

Being Respectful  
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Ephesians 6:1-9

Opening discussion:

- What are some examples of things your parents did that made you RESPECT them?
- How about people you have worked for? Any examples of things a boss did that made you feel RESPECT for them?

The last two weeks we've been talking about MUTUAL SUBMISSION. Christians to each other. Husbands and wives. This week we move on to parents and children and bosses and workers.

For MUTUAL SUBMISSION to work as God intended there must be MUTUAL RESPECT.

Our motivation for treating others with RESPECT is that it is done in SERVICE to our Heavenly Father who deserves ALL RESPECT.

What if we went through life every day (as PARENTS, as WORKERS, as BOSSES) wearing a sign around our neck that said: "I represent Jesus, that's why I act the way I do"? IT'S SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

Ephesians 6:1-3

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3 "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." [a]

- Verse 1 – We said last week that the word "obey" here is stronger than the word "submit" in the previous section.
- The word "children" indicates children who are "under age"; still under the care of their parents.
- Verse 1 – How does Paul say children are to obey their parents? "...in the Lord."
- What do you think this means? God's authority delegated to the parents. It is God who gives the parents that authority. But parents are not to ABUSE that authority as we'll see in verse 4 in a moment.
- Paul was not suggesting that a child should obey a parent who is cruel, evil, and seeking to harm the child.
- In fact, if a child is told to do something illegal or immoral, they should consider the higher Biblical principle of obeying God rather than people.
- When Paul says "for this is right" he's simply stating that for humanity to work children must be taught and to "do as they are told."
- Bottom line: Children must be taught to obey their parents.

Jim Dobson writes...

*Consider the following advice, featured on the Oklahoma State Department of Health's "Positive Discipline" Web page. It reads, "The goal of discipline is not to control children and make them obey, but to give them skills for making decisions, gradually gaining self-control and being responsible for their own behavior." Instead of telling a child, "Don't hit the kitty," or "Stop kicking the table," they suggest that parents say, "Touch the kitty gently," or "Keep your feet on the floor."*

*The Web site goes on to assert that "Giving a child choices allows him some appropriate power over his life and encourages decision making." Parents are advised to "redirect" childish behavior. For example, if a child is throwing a truck around the house, instead of telling him to stop, the site suggests you say to him, "I can't let you throw your truck, but you may throw the ball outside." Or if the child is kicking a door, you tell him, "You may not kick the door, but you may kick this ball or plastic milk jug." The suggestion for dealing with willful defiance is to ignore it or to allow the child to engage in "something pleasant."*

Dobson goes on to say:

*What ridiculous advice that is! Notice how hard the parent is supposed to work to avoid being the leader at home. What's wrong with explaining to a child exactly what you want him or her to do, and then expecting obedience in return? What's wrong with a parent insisting when a child engages in destructive or irritating behavior that he immediately cease and desist? What's wrong with telling the child, "Kitties have feelings, too. You will not hit the kitty"? The answer in each case is, "Nothing!"*

Dobson on How To Shape Your Child's Will (Not time to cover it all..see the notes/links)

- **Begin teaching respect for authority while children are very young.** The most urgent advice I can give to the parents of an assertive, independent child is to **establish their positions as strong but loving leaders** when Junior and Missy are **in the preschool years**. You, Mom and Dad, are the boss. You are in charge. If you believe it, the tougher child will accept it also. Once a child understands who is in charge, he can be held accountable for behaving in a respectful manner.

When that nose-to-nose confrontation occurs between generations, it is extremely important for the adult to display confidence and decisiveness. The child has made it clear that he's looking for a fight, and his parents would be wise not to disappoint him! Nothing is more destructive to parental leadership than for a mother or father to equivocate during that struggle. When parents consistently lose those battles, resorting to tears and screaming and other signs of frustration, some dramatic changes take place in the way they are seen by their children. Instead of being secure and confident leaders, they become spineless jellyfish who are unworthy of respect or allegiance.

