

Text: Eph 6.1-6
 Mother's Day

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 St Stephen's: Sat/Sun

Praise and Respect for Moms

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Over these past four week we have been looking at **Eph 5**, tracing God's purposes for our **relationships**. We've been focusing especially on the family, and we finish on Mother's Day today with a look at the first paragraph of Eph 6. In that paragraph Paul talks about **raising kids**, and quotes one of the **10 Commandments**. There are the **building blocks** of life, and if you don't build them into your life, your life won't go well.

"Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land."
 Exodus 20:12

How do you do that?

Well, it differs during the seasons of your life. Let's start out looking at your early years...

1. **When I am Young, by Obedience and Respect**

"Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed them in authority over you." Eph 6:1

Obey— do what they ask... (and as Bec's mom would add,) pleasantly & immediately. This obedience and respect for parents when you are young is an **important training step** for all of life...

Respect... that is the attitude that says, this person is important. Very important!

"Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD." Lev 19:32

(my father, always rising in the presence of a woman...)

The **capacity to respect and obey** people is **an essential life skill**...

What if you hired someone to **do sales** in your business and someone came into the store and you said, "Go see if you can help that customer" and they said to you... "You've got to be kidding!" What if you were lying on an **operating table** near the end of a surgical

procedure and the surgeon said to his assistant, go ahead and stitch him up, and the assistant said, "Whatever..." shrugged her shoulders and walked away. What if **marines** on the ground in Iraq were being protected by air cover and they called in support and the pilots overhead said... "You've got to be kidding..."

The capacity to obey is **an essential life skill...** In every group of people trying to accomplish a task there is a need to give and take directions. That is true of the government, of every school, of the military, of any athletic team, of every small business and every large corporation.

If you were on one of these teams, would you want someone to **work alongside you** who **has an attitude** every time they are asked to do something?

If you led one of these teams, would you want someone **to work for you** who gets an attitude every time you ask them to do something?

The quickest way to **destroy your life** is to **refuse to do anything you don't want to do.**

The child who only does what she wants to do is **in a prison**, developing an inability to work on any team or be part of any organization. That is a person who **can't work with others, can't learn from others, and can't get along with others.** That's a dark prison. And that is a person who is **incapable of faith.** Because they **can only follow their own desires** and feelings. They are unable to follow Jesus or trust God.

That is why respect for people and our relationship to the Lord are **linked.** Look at the vs again!

"show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD."
If we don't develop the ability to obey people, we will never be able to obey God, we will never be able to follow him, trust Him, or believe in him.

Where do we learn these essential life and faith skills? **In the home,** when we are young. In the home **you are in training for life.**

BTW, maybe there are some of here today who would like to **get rid of this attitude problem**. Today would be a good day to give it over to God and ask him to take it from you... That's the first step.

2. **During My Youth, by Listening and Appreciation**

As you grow, you start **to see all the faults of your parents**. This spells trouble. Then the last thing you feel like doing is listening to them or appreciating them.

"Listen to your father who gave you your life and do not despise your mother.." Pr. 23:22

Today what is much more popular is to **blame your parents** for all your problems. But the scriptures say...

"If you curse your parents, your life will end like a lamp that goes out in the dark." Prov. 20.20

Blame is self-destructive. Because you blame people for ruining your life, and you stop trying to change your life, and you become an angry, blaming person. You become a victim. And **nothing is ever your fault**. Today, if you're still hurting and being resentful and bitter over things your parents did in the past, you're mostly hurting yourself. It's much better to take the hand of Jesus... and **forgive and let go and be thankful for what God has given you and get on with living for Him...**

"Be grateful for the good things that the Lord has given you and your family..." Deut. 26:11

There are lots of "good things" to be thankful for in your family...

1. My Mom and Dad gave me my start... You may have second thoughts about how your folks raised you, but no matter how they raised you, they gave you something that nobody else in the world could give you—they **gave you your life**. Have you ever thanked them for bringing you into this world and giving you a start in life?

