

Victory of the Lamb – Called Series – God’s Calling for Children – Ephesians 6:1-2 –

May 23, 2021 Pastor Bill Limmer

For thirty-two seasons, Bart Simpson has been a role model for children. Bart is a prankster, mischievous, and rebellious. Whether you watch The Simpsons or not, Bart’s influence has been far reaching and has creating many lowlights and struggles in families.

What are some of the lowlights from your childhood? Share those – just kidding. Family strife and struggles have been around since the very first family. The first son born into the world, Cain, got angry and killed his brother, Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery, Sampson whined until he got what he wanted.

Today as we continue our series entitled “Called,” we went to answer the question: **What is God’s calling for children?**

Today in many of our homes there is a role reversal that happens. The kids are really running the house. Kind of like Sampson did. He was the really strong guy in the Old Testament. He was not only strong in strength, but he was also strong in manipulation. Do you know a home like that? The kids pout, scream, cry until they get what they want. I think every parent has experienced at least the attempt of this role reversal inside the house or even at a store. To avoid the tears or the creams or the hurt feelings or the embarrassment parents end up obeying their kids. But God hasn’t called young children to play parents or manipulate the home and so run the household. Here is the calling for children as given by God.

Ephesians 6:1-2 ***Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.***

The word obey is a word that literally means listen to with intent that you are to do what you heard. Is it easy to obey? Depends right? If your mom tells you to have your favorite candy as a bedtime snack, it’s easy. If you dad tells you go grab the toy you have been wanting because he is going to pay for it, it is easy. But if you don’t want to go to bed even if it is 30 minutes past your normal bedtime, and your mom tells you to go to bed. Not so much.

I always obeyed my parents . . . except when I didn’t. I was typically well behaved away from home and not so much at home. I don’t remember how, but a more than a handful of times I would misbehave and when my mom came to discipline me, I would run. And she would chase me throughout the house. I would make a couple of circles in the house until I could get a big enough lead to make it out the front door. And then my mom would go running after me. When we got about two or three houses down the block I would slow down and just as she was about to catch me, I would speed off and leave her in the dust. I don’t know how but I am still alive today. Low light.

It now reminds of Proverbs 22:15: *Folly is bound up in the heart of a child.* Folly is the notion that I can do whatever I want when I want without any consequences to me or others. Because of sin, every generation is made up of children and adults who don’t understand they can make choices, but they can’t choose the consequences.

God, through Paul, doesn’t say, “Children obey your parents only when they ask you to do something that you like. He doesn’t say, children obey your parents only if they buy you something-

Paul does say, ***Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*** Obedience to our parents is a sign of our connection and relationship with God. We show our love for God by obeying our parents. Our obedience

to our parents to be guided by God's word. So, we should never do anything that goes directly against God's Word. In Colossians chapter 3 it says in verse 20: ***Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*** The context is that parents will only ask to do what is right and God pleasing. We obey our parents because it is the right thing to do. It pleases God. In other words, he designed the family to work this way. It is not a great idea to go away from the instructions of the designer as I found out the other day when I put it bookshelf together by the picture on the box instead of by the directions it came with. By the way, this did not shock my family. And thankfully, my daughter helped me disassemble and reassemble follow the directions.

What is God's calling for children? 1. Obey your parents in the Lord

And there is more. Ephesians 6:2 ***Honor your father and mother.*** The word honor means to view something, someone as valuable, to set a price on, to treasure or respect. Every child has something they honor or value. Maybe it is their blanky, or maybe it is their basketball, or doll, or video game. To honor our parents is to value them as special and important. Even when they don't always do what is right or what we like, we to honor them, and give them the value for the role God has given them in your life. We can honor our parents by treating them with respect. Speak well of them. And seek out their wisdom and advice.

Before we move on, I want us all to be cognizant that in some homes the environment is toxic, and abuse is occurring. We can honor our parents while still protecting ourselves by incorporating boundaries using godly wisdom. We can honor our parents but not allow them to manipulate us or our marriages. We can honor our parents but also walk with Jesus even if it displeases them.

What Paul says is clear and simple. But for generations children have struggled to obey and honor their parents. Here is the deal: disobedient children are not a sign of a societal problem. It is a sign of a spiritual problem. Parents when you misbehaved as a child, it wasn't a societal problem, it was a spiritual problem. Parents, when your children misbehave today, it is not a societal problem, it is a spiritual problem. Children when you are following the ways of Bart Simpson, it is not a cultural condition it is a spiritual condition. It was not, is not, and will never be ok to disobey and dishonor parents who are in line with God. Did you ever disobey or dishonor your parents? Maybe sneaking out at night, having a party behind their back, telling them you were going one place, but you went to another, verbally rip them apart, ever do something because you had to instead of doing it out of respect and love. I wish I would have understood that when I was making my mom chase me, I was really running away from God.

What is God's calling for children? 1. Obey your parents in the Lord. 2. Honor your parents

While God hasn't called you children to run their parent's house, he has called older children to take care of their parents. There is a place for role reversal in the parenting and childhood relationship. This good role reversal happens as mom and dad age and needs a car. 1 Timothy 5:4 says, ***But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.***

As we age, we often find ourselves in the role of taking care of our parents who took care of us. It is not always easy. And it takes a lot of prayer and a lot of love, but sometimes out of love and for safety's sake, adult children need to make difficult decisions so that their parents are taken care of properly.

What is God's calling for children? 1. Obey your parents in the Lord. 2. Honor your parents 3. Take care of your parents.

Obey. Honor Care. How are you doing? How did you do?

But I want you to know that no matter who you are, what you have done, there is one who always obeyed and honored his earthly parents and his heavenly Father. Jesus gave the greatest honor, the greatest value to his heavenly Father. Jesus came to do his Father's will because it pleases God and to do it in our place. John 6:38 ***For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.***

As I mentioned a couple of weeks ago on Mother's Day, when Mary and Joseph left the big city without their oldest child (12 year old Jesus), Jesus was found in the Temple about his Father's business. When Jesus fed the five thousand, he first gave high value to God by thanking him for the 2 fish and five loaves of bread. Jesus when he was praying in the handful of hours left in his life, pray if there is another way let's do that but not my will your will be done. Jesus was saying I'm going to obey you, even if it costs me my life because your will and your way is best. That is giving high value to the Father. Jesus valued God and so honored him more than money, more than his name, his way, his position, his possessions, his opinion. Jesus valued God above all things and people. When Jesus was on the cross, he told his disciple to do that role reversal thing and take care of his mother for him because he wasn't going to be on earth to do it. And because Jesus obeyed and honored his Father, you and I, and all people have a Savior. And instead of making us feel like a wicked stepbrother or sister for blowing it, Jesus gives us credit for all he did, and Jesus took credit for all we have done – the cross.

A Savior to obey, a Savior to honor, a Savior to love and value more than any other.

When you and I give highest value to God, we will obey and honor our parents. Here is how we can obey and honor our parents. By obeying and honoring God. We can listen to them with the intent to do what they say. We can honor our parents by giving them empathy in their times of distress and weakness. Parenting is quite possibly the most difficult task on earth. Parenting is a piece of cake until you have the responsibility. We can honor our parents by seeking their advice. There are not too many of us who no longer have parents living, who wouldn't go for a talk two for advice in difficult situations and encouragement. We can honor our parents by thanking them for what they are providing for us. We can honor our parents by including them instead of excluding them. God has designed a beautiful family life. Let's follow his calling.