right or know it all. That's not what the Bible is appealing to here. We obey our parents because God has determined it's the right thing to do and it should be our desire to please the Lord.

You see, our earthly fathers aren't our real Father. God is our real Father. And our loving Heavenly Father has designed the family to be a shadow of that reality. Our earthly parents are called to reflect the heart of our Heavenly Father to their children, to teach us what God is like so that we will ultimately have a relationship with Him through Jesus.

So, when we rebel against our parents, we are actually rebelling against God and His design for our lives. God is our Authority. He's our God. And it should be our desire to please Him above anyone else in our life.

But that's not the only way that Paul is pointing to our relationship with the Lord as more central to our lives than our parents. In Ephesians 6, Paul says that children are to obey their parents "in the Lord."

We've talked about this a lot in our study of Colossians. To be "in the Lord" means that we are trusting in Jesus. When we place our faith and trust in Jesus, we are united to Him in a way that He begins to live in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is in us, and we are in Him.

And that's the only way we can truly live out God's call on our lives – by the power of Christ at work in us. We will never be able to truly obey and honor our parents until we are truly trusting in Jesus to be Jesus in us.

So, young people, the most important thing you'll hear me say all morning is that having the best relationship you can have with your parents begins with having a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus.

Are you trusting in Jesus? As you are living in your parents' home, is Jesus living in your heart?

I want to encourage you to stop relating to your parents on the basis of how good or bad you think they are as parents. Don't try to evaluate their rules or their leadership based on what you think they should or shouldn't do. That's not the foundation for submitting to their authority. The foundation is your relationship with your Heavenly Father and the life He desires to empower in you through the work of Jesus.

And when Jesus is living in you, He desires to transform your actions and your attitudes to be more like His. And the way Paul summarizes the actions Jesus desires to empower in you, he uses the same word in Colossians and Ephesians. It's the word "obedience."

2. God is pleased when we obey our parents in the power of the Lord.

**Colossians 3:20**

***Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.***

The word that is translated "obey" means to do what someone else tells you to do. It means to follow their instructions. It means to listen to what they say and do what they say. Actually, the Greek word translated "obey" was used to describe a doorkeeper who would stand at a door waiting for someone to knock so they could open the door for them. The picture is someone who is listening intently...who is on the ready to hear the instructions...

To obey means to listen to and do what your parents tell you.

The call of Christ on the lives of children is to obey their parents in everything. So long as your parent isn't telling you to disobey God, you are called to obey.

Now, I know this is a difficult concept, so let me give you an example of what I mean.

If your mom says, "Come over here." Obeying is when you go over there. If you just sit there and look at her (ignoring), that isn't obeying. That's called disobeying. If you launch a debate about whether she is justified in asking you to go over there (arguing), that isn't obeying. That's called disobeying. If you go the other way (rebellious), that isn't obeying. That's called disobeying. If you sit there a few more minutes finishing out your video game (delaying), that isn't obeying. That's disobeying.

Children, do what your parents tell you to do.

- Don't ignore, that's disobedience.
- Don't argue, that's disobedience.
- Don't rebel, that's disobedience.
- Don't delay, that's disobedience.

And parents, part of your responsibility in raising your children is to teach them to obey; to respect and follow authority. You aren't called to be their buddy or their best friend. You are first called to be their mom and dad in authority. You are called to train them to submit to you (and to experience the blessing of doing so and joy of godly leadership) so that they will be more likely to yield to the other God-ordained authorities in their lives – school, work, government.

The Duke of Windsor once remarked, "The thing that impresses me most about America is the way parents obey their children." (Wiersbe, *Listening to the Giants*)

We will talk more about this next week, but parents are called expect obedience and to lovingly and consistently discipline disobedience. The call of Jesus for children is to obey our parents.

And this raises an important question: How long do we have to obey our parents?

