**Kids, the Future of Christ’s Church Depends on You**

We misuse many passages without even realizing it. We read through a passage, come up with some surface impression, and walk away with an anemic moral, missing the depth of God’s Word. **Ephesians 6:1-3** should be in the top ten list. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ (this is the first commandment with a promise), ‘that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land’” (ESV).

We all know what that passage means, right? It means if kids will obey their parents, they’ll live longer. Parents tell their children not to play in the middle of the road. If the children obey, they won’t get hit by cars at a young age. No doubt, there is truth to this principle. It is easy to think this is the message of **Ephesians 6:1-3** in the modern safety we experience. However, when we remember Christianity could be a death sentence for folks when Paul wrote this, it is hard to believe he was saying when children obey our parents in the Lord, they’ll live longer. Perhaps we need to rethink this overly simple point.

Paul says this is the first command with promise, referring us back to the 10 Commandments. The promise was “that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you” (**Exodus 20:12**, ESV). Was God telling kids if they obeyed their parents they would have a longer life? No. He was telling Israel that if the younger generation would honor the older, learning from them about serving God, obeying the teaching they gave about God’s will, Israel would remain in the land for a longer time.

It only took two generations for them to violate this command. In **Joshua 2:10**, God’s Word says, “And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel” (ESV). They did evil and God sent judgment. We see this happen again and again throughout Israel’s history. Most often, when we teach about this, we blame the parents for not teaching properly. That may have been part of the problem, but notice God’s command was for the children to honor and obey the parents. Certainly, it was the parents’ responsibility to teach their children (cf. **Deuteronomy 6:4-8**). However, God places responsibility on the children to listen, heed, and honor that passing generation. Because a generation rose up that wouldn’t honor their parents and heed their teaching, judgment came. Ultimately, Israel was removed from the land.

Paul is teaching with this background in mind. His point is not every child who obeys a loving parent will have a longer life. His point is children who obey and honor their parents in the Lord produce a lasting, generational legacy for Christ’s church. This isn’t about 5-year-olds not playing in the streets. This is about 25-year-olds honoring the generation that came before them, listening to what godly parents teach about godliness and obedience. Yes, the children are to make sure what is being taught is in the Lord and not simply follow their parents to hell. But the modern norm of abandoning what Dad and Mom teach, practice, and believe because they just don’t understand will destroy Christ’s church.

Children, the future of Christ’s church depends on you. Will you honor and obey your parents’ in the Lord? We are counting on you to do so.