

## The March Toward Globalism (Part 5)

Childrearing's Part

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Given 01-Jan-11; Sermon #1026

We will begin this sermon by turning to Revelation 13:4. We will use this as a starting point and will spring forward from here.

**Revelation 13:4** So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

This is the fifth sermon in this series. The previous sermon, Part 4, transitioned us directly from addressing the subject of globalism to the subject of childrearing. I believe addressing childrearing within this subject of globalism is necessary because corrupted childrearing is at the heart of many of Satan's preparations for the appearance of his version of a one world government that includes the Beast and his world-dominating system.

I want you to turn to another scripture that we have used a couple of times in the past. It is in Romans 9:22. It is a one-verse statement from the Apostle Paul.

**Romans 9:22** What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.

We all know, understand, and believe that God is preparing us for His Kingdom, but this verse gives us an understanding that somebody is preparing those who are for wrath's sake. We know that one is Satan the Devil. He is the ruler of this world, and he is preparing people to operate in his global government.

These foundational preparations have been proceeding for a fairly long period of time. From my knowledge of history, I am sure that several generations, perhaps a half dozen or so, are involved.

The Beast and all of the systems of his kingdom are not going to just suddenly materialize on the world scene. The Beast, whether considered as a government or as a single person, will be a formidable force as Revelation 13:4 says. He is going to appear

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with everything needed for him to dominate a system already in place, and the system will be on "Go." They are already operating, I personally feel, at this time.

So, how did we get to where we are in the childrearing scene here in the United States? Now childrearing is a preparation that is needed. That is what God is doing to us. We are His children. He is preparing us for His kingdom. We are to prepare our children, give them a start toward the kingdom of God. There is no reason why Satan would not follow the same general practice. He is preparing in advance for what he is going to do. So how did we get to where we are in the childrearing scene here in the United States and probably in the other Israelitish nations as well?

In the previous sermon we covered Proverbs 22:6 in a pretty good bit of detail, but the most important single scripture in that sermon appears in Ephesians 5:18. I want you to look at that again because it needs to be ingrained in our mind.

**Ephesians 5:17-18** Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.

In this verse, which precedes Paul's instruction regarding a variety of relationships, he admonishes us to "walk in the spirit," or to "be filled with the spirit." Childrearing in a godly way is a commanded function within the five relationships Paul addresses here in Ephesians 5, the overall point being that the source of the gifts that enable us to rightly conduct ourselves in all *five* relationships is the one with God.

Jesus stated in His prayer in John 17:3 that "eternal life is to *know* God." We come to know God through this relationship, and we are commanded to imitate Christ or to follow Him. We cannot imitate or follow someone unless we know them from *within* a relationship. We really do not know people who are way away from us, and we have no relationship with them. We do not know those personalities who are entertainment figures. We do not really know those people who are in the political government, and on and on and on it goes. It takes a relationship to really know somebody from the inside-out. I mean an intimate relationship, a close relationship. Our relationship with God is a key and is important to functioning well in the remaining four of those relationships. What we are focused on right now is the relationship within the family and our children.

Eternal life is the term that is used to describe the highest quality of life. It is the quality of life that God Himself lives. It is the level of life we must be striving to live. It is the *only* quality of life that is worth living eternally, and this is why it has to be our goal—eternal

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life, a quality of life. Now the enabling flows from God within our personal relationship with Him. To put it bluntly, godly childrearing practices flow from Him through the parents to properly rear their children.

As we begin today, we are going to look at a verse that is not normally thought of as being used in a child-training sense; however, I think it should, because this verse tells us what God has given us as a gift so that the qualities of His mind, especially one particular quality, can be created in ours. We should, in turn, aim for these qualities in training our children.

Turn with me to II Timothy 1:7.

**II Timothy 1:7** For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

In that list are really the qualities we need for all relationships, but I am going to concentrate on one particular one—the word "sound": a *sound* mind. That word that underlies that English word in Greek is phonetically transliterated as *sosronismos*. It is *Strong's* #4995. *Sosronismos* is one of a whole string of words from a single root word that is variously translated into English synonyms depending upon the context in which it appears. It may be translated as sound, sane, moderate, disciplined, self-controlled, sober-minded, temperate, and balanced. You will find these either in biblical or non-biblical Greek writings.