A good place to start is when you leave your father and mother to be joined to your spouse. You are starting a new home and family, so you have been released from your parents' authority. But, as long as you are under the provision and protection of your parents, you are also under their leadership. A good rule of thumb is if they still claim you on their taxes, then you need to obey them.

But, 1 Corinthians 7 says some people are called to be single their entire lives. Those people don't leave father and mother to be joined to a spouse. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 that those people are free to follow Jesus because they don't have the constraints of family life like married people do...which implies they aren't commanded to be under their parents' authority.

Also, if they have to obey their parents until they are married, what if their parents forbid them to marry? What if their parents forbid them to move out? So, the transition from childhood to adulthood isn't an arbitrary number or our marital status. It's a personal development that looks a little different for all of us.

This is why our relationship with Jesus is central to our relationship with our parents. We need His Spirit in us to make us wise and discerning as we navigate through the stages of life and the changing dynamics in our relationship with our parents.

### 3. God is pleased when we honor our parents in the power of the Lord.

*Ephesians 6:2–3*

*"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."*

The word translated "honor" also means "to set a price" or "to value." In other words, to honor your parents means you treat them as valuable and precious and worthy of respect. This goes way beyond just the action of obedience. It goes to the attitude of your heart.

And while the call to obey our parents may come to an end when we start a home of our own, the call to honor our parents last a lifetime. As a matter of fact, the word "children" in our text refers to someone of any age or gender. It can mean a small child, a teenager, a young adult, or a 60 year. As long as we live, we are the children of our parents. And there is never a time when we are to stop honoring them.

Paul is quoting the book of Deuteronomy here. When Moses gave this command to the children of Israel in the book of Deuteronomy, they were getting ready to enter the land God had promised to give them. And what he is saying is that children who honor God's design for their lives will enjoy the blessing of God on their lives and not be run off by enemy nations. He isn't saying that honoring your parents will guarantee you a long life. Plenty of people who honored their parents have died young. The best example is Jesus.

What the bible is saying is that honoring our parents is an expression of our desire to honor God and when we honor God, we will enjoy His blessing on our lives.

You honor your parents when...

- You obey them cheerfully and with a willing attitude.
- You speak respectfully to them and about them behind their backs.
- You tell them you love them and show them gratitude for the ways they have blessed your life.

- You ask their opinions and advice...and maybe even put it into practice.
- You spend time with them.
- You serve them by looking for ways to make their lives easier and not harder – maybe helping out around the house.
- You take care of them as they age. (RESOURCE) The Caregiving Season: Finding Grace to Honor Your Aging Parents by Jane Daly
- You pray for them.
- You follow hard after Jesus.

Honor your parents.

And there are some of you who might be asking another important question: How do I honor a parent who isn't honorable?

I realize that many in this room have been deeply hurt by your parents. Some have even been abused or have had parents who try to manipulate or control you even as you've gotten married and started a family of your own. So, how do you show honor to your parent when that's your story?

Well, I can't possibly give a detailed answer for every situation but let me give you a few points to consider.

1. Pray for them to yield their lives to Jesus. We are called to love and honor people who are our enemies. So, we shouldn't do any less for our parents. Love and honor them in prayer by ask God to work in their lives.
2. Ask God to give you a forgiving spirit. Your parents are broken, sinful people just like you. As you've been shown grace, you're called to show grace.
3. Live as a witness to the power of Jesus to transform our lives. As much as it depends on you, live at peace with all men, including your parents.
4. Establish healthy, appropriate boundaries. This will be different for every situation, but it isn't honoring to our parents to enable them to engage in behaviors that are destructive to them, to your children, or to you. Abuse...tell an authority.
5. Don't try to figure it out on your own. Enlist the help of a godly, Spirit-filled person in your life. Seek biblical counseling with a pastor, Christian counsel, or spiritual mentor.

The call of God for His people is to obey and honor our parents in the Lord. It's right. It's pleasing to God. And it's possible by the power of Christ in you.