- **Define the boundaries before they are enforced.** Preceding any disciplinary event is the necessity of **establishing reasonable expectations and boundaries for the child.**
- **Distinguish between willful defiance and childish irresponsibility.** When accidents happen, patience and tolerance are the order of the day. There is another category of behavior, however, that is strikingly different. It **occurs when a child defies the authority of the parent in a blatant manner.** She may shout "I will not!" or "You shut up!" or "You can't make me." It may happen when Junior grabs a handful of candy bars at the checkout and refuses to give them back, or when he throws a violent temper tantrum in order to get his way. These behaviors represent a willful, haughty spirit and a determination to disobey.

- **Reassure and teach after the confrontation is over.** After a time of conflict during which the parent has demonstrated his right to lead (particularly if it resulted in tears for the child), the youngster between two and seven (or older) will probably want to be loved and reassured. By all means, open your arms and let him come! Hold him close and tell him of your love. Rock him gently and let him know again why he was punished and how he can avoid the trouble next time.

This is a teachable moment, when the objective of your discipline can be explained. Such a conversation is difficult or impossible to achieve when a rebellious, stiff-necked little child is clenching her fist and taking you on. But after a confrontation has occurred — especially if it involved tears — the child usually wants to hug you and get reassurance that you really care for her.

- **Avoid impossible demands.** Be absolutely sure that your child is capable of delivering what you require. Never punish him for wetting the bed involuntarily or for not becoming potty trained by one year of age or for doing poorly in school when he is incapable of academic success.
- **Let love be your guide!** A relationship that is characterized by genuine love and affection is likely to be a healthy one, even though some parental mistakes and errors are inevitable.

[http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/effective\\_biblical\\_discipline/the\\_strongwilled\\_child/how\\_to\\_shape\\_your\\_childs\\_will.aspx](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/effective_biblical_discipline/the_strongwilled_child/how_to_shape_your_childs_will.aspx)

Dobson on the “Strong Willed Child”:

[http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/effective\\_biblical\\_discipline/the\\_strongwilled\\_child/the\\_new\\_strongwilled\\_child.aspx](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/effective_biblical_discipline/the_strongwilled_child/the_new_strongwilled_child.aspx)

- Verse 2 – What other scripture is Paul quoting here?

Deuteronomy 5:16 (New International Version)

16 “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

- Verse 2 – That word “honor” means to “place a value or a price”. When a merchant takes a gift certificate in payment they “honor” that certificate. When we pay a speaker we call it an “honorarium”. In this case we are to “place value” on our parents.
- In verse 1 Paul’s words were directed at “children” who were under age...this one applies to “children of all ages”.
- Paul changed the wording a bit to say “live long on the earth”.
- Of course, this was not an “absolute guarantee” but a general guideline.
- Generally, children who obey parents grow up to be people who live more harmonious lives.
- In fact, children who obey their parents and don’t engage in foolish and reckless behavior are more likely to “live long” than those who take crazy chances.
- What are some ways we can “honor” our parents?

New Life Live gives some suggestions:

*So what are some practical ways that you can show honor to the adult figures in your life?*

1. **Write a letter.** Tell your mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, or another elderly person in your life *how they have blessed and impacted you.* A letter is sometimes better than a call as the person can look back on your words and be honored again and again.
2. **Make a list.** *One family made a list for their father and mother's 60th birthdays, including 60 reasons why they loved and appreciated them.* Mom's list included gratitude for making their lunches, taking care of them when they were sick, and for her amazing multitasking qualities. Dad's list includes thankfulness for his service in the war, for passing on a love for music, and for his financial faithfulness. This is a great project to include kids and grandkids (sometimes the grandkids have some of the best ideas.)
3. **Teach your kids about the importance of age.** Who gets served first for dinner in your house? In Asian cultures, the elderly are served first. *Find little ways to teach your kids about the importance of respecting age.*
4. **Visit a nursing home with your kids.** Far too often, elderly people are considered a burden. *Ask the staff at a nearby nursing home if there is anyone in particular who could use some love and encouragement. 'Adopt' this person by bringing them cards, treats, by singing for them, or by simply listening to him or her.*
5. **Address disrespect in your home.** *A disrespectful tone or disrespectful actions should never be tolerated in your home. Dads especially need to communicate to their kids that mom is always to be addressed with respect and that he too must be addressed respectfully.* If you notice a general lack of respect in your home, call the family together and discuss it. An un-teachable child, one who thinks he knows more than his mom or dad, is headed for a world of pain and disappointment

