

**DAY 88**

## READ

EPHESIANS 6:1-4

## FOCUS

<sup>1</sup>CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD, FOR THIS IS RIGHT. <sup>2</sup>"HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER"—WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WITH A PROMISE— <sup>3</sup>"SO THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU AND THAT YOU MAY ENJOY LONG LIFE ON THE EARTH." <sup>4</sup>FATHERS, DO NOT EXASPERATE YOUR CHILDREN; INSTEAD, BRING THEM UP IN THE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD.

**REFLECTION from PASTOR MATT CIANFRANI**

It was July 4th 2006, and my parents were having a party at our house. We spent the morning setting up; I had to clean the pool and my dad was cooking. Fast-forward a few hours: there are tons of people at my house and I am in my room with my friends playing on my brand new PlayStation. All of a sudden, my door flies open, my dad and his friend come running in, they grab me, and run me to the backyard to throw me in the pool. Everyone at the party was laughing. Well, everyone but me. As everyone laughed, I planned my revenge. I took the chlorine tablets in the blue bobber, put them in my pockets, and got out of the pool. Then I walked over to the washer and threw the chlorine tablets in with all of my dad's clothes and turned it on. He wasn't laughing quite as hard when, hours later, all his clothes came out technicolored.

So, I guess you could say, growing up, I didn't do the best job in carrying out what this verse says. In fact, sadly, I have tons more stories just like this. I share this story with you to point out a truth: parents don't need to teach their children to disobey them (because that is something I think we have all inherited from Adam). Obedience is something that must be taught—but I also think it is something that can be caught. If you follow Paul's argument, he first begins by commanding children to honor their parents. This wouldn't be that difficult of a command if, the father leads them in love to the Lord. This idea is something Paul has been building since Chapter 4. Spirit-led people live differently. The Christian father treats his family different than the non-Christian father. The child who has grown up in a Christ-centered household more often than not will treat their parents differently than children who grow up in a house that is not Christ-centered. Now the Youth Pastor in me wants to point this devotional to youth but I am willing to bet there are more parents reading this than there are Jr. High and High School students. So, with that in mind, let me share a story with you.

Many years ago, I got a phone call from a parent saying that their kid needed "fixing." The student was lashing out, disrespecting them, and was just plain difficult to love. What this parent didn't know (and I am only sharing this story because it happened almost 10 years ago) is that this student had come to me a few weeks earlier to talk. He shared about how his parents just worked and worked so much (some weeks 70-80 hours), that he had started to resent them. Given the background I knew, I asked the parent a very simple question. I said, "I hear everything you are saying and your child's behavior is not appropriate and needs to be fixed. I would love to help with that. But, can I ask you, is there any side of this that you need to own? In other words, is there anything on your side that needs to be fixed, changed, or corrected?" Logically speaking, it makes sense that when parents put work or something in front of their kids, their kids will naturally put something in front of their relationship with them—and that can cause conflict and disharmony. It is the adult's job to go first—to lead their children and as Paul said, to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." This is such a difficult command to put into practice.

So here is my challenge: we have all been someone's child, and many of you reading this are someone's parent. More often than not, within relationships there are behaviors, actions, and attitudes that are ours to own and ones that are not. If you are a parent, work to make things right, and as all of us are the children of someone it is our job to make things right with our parents.

DAILY DEVOTION



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REFLECTION from PASTOR MATT CIANFRANI

### QUESTIONS

- DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO HONOR YOUR PARENTS (WHETHER YOU ARE 8 OR 80 YEARS OLD)? WHY IS THIS? WHAT STEPS (IF ANY) DO YOU NEED TO TAKE TO IMPROVE IN THIS AREA?
- IF YOU ARE A PARENT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO BRING YOUR KIDS UP IN THE LORD (EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC)? AS MATT ASKED, IS THERE ANYTHING ON YOUR SIDE THAT NEEDS TO BE FIXED, CHANGED, OR CORRECTED?
- SPEND SOME TIME PRAYING FOR YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOTH YOUR PARENTS AND YOUR CHILDREN, THAT THEY WOULD BRING WISDOM AND PEACE TO YOUR LIFE, AND BE HONORING TO GOD.

DAILY DEVOTION