**Parenting in the Lord**

 *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.”****4****Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesian 6:1-4, ESV)*

 For the believer, parenting is called to be done on a foundation of faith. Happy Father’s day to you all as we talk today about messages that pertain to being a parent and child. The Apostle Paul had just finished explaining what needed to be fleshed out about marriage; in those verses, he had shown both the natural image of what a couple was, and then its spiritual parallel image. He had also just drawn the connection between the man being like Christ, and the woman being like the church. After saying this, he moved onto the internal life of a couple once they were a family with kids. The verses chosen for today’s message are in a large part aimed at children, but there is advice there for fathers as well. Therefore, today we’re going to focus on being a parent in the Lord. My prayer is that we will not only consider our position as a parent as a natural duty, but also a spiritual work and calling. Again, for the Christian, parenting is called to be in the Lord. So, let’s talk about this calling…

 The Christian father is called to teach his children both obedience as well as the discipline and instruction of the Lord. It is important to note that the first words are directed at the children – but, unfortunately, today, the word “obey” is not as valued as it was back in those times. Even in the eastern hemisphere of today’s world, obedience is more respected as a true virtue than here in the West. In the passage above, we can see that the promises connected to some of the Ten Commandments are alluded to as an encouragement for the children to obey their parents. The one who respected and honored their father or mother would have favor in their life and would remain in the Lord’s favor for a long time[[1]](#footnote-1).

 It was up to the fathers of the households to pass on these words to their children. Fathers and mothers were supposed to teach the children the Ten Commandments of God to their kids. Note, however, that children would not be able to obey God, who is invisible if they did not obey their visible father and mother. However, since it was the father that was the head ruler of the house in those days (and called to be in Christian households today), Paul tells them specifically not to provoke the children to anger. According to the passage, the fathers were being called to raise the children in the Lord – not based on their wrong example of venting their anger on the kids, but rather by using the Word of God and promoting the lifestyle and discipline of the Lord.

 When a child grows up with the Word of God in their life and they are praised for their obedience, that correct spiritual behavior becomes pleasing to the child. However, when he or she is only affected by the anger that is directed to him or her, that child can grow in fear and transfer that fear of receiving anger from God, when a relationship with God begins to be possible. The child’s foundation gets built on that wrong anger and fear, which is taught by the father’s (or parent’s) wrong expression of anger.

 Dear fathers, our job as fathers is extremely important for the sake of the future of our children. When our kids rejoice in their obedience to us, that joy will transfer to when they obey God.

 We are called, as parents, to raise children in the Lord – but it is important to do so without establishing an impression of anger in kids’ minds.

 May God give wisdom to raise children in the Lord. May they learn to obey from us, as we obey the Lord ourselves. May they grow in His Word and commandments, just as we ourselves follow them. The Christian father is called to teach his children both obedience as well as the discipline and instruction of the Lord. For the believer, parenting is called to be done on a foundation of faith. in His Word.

1. Please note that the original sense was that they would live in Israel and not outside of God’s literal kingdom for all of their lives. This comes from the trauma of constant invasion and the loss of their kingdom over and over again, much like Armenians throughout history. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)