You can see there is a wide variety of synonyms for that one Greek word, depending upon the context. Now here, the *New King James* people decided to translate it as "sound," and that is fine. I personally would not translate it that way. I would tend to think of "sane"—a *sane* mind. I will tell you why in just a little bit. I think "balanced" is also very good. The question, though, is to *what* standard is sound, sane, moderate, controlled, or temperate compared or measured against? In this case it cannot be God's. Why did Paul use it here? It is all of those qualities as measured against or compared to human nature.

Compared to human nature, the sound mind of God carried to us by that spirit is really sound. It is really sane. Human nature is the opposite of all of those good qualities. It has a very strong implication toward excessive behavior. The carnal mind will drag people in that direction. Why? Because it is the mind of Satan. That is why.

Human nature, by comparison to the mind of God, is insane, immoderate, intemperate,

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uncontrolled, and unbalanced. Now why is this radical difference so? It is because the source from which they flow. Human nature flows from Satan, and sanity flows from God by His spirit. What this comparison shows us is that it defines the quality we should aim to produce in our children. Do you want your children to be self-controlled? Do you want them to be temperate in all things? Do you want them to be moderate? Do you want them to be disciplined in the right way? Certainly you do. You do not want to follow the inclinations and the mind of Satan the Devil.

Let us now go to John 15:4-5. Jesus is the speaker.

**John 15:4** Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

Are you beginning to see why living in the spirit is so important to all these relationships? It depends upon what spirit we are carrying and being led by. So the spirit in Ephesians 5:18 is the spirit of God.

**John 15:5** "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

**John 15:7-8** If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Abiding in Christ *is* being "in the spirit." Thus the fruit of which Christ is speaking in John 15 should first be produced in you and me as parents, and then the fruit should be in the goal that we seek to reproduce in our children. If we do not have it, it is awfully hard to pass it on to our children. Again, we are seeing how important what Paul said in Ephesians 5:18 is. If we want to rear our children in a godly way, it is essential that we ourselves be led by God; otherwise, the enabling is not going to be there.

Let us be reminded by going back to Galatians now, this time to chapter 5 and verse 22, and we will see what it is more specifically—what we are to strive for to produce in our children.

**Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

There is a beautiful list of qualities to work toward building in our children. This is a listing of those qualities of which sound-mindedness consists. This is what a sound-minded, sane person will produce. I mean *sane* because of God's spirit.

Let us go on to verses 19 through 21. Here listed are the works of the carnal mind.

**Galatians 5:19-21** Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness [licentiousness], idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In short, brethren, we should be aiming in our childrearing at producing the same qualities, the same characteristics that God wants to produce in us. They can be produced, not to the same degree in our children that God is able to produce in us, but we can move them in the right direction, and they will have good imitations of those qualities built within them.

So the fruit that we produce is going to be witnessed to in our presence in our example to our children day in and day out. And I think, that in an overall sense, they are going to respond to what they see more than to what they hear in the teaching. If they see it in us, it is going to be much easier for them to follow after, because they are going to want to imitate us even as you, brethren, want to imitate Christ. God put these forces to work so that if we do it, then our children will be led in that direction, and they will be able to grow in these things much more easily by far than the children in the world.

Again, it points out how important what Paul said in Ephesians 5:18 is. It is one of the most important verses in the whole book of Ephesians. It is a very brief admonition, but it is power-packed and it can be produced if it is done.

Let us go now to Ephesians 6:1-4.

**Ephesians 6:1-3** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

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The child/parent relationship is the third of the four relationships that Paul addresses. Understand this, that Paul is not going to suddenly tell us to beat the tar out of our children. Neither is he going to tell us to coddle and pamper them.

The first thing we are going to do here is take a brief look at the childrearing world that we live in. I want you to turn with me to the book of Psalms, chapter 11, verses 1 through 4. I chose this Scripture for a good reason.

