

**Colossians: Christ Over All**  
**Living as Children and Parents in the Lord**  
**Colossians 3:20-21**  
Sunday, March 3, 2019

### **Introduction**

Paul's primary goal in Colossians 3 is to help us understand what it means to live as people who are 'in Christ.' Every aspect of our lives should be informed by our relationship with Christ – including our relationships.

In verses 18-19 Paul describes God's design for the marriage relationship and how God intends for husbands and wives to live toward one another. Now, in verses 20-21 he turns his attention to children and parents.

Often verses like these get reduced to being used as simple rules and commands, but the context of Colossians 3 encourages us to remember that Paul's aim is deeply spiritual and eternally significant. If we simply see these verses as rules to follow then we will miss the true significance of what God is trying to do in and through us in these relationships.

### **The Reason Relationships are Hard: Back to Genesis**

As we think about the call for children to obey and for parents to lead well it is important that we remember what makes relationships difficult – our sin nature. The reason children struggle to obey is because of the sin nature. The reason parents struggle to lead well is because of the sin nature. Thankfully, through Christ we know that there is an answer for sin and we can learn to live in a way that pleases Him.

### **Instructions for Children: Obey Your Parents (3:20)**

- The command for children is stated simply, they are to obey their parents in everything, but the motivation for the command is what makes it uniquely Christian. The reason children are to obey is because it pleases the Lord. As Christians our aim is not simply to follow rules, but to live as those who are 'in Christ' and to glorify God by following His plan and His commands.

### **What Parents Should Consider about the Instructions to Children**

- **Parents: Help your kids make the connection between obeying you and pleasing God** – As parents we need to help our kids recognize that their obedience is about more than rules. When they disobey they are not only in defiance against us; they are rebelling against God. As Christian parents it is part of our responsibility to help our kids understand the realities of sin, the need for repentance and forgiveness and the gifts of mercy and grace that are available through Jesus.

- **Parents: When dealing with disobedience from your children you should strive to be more concerned about their heart before God than your own comfort or preferences** - What gauge do you use for determining how you respond to your children's disobedience? Our own comfort and preferences are unreliable gauges. As Christian parents we must be willing to do the hard work of looking at our children's hearts and not just their actions and using discipline to help them grow in their desire to please God.
- **The Extent of the Command: How long are we children and how long must we obey our parents in everything?** In this context Paul is writing to children who are living under the care and provision of their parents; it's a command for children in the home. However it is worth noting that the command to honor our parents is not limited by age or stage of life. Throughout our lives we should seek to respect and show honor to our parents (Ephesians 6:1-3; Exodus 20:12).

### **Instructions for Parents (3:21)**

- **A Command for Fathers or Parents?** In this verse Paul addresses fathers as the head of the household and as the one who is responsible for setting the tone of the home. However, the responsibility of parenting is a shared responsibility and the admonition of the verse is applicable to both moms and dads.
- **The Command: Don't Provoke Your Children** - Paul wants us as parents to think about the way we use our authority and the impact it can have on our kids. We can make it easy for them to obey or we can make it really hard for them. We can encourage their growth or frustrate them.
  - **Ways we can provoke our children:** Misusing discipline, neglect, inconsistency, sinful anger, harsh words, lying, etc.
- **The Reason: So that they aren't discouraged (disheartened)** – We can use our role as parents to encourage, build up, equip and strengthen our children, or we can crush them. God has given us children and they are looking to us for guidance and loving authority. When we don't parent the way God has called us to there are consequences.
- **The Proper Aim: Raise them "in the Lord"** – In the parallel passage (Ephesians 6:4) Paul tells us that we are to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We must strive to help them know, love and follow God through the way we parent.