- How can the command to “honor your parents” be misused in dysfunctional and manipulative relationships?
- There is a Biblical principle we call “leave and cleave”

Genesis 2:24 (New International Version)

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

- When we become an adult the role of CONTROL by our parents should SHIFT to ENCOURAGE, ADVISE, SUPPORT, INFLUENCE...but NOT control.

In the book BOUNDARIES by Henry Cloud and John Townsend say that in the period of ages 11 to 18:

By this point, the “de-parenting” process should have begun. Things are beginning to shift between you and your youngster. Instead of controlling your child, you influence her. You increase her freedom, as well as responsibility. You renegotiate restrictions, limits, and consequences with more flexibility.

- As adults we need to show LOVE and RESPECT to our parents but that doesn't mean being MANIPULATED or GUILTED into doing things we don't want to do.

I recommend the book BOUNDARIES:

[http://books.google.com/books?id=3cfF94ZTxc0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=BOUNDARIES+Cloud+Townsend&source=bl&ots=4tvnIqe1PJ&sig=fTfJby9fjmiTZI3E1CqEpwyXZsA&hl=en&ei=CNjnTPuSDoH6lwf9zY3JCw&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CGoQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=3cfF94ZTxc0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=BOUNDARIES+Cloud+Townsend&source=bl&ots=4tvnIqe1PJ&sig=fTfJby9fjmiTZI3E1CqEpwyXZsA&hl=en&ei=CNjnTPuSDoH6lwf9zY3JCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CGoQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q&f=false)

- How can we honor ABUSIVE parents?

Nancy Ortberg on honoring “abusive parents”:

*When the Bible instructs us to honor our parents (in Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:2, among other places), it's guiding us in a God-honoring direction. But these words were not written as a response to an abusive situation. There are times when the Bible provides instruction for specific situations, and times when it instructs through broad principles. It's important to be aware of this distinction.*

*The broad principle of honoring our parents reminds us of the important work they do. But it's also important to note that this command doesn't say, "Only honor terrific parents." No parent is perfect and most are doing the best they can. In God's economy, this effort is such a good thing it deserves great honor, especially from the people who benefit from it most-the kids. It's easy for children to take for granted and/or fail to notice the work their parents do.*

*Still, a lot of damage has been done in the name of obedience, by insisting that abused children ignore their pain and heap false praise on their parents. Abuse is sinful (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Ephesians 6:4). Having said that, it's possible to acknowledge abuse and discover ways in which you're capable of showing honor to your parents. This will depend on the work you do to heal, the ability of the parent to admit the abuse, as well as the level of abuse. You need to be in Christian counseling. And the healing process might also include developing deep spiritual friendships within which you can tell your story and rebuild trust.*

Full Article:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/questions/parentingandfamily/honormymotherandfather.html>

Ephesians 6:4

4 Fathers,[a] do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

John R.W. Stott said...

*“Don't make irritating or unreasonable demands. Don't be harsh or cruel or indulge in favoritism. Or be possessive and turn mother love into “smother love”. But realize your*

*children are persons in their own right. Though children are to obey their parents, they have a life of their own.”*

He continues...

