**“Children, Obey Your Parents”**

Jarrod Jacobs

 A well-known Bible passage is found in Ephesians 6:1. There, the apostle Paul wrote the Christians at Ephesus and said, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” A parallel passage is found in Colossians 3:20 where Paul wrote, “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.” Such passages as these are powerful for several reasons. However, I am afraid that these verses have escaped the notice of many parents.

 Usually, when such passages as Ephesians 6:1 or Colossians 3:20 are read, we direct our focus toward the children, telling them that God expects them to obey Him as well as us (the parents). We might then turn to other passages which stress God’s expectation of a child’s obedience to his parents, as well as the example of Christ’s obedience to His parents (Lk. 2:51). We make the point that children must obey parents “in the Lord,” i.e., in connection with the teachings of Christ.

 While we certainly understand the need for our children to be obedient, is there not another point which needs to be stressed? Remember, a child cannot “obey” what he has not been “told” to do! Therefore, when we read “children, obey your parents…” it is also a command to parents that we instruct our children so that they CAN obey the Lord and us! Parents, what instruction and guidance are you providing for your children?

 Let us be honest and evaluate just who it is that is instructing and training our children on a daily basis. From Old to New Testament days, God expected parents to do it (Deut. 6:6-9; Eph. 6:4). Are we doing this, or are we allowing someone or something else to do our job? Are we allowing the TV to train our children? Are we allowing their friends, or other outside influences to infiltrate our children’s minds? Yes, I recognize that as children get older, they will choose to be around their peers more than their parents, but who is it that had that daily contact during the “formative” years?

 Yes, Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20 teach children to obey their parents “in the Lord,” but this passage also places a great responsibility upon parents. How can untaught children “obey” the Lord? It is high time that parents recognize that they cannot go on “cruise control” or “auto-pilot” when it comes to parenting. Remember, “...A child left to himself brings shame to his mother” (Prov. 29:15). Parents must be vigilant, realizing that God has blessed them with a precious soul (Ps. 127:3-5). Obedient children are the result of parents willing to teach!

*-- Jarrod Jacobs preaches with the Caneyville church of Christ in Caneyville, KY. He can be reached at (270) 589-4167.*