**Psalm 11:1-4** In the LOORD I put my trust; how can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain"? For look! The wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow on the string, that they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart. If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? The LOORD is in His holy temple, the LOORD's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

We live in a culture in which there is an alarming breakdown of marital relationships so bad that a major news magazine recently headlined an article questioning whether we are witnessing the end of marriage as the foundational institution of American life. How long can this institution continue with divorce rampant, with homosexuality and lesbianism gaining great political power far beyond their numbers? Totally unnatural male-male and female-female unions *called* "marriage" are being forced into the culture and are gaining in numbers.

Only forty percent of the children in the United States of America live in the same home with the couple that conceived them, and into this corrupt matrix children are being born and raised. What mindset, what kind of worldview, is being produced in these children who, when they become adults, are convinced that all of this perversion is normal because it is all that they have ever experienced? The foundations are crumbling, and we have got to do something about it with *our* kids and *our* marriages.

You know what God did at the Flood. Poof! They all disappeared. He is capable of doing that again, except that He promised that He will not. But He wants to see a response in *His* children that they are willing to follow and to do things *His* way, and we have to do it in the midst of a culture where the foundations that were established long ago are crumbling before us. We cannot allow this world to trip us up.

Human nature is given to extreme forms of conduct. One hundred to one hundred fifty years ago children were raised in a very strict manner called today "Victorianism." Today our culture has swung all the other way to the end of the pendulum, and now it is

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"permissiveness." Victorianism is from Satan and so is permissiveness. Victorianism was practiced by Satan on a society. One of the interesting things is it produced fairly good adults, and in one sense, especially for the British. For the British, it was a very productive area of time, and they became a world power when all that strict discipline was going on within the family. But that is not what God wants at all.

Much of that permissiveness that we are living within now was influenced by false Christian ministers who incorrectly interpreted the teachings of Jesus Christ, and then foisted them off on churchgoers. They thought that the God of the Old Testament was all harshness; but to take it to an extreme, their picture of Jesus Christ turned Him into nothing more than a marshmallow sentimentalist. The reality of that is that the God of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ of the New were one and the same person.

Now permissiveness is the result of focusing childrearing attention on pleasing the child. Pay attention to that.

Go with me, as I lay a little bit more foundation here, back to Matthew 7. I want you to think right now that the child does not have God's Holy Spirit, therefore the child is carnal. You will agree with that. I know you will, because it is right biblically.

**Matthew 7:9-11** Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Remember, I mentioned to you before that the children are carnal. They are not converted. They have not been given God's spirit, and therefore they are not operating on exactly the same wavelength that we are.

Jesus was talking to unconverted adults—adults who had already produced children. What does He call them? He calls these unconverted people *evil*. Jesus does not lie. They may have been ordinary Joes and Mary Janes in the community. They were unconverted; and to Jesus, they were evil. They were not a holy people as we are holy. We are holy because God gave us His spirit; but He had not given them His spirit, and therefore, to Jesus rightly judging them, they were evil.

All that these people had in their heart was human nature, from which Jesus said, in Matthew 15:19, proceeds that listing which includes evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,

fornication, and theft. All of these acts flow from self-centeredness.

Now, why am I going through this? Why is it important to this subject? Because at the foundation of permissiveness, it says that human nature is fundamentally *good*, *which is* just the opposite of what Jesus said. I said earlier that false ministers are the ones responsible for pushing and influencing our world into permissiveness in the rearing of our children. That came out of unconverted minds. It came out of evil minds. Their concept here was that human nature is fundamentally good, and because of this foundation of permissiveness, they said that all that this nature needs is to be drawn out and everything will be right. All it needs is to be persuaded a little bit. Persuasion is not going to change the nature. It takes more than that.