*“Children are to be respected as human beings in the image of God...not to be exploited, squashed, or crushed, or possessed.”*

John Piper encourages us to show our children that making them obey is not just so we can flex our muscles as an authority figure. We are to communicate to them the vision that we’re trying to lead them to grow into the person God designed them to be.

He writes...

*“Anger comes from feeling that a parent's rules are petty and trivial -- that they don't have anything to do with something really great or important. But a child who sees that the rules of the home and their consistent enforcement are connected to some great vision of life and some great cause to live for will not harbor resentment toward their parents. They will be like young soldiers who may complain now and then about the toughness of the training but would die any day with the captain, because the cause he stands for is so great. Parents who don't see discipline as part of some great vision of what their children might become for God will wind up using discipline to increase their own private comfort. And children will see that and eventually become angry.”*

Ephesians 6:5-8

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

- If our boss tells us to do something Paul says do it...
- But, like we said of children and parents, UNLESS it is against the teaching of scripture. We are not expected to carry out orders that are immoral or illegal.
- Verse 5: Respect – If not for the person...for the position
- Fear – The Bible says “fear of man is a snare”... not fright but RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY
- Sincerity of Heart – A GOOD ATTITUDE
- WHEN does verse 6 say we are to obey our leaders?
- WHAT does that verse (6) say about our MOTIVES?
- Let’s get real: Sometimes we have a bad boss...that’s life

Wes Cantrell...great businessman and teacher here at FBCW in his book From the Shop Floor to the Top Floor has a chapter on a TERRIBLE boss he worked for. He says:  
*“A key to responding to any and all authorities is to realize that the Lord has placed them in your life for a purpose. When we resist, we delay the shaping, sculpting, and developing of the qualities the Lord desires in our lives.”* “Honoring the position rather

*than the personality leads to a proper response to any type of leader you encounter in your career.”*

- In my career I’ve always turned to Colossians 3:23-24:

Colossians 3:23-24 (New International Version)

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

- We’re not just working for our “human” bosses...we’re representing Christ!

What if you showed up for work every day wearing a sign around your neck that said: “I represent Jesus, that’s why I act the way I do”?

- I represent Jesus here in our company and that’s why I...
  - Show up late and ditch out early
  - Spend paid time on my computer shopping E-bay and playing fantasy football instead of adding value to the company
  - Cuss the supervisor behind their back
  - Steal office supplies
  - Gripe, complain, gossip, undercut the leadership of the company

If we walked around with a sign around our necks that said: “I represent Jesus, that’s why I act the way I do” what would they think of HIM?

- Those of us who are bosses have a responsibility too

Ephesians 6:9

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

- Verse 9: When Paul says “in the same way” he means with RESPECT just as he instructed workers to treat their leaders.
- Bosses need to wear that same “sign around their neck”
- I represent Jesus here in our company and that’s why I...
  - Lead by the golden rule...not “he who has the gold rules”
  - Lead by example never expecting anyone to do anything I wouldn’t do
  - Coach people to IMPROVE and to be the BEST THEY CAN BE
  - Give reasonable GRACE when people make honest mistakes and teach them to learn from them
  - Don’t show favoritism in how I deal with people...because Christ shows NO FAVORITISM
  - And the list could be very long with Jesus as our example.

John MacArthur says:

The Spirit-filled boss uses his authority and power with justice and grace – never putting people under threats, never abusive or inconsiderate. He realizes that he has a heavenly Master who is impartial.

So, What's the TAKEAWAY?

- Want to INFLUENCE society in a positive way? You don't have to run for office...just raise GODLY KIDS and the first step is teaching them to OBEY God and their parents.
- Want to leave a legacy of HEALTHY, BALANCED children? Give them the guidance they need to grow in the Lord.
- Want to have HIGH IMPACT on the job? Whether the boss, the worker, or both...we need to WORK LIKE WE'RE WORKING FOR CHRIST.
- Like we're wearing that sign around our necks: "I represent Jesus here, that's why I act like I do!"