2. My Mom and Dad gave me their best... Parenting is a confusing, challenging, bewildering job. They say they can tell the

stress in the different **years of a tree's life** if you cut it and look at the rings. Certain rings are packed tightly together; those are years of raising kids!

A father came home from work at the end of the day and found his three children were **outside**, still in their pajamas, playing in the mud, with empty food boxes and wrappers strewn all around the front yard. The door of his wife's car was open, as was the front door to the house and there was no sign of the dog.

Inside, a lamp had been knocked over, the TV was blaring, and the family room was strewn with toys and clothes. In the **kitchen**, dishes filled the sink, breakfast food was spilled on the counter, the fridge door was open wide, dog food was spilled on the floor, a broken glass lay under the table, and a small pile of sand was spread by the back door. He quickly headed **upstairs**, looking for his wife. He was met with a small trickle of water as it made its way out the bathroom door. As he peered inside he found wet towels, more toys strewn over the floor. Miles of toilet paper lay in a heap and toothpaste had been smeared over the mirror and walls. He was **worried** she may be ill, or that something serious had happened. As he rushed to the **bedroom**, he found his wife still curled up in the bed in her pajamas, reading a novel. She looked up at him, smiled, and asked how his day went. He looked at her bewildered and asked, "What happened here today?" She again smiled and answered, "You know every day when you come home from work and you ask me what in the world did I do today?"

"Yes," was his incredulous reply. She answered, "Well, today I didn't do it."

Your parents worked for you for years and years. Our last child leaves home this fall. She's 18. That's $18 \times 6 = 108$ child years of parenting. Becca has carried the major portion of that labor. Most of our moms carry this kind of load on top of a job! Folks, **that kind of love from your moms is worth your respect**. Has it been too long since you said "thank you"?

3. **When I am Older, by Thankfulness and Care**

"When your mother is old, show her your appreciation." Prov. 23:32

For many parents, **the older they get the less honor they get**. They are no longer wanted in the market place for their skills and wisdom. Their grown children are busy with their own families. All of their friends start to die off. They lead **lonely lives**.

Your parents have a great need to feel and to know that they made some kind of positive contribution in your life. They need your **thankfulness** and your **care**. They need to know that you still love them, still need them, still treasure them.

How do you do that? You can **stay in touch** with them. You can write a letter, send a card, make a call. You can **share the details of your life**. They want to know! The Bible says we are to value and to treasure and to hold in highest esteem our aged parents. You can ask for **their counsel**. You can welcome them in your life!

The Bible says that the way you treat your older, elderly parents is the demonstration of your faith...

"Anyone who won't care for his own relatives when they need help, especially his own family, has no right to say he is a Christian. Such a person is worse than the heathen." 1 Tim 5:8

This is the **cycle of the family**. At one point in life, they cared for you. As they grow older, the time will come when you will **care for them**. God says that's part of being a Christian. It's a **building block**.

A Command with a Promise

"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Eph 6:2-3

Paul pointed out that this is the first commandment with a promise...

Your future days and years **are linked** to this commandment.

If you walk through life with an **attitude**, if you only do **what you want to do**, if you get in everyone's face along the way, you will bump into life hard, and your days here will be tough and grow short. And you will

have only followed yourself, and only worshipped yourself. And your prison will grow very dark, and your life will be angry and bitter and short.

If you honor and love and respect and follow the guidance of your **parents**, you will be prepared to honor and love and respect and work with **other people**. And you will be able to honor and trust and respect and follow **God**. And your days will grow long on the earth, and the days here lived for him will stretch out before you into eternity. Because the life lessons you have learned here will prepare you well for life there.

Prayer...

We thank you for our mothers and our fathers, and ask you blessing upon them...

Where we have fallen short, where we have not honored them or obeyed them or cared for them as we could have and should have, we ask your forgiveness...

We ask that you would heal, and restore this honor and this love to our families...