We can see in what is going on in the world around us that the foundations are shaky, and here in the United States and Britain very largely this is because they have been persuaded by Satan and his ministers to use permissiveness as a reaction against the Victorianism that preceded it. We can all agree that the Victorianism indeed was evil. It is an extreme form of childrearing, but the answer to the extreme form of childrearing is not no discipline at all. They went all the way over to the other end of the pendulum, and that is why I said at the beginning of this section that Paul is not about to say we should beat the tar out of our children. Not at all.

The apostle Paul makes a very nice balance between the two from the spirit of a sound mind. Yes, discipline is absolutely necessary, and there are times that it should be painful to the child to reinforce the fact that the kid is wrong and that the kid is partially driven to a real repentance *because* of the pain. There is another reason, too. We will get to that a little bit more later.

If putting emphasis on pleasing the child is wrong, what is the right emphasis? We can learn it from God. What is the right emphasis in our relationship with God? *He* is the focus. The emphasis should be on what Jesus did. He said, "I always please the Father," and that is what our children should do. They should be striving to please their parents. That puts things in the right balance.

It is the parent who has the wisdom. It is the parent who has the understanding. It is the parent who has the knowledge. It is the parent who has had the experience. Is it not this way between us and God? All we have to do is reduce that equation down to family size, a family position, and we should see the wisdom in the focus in childrearing should be on children pleasing the parents.

We see then, parents, that we have to control ourselves so that the children are not



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trying to please tyrants. But now if you have the spirit of a sound mind that should not really be all that hard, because God has given us the enabling.

Over the past 60 or 70 years, with Satan's help, the approach to childrearing has been turned on its head. This change was done, as I mentioned, in order to please the child and to actually make the child momentarily happy. Well, roughly 60 or 70 years ago, through men like Dr. Benjamin Spock and others of the same mind, a gradual shift in child training began in order to build the child's self esteem. It actually became the object. But know this, that children's obedience and affection—the kind God desires—cannot be bought. Do you know why? It is actually very simple. It is because the Bible reveals that human nature is never satisfied. Human nature's source is Satan, and it is very interesting that before Dr. Spock died, he confessed that he was wrong. He was just 60 years too late.

One thing God very definitely will not instruct us to do is to raise our children permissively. Permissive childrearing produces self-centered children who grow up ruling over their parents. Isaiah even at least somewhat warned of this. They then become self-centered adults. Think of the Boomer generation. They are adults with very much self-esteem, but with little self-control and little godly character, and a major unwillingness to sacrifice for the common good.

I recently read an article by Dennis Prager. I do not know whether any of you are familiar with his name, but any time you see an article by him it is worth reading. The article was titled "If you want to raise a good person, stop nurturing your child's self-esteem."

Now regarding self-esteem, he said in this article that it was in the 1980s that California created what they called "the task force to promote self-esteem and personal social responsibility." This was at the state level, and it was going to spread out into educational circles all through the state. This was about 30 or 40 years after the Dr. Spock thing, and all of his cohorts began to shift in child training. That task force's guiding principle was to raise children's self-esteem in order to increase the number of socially responsible children in society.

As Prager said, that concept sped rapidly across the entire country, but it turns out twenty years later that the premise was entirely misguided. Now what are the findings by psychologists who deal with children all the time? Prager reported that current studies are showing that there is no correlation between goodness and morality and high self-esteem, but there is a correlation between criminality and self-esteem. He specifically quoted Florida State University professor Roy Baumeister, who got his PhD

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in psychology from Princeton University. But Baumeister has revealed a lifetime of study of violent criminals, and the one characteristic nearly all these criminals share is high self-esteem. Now Baumeister focuses on *violent* criminals, but other psychologists on other forms of criminology have similar findings, but it remains that most American parents still believe that it is their fundamental responsibility to insure that their child has high self-esteem. Now what has happened is that we have reared a whole generation that feels good about itself for no good reason.

Prager's article revealed that a survey of high-level mathematic students had a telling result. Students from seven countries were pitted against each other. All were given exactly the same test. The test showed that Americans placed last in mathematical ability, but we placed first in self-esteem, which we showed in actual practice we were clearly lacking in.

