**RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILDREN**

Sunday School Lesson 7

*Building Right Relationships*

Proverbs 22:6

4/16/2023

**Introduction:** Two weeks ago, we had our second lesson on the parental/child relationship. We were not quite able to get through all of it, so we are going to pick up this morning where we left off. Let’s first review the principles that have already been covered through two lessons. 1. The parent must remember the chief objective in the relationship with the child – raise them up in the admonition of the Lord. 2. The parent must understand the importance of having a right spirit. 3. The parent must help to break the will of the child. 4. The parent must expect proper respect from the child. 5. The parent must be honest and live honestly. 6. The husband/father must rule his own house well. 7. The parent must be attentive to the changing diet of the child. 8. The parent must have a proper understanding and use of chastening. During today’s lesson, we are also going to observe a few thoughts related to the parent/child relationship from the standpoint of an adult child who has left the home. As mentioned previously, children who are still in the home, even if adults, are expected to submit to the leadership in that home. As for grown children out of the home, the dynamic of the relationship with your parents can be challenging to properly navigate. There is a Biblical expectation that we are to properly honor our parents. We’ll consider how to properly accomplish that, but first let’s finish up what’s left from our previous lesson:

1. **THE FATHER MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO PROVOKE HIS CHILDREN TO WRATH.**
   * Ephesians 6:4 - And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Colossians 3:21 - Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 1 Thess. 2:11 In both places that we find this command in the Bible, it is right on the heels of instruction for children to obey their parents. Given the connection, the thought seems to be that we have to be careful in how we handle our children and what our expectations are for them. If we make it impossible for them to obey us and please us, we are setting them up for anger, wrath, and discouragement. If we are always criticizing them and pointing out their shortcomings, then we are making it difficult to have a healthy relationship with them and for them to find happiness and joy in the home. This is the balance of parenting. Consider how longsuffering and merciful the Lord is with us. Is it reasonable to hold them handle them tougher than the Lord has handled us? Don’t you agree that the Lord knows best how to handle His children? If He is our example as a Father, then we ought to follow His lead in parenting. It must be clarified that this verse does not mean that we withhold discipline simply because our children are mad at us. The Lord doesn’t withhold chastening if someone is upset with Him. It means that we ought to consider whether we are causing unnecessary anger/wrath for our children. We ought to seek wisdom from the Lord in this area.
2. **THE PARENT MUST BE AVAILABLE AND APPROACHABLE.**

* Jeremiah 33:3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. Acts 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 1 John 1:3 Our Heavenly Father sets the example for us in this matter of being available and approachable. As adopted children, the Heavenly Father has His throne of grace open for us to come in unto Him. If we go back to the beginning of man, we see the Lord’s desire to fellowship with us. He walked with man in the Garden of Eden. Not only is the Heavenly Father available for us to come to, but He actually commands us to come to Him often. We are to pray without ceasing. That means that the Lord wants us constantly communicating with Him. This ought to be the same approach that we take with our children. We ought to encourage their communication with us. We ought not to make them feel like we are too busy for them or that we are irritated by their desire to speak with us. Do your children know that they can come to you any time and with any problem? Let’s foster that type of relationship with our children.

1. **THE HONOR GIVEN TO PARENTS SHOULD BE MORE THAN JUST LIP SERVICE.**

* Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Proverbs 23:22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. When we think of honoring our parents, that should be more than just lip service. The honor shown to them ought to be based out of our love for them. This is what the Lord desires of us. He doesn’t just want for us to show Him honor, but He wants for us to truly love and respect Him. To honor means to hold in high esteem. It is a great show of respect. If they have advice for us, we should truly listen or hearken unto it (assuming it means the standard of Godly advice). Godly parents will desire to still bring value to the lives of their grown children. If both parties handle it properly, parents can be great advisors for their adult children. While this doesn’t mean that the child must follow all of the counsel given, it ought to be considered respectfully with prayer and Godly wisdom. Adult children ought to make a serious effort both inwardly and outwardly to truly honor their parents.

1. **SPECIAL CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN IN ADDRESSING WRONG DONE BY PARENTS.**

* 1 Timothy 5:1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, gave Timothy special instruction in dealing with elders in the church. His instruction to Timothy was to avoid rebuking an elder and to intreat him instead. The example given was to intreat that elder as one would intreat his father. This brings us to this thought about dealing with times where a parent may be wrong. Perhaps, your parents don’t handle your children the way that you have requested for them to handle things. It can be easy to get frustrated and even upset. If we are not careful, we can handle our parents in a particularly harsh way. This is probably because we expect a certain behavior out of them because they are the ones who instructed us in the first place. We must resist the urge to be harsh and instead seek to speak to them about it in a way that is gracious and wise. It helps to remember that your parent is always going to see you as their child. They have seen you through every phase of your life, and it can be hard for them to take rebuke from their own child. Strive to treat them with the honor that ought to be given to parents from their children.

1. **PARENTS MUST ACCEPT THAT THEIR GROWN CHILDREN HAVE THEIR OWN HOME.**

* Ephesians 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. John 9:21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. Sometimes, one of the hardest things for a parent to do is to let their child go. Those childhood years seem to pass by so quickly, and that child is an adult in the blink of an eye. It is important for the parent to remember that this is what they have been preparing for. They should not want that child to remain a child forever. That would be selfish. Sadly, I’ve seen many parents who seemed unable to let their child go, and the parents attempted to insert themselves in every area of that grown child’s life. This will either result in a very immature adult child, or it will result in a grown child who is resentful toward his parents.

1. **GROWN CHILDREN SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THEIR AGING PARENTS, AND THEIR PARENTS WOULD BE WISE TO ALLOW THEM TO.**

* Mark 7:10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. 1 Timothy 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. The Lord Jesus reproved the religious leaders for allowing children to avoid providing for their parents by dedicating their goods to the temple or the Lord instead. When Moses gave the command regarding parents and children, it was a very serious command. The result for such a child willing to ignore the command was death. Clearly, the Lord desires for children to care for their aging parents. Of course, this also requires humility on behalf of the parents to allow their children to help to take care of them. Children should also be careful not to rush this process along with parents.