

Rod Rindahl

HCCL, May 18, 2025

#3

Living in Light & Love:

God's design for raising children in a Christian home

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

Good morning, welcome to Harvest Community Church, Litchfield. "May grace and peace be multiplied to you. (1 Peter 1:2) We are very glad that you are here.

Let's pray:

Introduction:

I have made a general rule in my preaching that I will not use my family, especially my children, for sermon illustrations unless they first approve of the story I'm about to share or it puts them in a positive light. No one likes to be used as an illustration of something bad, embarrassing, or even sinful - even if it's true. **Wisdom #1 Build up your kids in love - speak truthfully about them in public, speak more about their strengths, while not denying their weaknesses.**

So, I reached out to my kids and son-in-law this past week to ask if I could share a few pictures of them with you this morning. I wanted you to see that the idea of growing up in a Christian home can give a false impression. Simply because one grows up in a Christian home doesn't mean that they will be perfect "Christian" kids. Each of one of my kids (and grandkids) is valuable because they are created in God's image, with unique personalities, likes and dislikes, a mind of their own, and a moral responsibility for their decisions, and life choices.

The privilege of having grown up in a Christian home, in a pastor's home, actually can make life harder, sooner. Living in a circle of Christian expectation, often unreasonable expectations, from family, the church, and neighbors brings incredible pressure in kids. It can lead to basing one's life on "performance" ("If I just act a certain way, then I'll be loved and approved of") rather than personal heartfelt devotion to the Lord.

In my family, from the moment my girls came out of the womb, they were exposed to Christian values, Christian truths, and Christian expectations. This exposure did not mean they would automatically become Christians or embrace the truths of Christianity. It meant that the way in which we teach them Christian truth is as equally important as proclaiming that truth. **Wisdom #2 - Be consistent in living out your own faith in Christ before your kids in love-** rejoice more, be honest more (repent and don't repeat), be faithful more and be more forgiving (of yourself and your kids). What they see is often what they will do, especially as young children.

1. Children in a Christian Home

What the Bible says: **Ephesians 6:1-4** (ESV) 1 **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.

Leading up to this passage the apostle Paul has addressed significant expectations for the Christian wife and the Christian husband based on God’s design for Christian relationships:

- 1) A wife’s submission to their husband (“...as to the Lord” vs 22-24)
- 2) A wife’s respect for their husband (vs 33)
- 3) A husband’s Christ-like love for their wife (“...as Christ loved” vs 25)

Each of these expectations are grounded in a motivation to first please the Lord.

In **Ephesians 6:1-4** Paul turns to God’s design for relationships between Children growing up in a Christian home and how Father’s are to lead the way in that relationship. When Paul says, “**Children**” he may be speaking about young people - toddlers to teens. He may also have a broader and extended expectation that points also to “adult-children.” Culturally, in Roman culture and Jewish culture, the Father of the home held sway on the direction of the family even over adult children.

Paul is calling for a co-operative spirit, an obedient will that recognizes Dad and Mom are God’s appointed leader of the home for the benefit of the family. **Obedience (demonstrated by submission)** in a Christian home points to a recognition of God’s wisdom and will. How we relate to one another in the home, points to how we relate to God in the world.

Paul’s word comes from the 10 Commandments - **Command #5** says, “**Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.**”

Rebellion, is the opposite of Obedience and viewed by God in a very severe way. King Saul, refused to obey the Lord’s command of wiping out Israel’s enemies and he paid a huge price for it:

1 Samuel 15:22-23 (ESV)

22 And Samuel said,

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
as in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
and to listen than the fat of rams.

23 For **rebellion is as the sin of divination**,
and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has also rejected you from being king.”

Eph 6:2 “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.”

Obedience points to Honor and Honor point’s to God’s wise design for the Christian family. Honor given to mom/dad promises “well-being” or “long life” or “good relationships” with parents and family. Honor refers to the value one places on others. It says, “I value mom/dad more than I value my wants, my cravings, and my way. I speak well and obey mom/dad because they are special to me!”

Places in the Bible for further study and application: Proverbs 1:1-19; 6:20-22; 23:22-25

2. Father's Teaching Their Children

4 **Fathers**, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:22).

Father's love their children by teaching, disciplining them, and instructing them God's word. (Eph 6:2)

Father's are not to "**provoke** your children to anger" - intimidation, thoughtlessness, inconsistency in living out moral values (hypocrisy), being inflexibly demanding, pridefully arrogant ...etc...

Wise Christian fathers see in their young children what their children cannot see, God's purpose for their lives.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV) 4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 **You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.** 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 **You shall teach them diligently to your children**, and shall **talk** of them when you sit in your house, and when you **walk** by the way, and when you **lie down**, and when you **rise**. 8 You shall **bind them** as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall **write them** on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

First, Christian dad this has more to do with your own response to God's expectation on your relationship with him.

Is God's truth immersed into your daily breath, your daily walk?

Is it the first thing you see in the morning and the last thing you see at night?

Is it bound to work you do?

Is it embossed into your home?

Before, you expect your children to live for God in an obedient and honoring way, is this happening in your life?

Inconsistency and hypocrisy are the poisons that can cause massive damage to the Christian home.

Take sometime to search your heart and life. If there needs to be repentance to get you back on the road to having God's truth "on your heart," then do what you need to do to make that happen. This is far more important than hobbies, or preferences and if your kids are little they will see a humble, godly man, seeking to live his life our honorably before the Lord. If your kids are older, they will see a man responding to a God of second chances and set you on a course for relationship repair and redemption.

Dad, in love discipline, and instruct your children. This IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY! God will help you. The church will come along side of you. Your wife will respect you!

Let the 10 Commandments be in your heart and they will be before your children's eyes and hearts!

Let's pray!