Now parental responsibility to God regarding their children is to give them a good start toward godly character, and godly character is created by building self-control, not self-esteem. Parental responsibility is to be the primer for their children's future submission to God Almighty and to His purpose.

Let us go back to Ephesians 6, verse 1. We will look at verse one a bit more closely. The first thing that Paul does is make this statement. Remember, it is addressed to the children. Remember I told you in the last sermon that Paul, in this series of admonitions, always addresses the one under authority first. The children are under authority.

**Ephesians 6:1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

This is no minor responsibility. One of the ten foundational directives covering all conduct in all of life is devoted to this law. The commandment in Exodus 20:12, and of course in Deuteronomy 5:6, says to *honor* father and mother. Now "honor" in Hebrew implies a sense of heaviness. We even use that term from time to time. We talk about a heavy responsibility. "It was a heavy situation." It can even mean burdensome. In the commandment it has a good sense, implying a very significant responsibility. It is like, "I am watching, and therefore it is heavy, because I am watching what you are doing." But there is more to just watching.

This commandment really has an effect on life—a very great significant effect on life; and fathers and mothers, if you want your children to be happy and to be well off mentally, you will work to establish this responsibility in their mind so that they do it. So that word "honor" means "this is not unimportant." It adds deep respect into the mix. It

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carries with it the sense that the mere letter of the law of obedience is not the highest standard, but children should consider it a *privilege* to submit to their parent's right alongside merely obeying.

The word "honor" is emphasizing the inner attitude in which the obedience is to be given. This puts pressure on the parents to set the right example in regard to how *they* carry out *their* responsibility to God, meaning the attitude they show before their children, the consistency with which they perform their functions, and their overall submission to God in their personal life.

Now the general term "children" is not restricted to any age limit. Regardless of whether a person is still in his parents' home, regardless of whether they have married, and regardless of whether they have established their own home, some degree of responsibility to obey—that is, to honor parents—remains until the parents' death.

Notice, again in verse 1, that Paul adds "in the Lord." "Obey your parents in the Lord." I am going to have to reconstruct this sentence back into the Greek order of words to get a more distinctive sense of what Paul is saying. The translators shifted words around to make it conform to the English word-pattern, and yet still mean the same basic thing. But I think it adds clarity if the sentence is read this way: "Obey, in the Lord, your parents." That makes very clear that "in the Lord" is a qualifying statement. "Obey, in the Lord, your parents." What this does is place more direct and stronger emphasis on who is to be obeyed.

Let us look at Ephesians 5, verse 21.

**Ephesians 5:21** ...submitting to one another in the fear of God.

He uses that prepositional phrase "in the fear of God" when addressing brethren and their treatment of one another. In verse 22 he said:

**Ephesians 5:22** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

That phrase changes one preposition, but it still means essentially the same thing.

We are going to jump all the way to Ephesians 6, verse 5.

**Ephesians 6:5** Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters

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according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;

Regarding children's obedience, "in the Lord" has the same sense as the other three. In each of the four relationships, Paul is stressing that what he commands is to be done with a conscious regard of God's clearly revealed will. In other words, you are doing it because of God. So the aim in each response is that the one under authority is giving this obedience to Jesus Christ personally. That is a heavy load.

Do you understand what he is saying there? Children, when you actually, literally obey your parents, it is as if you are obeying Jesus Christ. I think you are beginning to see that this commandment is no light responsibility, and God is watching and evaluating how we are reacting in each situation, and He wants things done as if it is being done personally *for* Him, and *to* Him. That is the kind of response that He wants.

I know that everyone of you would surely love to be doing it to Christ. You are, you see, if it is done "as to the Lord." So the aim in each response then is that the one under authority is giving this obedience to Jesus Christ Himself personally. It is another way of stating that the obedience to the parents is part of one's obedience to our Lord and Savior, and when we begin to think this through, it begins to become clear that doing this is in reality an act of worship to God Himself. That is how close He is to us in this relationship. It really is as if we are doing it to Him. That is a heavy load. If we do that, we are following right in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Go with me now to Luke, chapter 2, verse 49.

**Luke 2:49-51** And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

Now here before them was this 12-year old boy. It is hard to think of it this way, but He was their Creator. He was God in the flesh, and He had just demonstrated before all these scribes and rabbis how well schooled He was in the scriptures enough to amaze them and mystify them that somebody so young could be so knowledgeable and so aware of what was going on, and yet here He willingly subjected Himself to his parents. It is a little mild reproof. "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

And they did not understand. Not fully yet, any way.

So I ask you young people, is there any better example to follow than what He did here? The King of the universe, in a sense, submitted Himself to them. He bowed before them. He submitted Himself to them, even though the way things stood, He could have ordered them about as His servants, but He did not, and He never stopped it, because we find in John 8:28 that He said, "I always do those things that please the Father." He was always submissive to His Father.

This further confirms that the same sense of deliberately choosing to follow Christ regardless of the reality that the human one the child is submitting to is not Christ, yet that is the kind of submission God wants.

Let us go back to Ephesians 6, verse one, and we will see another reason here why a child should submit.

**Ephesians 6:1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

This is kind of interesting. I hope that I am able to teach it in a way that you can follow. We might also say that "this is righteous." Not much difference there, but it was, and it is an act of righteousness.

We are going to look at Psalm 119:172. We turn to this every once in a while, and it is good. This should be a memory scripture—something that we carry around with us at all times.

**Psalm 119:172** My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness.

We have Paul making the statement—"it is right." Psalm 119:172 confirms that, but in Paul's statement, that he makes there in Ephesians 6:1, it goes beyond that by appealing to another reason why it is right. He is actually calling on people to search their knowledge of history as well as their personal observations regarding life itself.

I do not know whether you know this, but this particular command—"It is right"—is strongly stated fifteen times in the scriptures. I am going to have you turn to one that shows this principle. It is in the book of Malachi, right in the first chapter, verse 6. I want you to see the way God stated this through Malachi. Listen to the way this is stated, how

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positively and dogmatically it is said.

**Malachi 1:6** "A son honors his father, [Is that not right? That is what a son should do. It is right.] And a servant his master. [That is right as well.] If then I am the Father, where is My honor? [He is saying, "I deserve this. You should give it to Me. It is right that you should do this to Me.] And if I am a Master, [He is the Lord. He employs us.] where is My reverence? [A Master should be revered. It is right.] says the LORD of hosts to you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'

He is incredulous that they cannot see what they were doing was wrong. Anybody ought to know, and *know* that they know, that it is right to submit to God. It is *right* to give Him reverence, because He *is* God and because He is our Creator.

Now what is Paul doing here? I gave you a little bit of a clue. He is calling upon them to search their knowledge of history and to understand what he is saying by saying "It is right." It is a natural law everybody in the world, every culture in the world knows, that a child should honor his parents. In other words, he is going beyond the commandment to the fact of a natural law.

Those of you who are familiar with the American Constitution know that in the Constitution James Madison appealed to nature's God and the laws of nature, that we have an unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Paul said the Fifth Commandment should be obeyed because it is natural law, and everybody knows that it is right, so he is piling "right" one on top of another. He is giving people reasons why they need to honor their parents, beginning with the children, and to understand the parents being honored is what is right in God's eyes—even to all in the world it is right. And so we find from Malachi 1:6 that God fully expected that He should be obeyed as their spiritual Father and as their spiritual Master. That is what Paul compares the Fifth Commandment to. That is a heavy responsibility.

It does not get done. In addition to this, when Paul addressed the marital relationship earlier in Ephesians 5, he appealed to Genesis 2:24 which says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." That was Paul's proof there in the relationship between a man and a wife. That was from the very beginning. He is saying this is the way it should be.

Then again, in this one he is actually appealing using Genesis 2, verses 15 through 17.

**Genesis 2:15-17** Then the LOORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LOORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Where is the Father-Son relationship there, or the parent/children relationship? Well, God was their Father, and what did the Father do? He commanded the children to obey Him, and they did not.

Paul is really pulling out the big guns on this commandment, and we will find out why in just a little bit. Paul is drawing our attention all the way back to creation. He is for the commandment given in Exodus 20 to show that obedience is one of God's natural laws all the way from creation. Without directly saying it, he is implying that children obeying their parents is something that everybody knows by nature is right. In so doing, he is asking people to encompass all of man's history on earth and confirm by that witness that the obedience of children to their parents has been in force and effect for all time since creation, and human history confirms this as a right that parents should expect, even as God should expect it.

And then he makes another sweeping statement which adds even more weight to this commandment. He says in Ephesians 6:2, "Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise." This is puzzling, because it is the only commandment with a promise attached to it. So why does he say, regarding the Fifth Commandment, that it is the first? You would naturally expect that there must be a second, or maybe even a third, but you can examine all ten, and this is the only commandment with a promise. So why did he do it?

Nobody knows with absolute certainty, but the most frequent guess is that the Fifth Commandment is the first of the ten which addresses our relationships with each other, because the first four commandments clearly bear on our relationship with God. Now that is one guess. However, there may be another one with a little bit different meaning, but it is very important to the overall subject of this series.

Recall that God is the One who directly inspired Paul to insert that word "first." It came from God, not Paul; therefore there must be an overriding or undercurrent, a holy reason why that "first" was put there.

Now the word or the term "first" has more than one usage in the Bible, and this second

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reason may have absolutely nothing to do where this word is used in relation to the listing of the Ten Commandments; rather it may be indicating that within our relationships with each other, the Fifth Commandment is first in rank of importance.

Let us turn to the book of Mark, chapter 12, verses 28 and 29.

**Mark 12:28-29** Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LOORD our God, the LOORD is one.

The scribe did not ask which is the first commandment God gave, nor did he ask which is the first commandment listed among the ten; rather, he asked which is the foremost or most *significant* of all commandments. Jesus responded in the same manner as the question was asked.

**Mark 12:30** And you shall love the LOORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.

Are you beginning to see? "First" can also have the meaning of "most significant" or "foremost." Understanding this, then, Paul's usage of the same sort of wording raises one's obedience to the Fifth Commandment to a very high level indeed. Very high. It would mean that in some way the Fifth Commandment, among the Ten, is the most significant one. It does not necessarily mean that it overrides the First Commandment, but where it is placed now becomes an issue. It is the most significant in relation to what? It is the most significant in relation to the six commandments that have to do with our relationships.

Now what is God saying? Basically, He is saying this to parents. "If you take care of your children, and rear them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, then the keeping of the Fifth Commandment is going to make secure the whole culture, because the obedience, the way of life of the entire culture, is tied intimately with how the children are raised. The family, through the rearing of the children, is the well-spring of whether life in that culture is going to be good or bad, whether it is going to be safe and secure, or whether it is going to be dangerous.



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Brethren, we have got to translate all of this into our relationship with our Father in heaven, and to begin to see why He makes this such an issue, because if we do not allow Him to rear us according to the dictates of His way of life, then we will not be there because we would disrupt everything in the family of God, in the Kingdom of God, just exactly the way Satan the Devil does. This has far, far reaching implication, all the way into the Kingdom of God. It is the foremost commandment in terms of whether we will be in the Kingdom of God, because if we allow ourselves to be reared properly by God, we are going to keep the first four commandments, and if we are reared properly by God, we are going to behave ourselves within the community as well.

Here it is. Commandment number five is sitting right in the middle, and in a sense you see, everything in terms of the culture, or even to the Kingdom of God, hinges on this allowing ourselves to be reared by God, and beginning the process of rearing our children and preparing them for the Kingdom of God. It is really a big responsibility that has been given to us.

Before the sermon we sang Psalm 128. Psalm 127 and Psalm 128 are linked to one another. "Lo, children are the gift of God, and sons the blessing He commands." They are there for a reason.

In the next sermon we will learn the actual practice of rearing them. These children are merely on loan from God. They are His gift to us. We get first crack at them, and we learn from them.

I will stop there, and God willing, we will go on the next time.