**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

**Loving Reverence**

 Ephesians 6:1-4

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December 5th In the Year of Our Lord - (Anno Domini A.D.) 2021

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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In Chapter 5, Paul addresses the relationship between the individual Believer and God, and the relationship between a wife and God, husband and God and both together as a couple serving in God’s family plan. Both wife and husband have an independent relationship with God. God calls on both husband and wife to fulfill their roles that He has planned for each of them. God is their head. Both wife and husband look to God . . . and in that common spiritual pursuit fulfill their roles.

In chapter 6, Paul delivers life-guidelines from God for **children**, **fathers**, **slaves**, and **masters**. All of these stations in life . . . God provides a guideline. God does not leave anyone out of His plan.

**1 Children,** (Quote fromExodus 20:12, Deuteronomy 5:16)

obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

 **2** HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

 (which is the first commandment with a promise),

 **3** SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU,

AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

**God in the flesh as Jesus Christ also stated. . .**

**Matthew 15:4** "For God said, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER, and, HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.

**Mark 7:10** "For Moses said, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER ; and, HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH ;

**Old Testament passages to teach children and grandchildren:**

**Exodus 20:12** "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

**Leviticus 19:3** Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the LORD your God.

**Deuteronomy 5:16** Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.

**Deuteronomy 27:16** Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

**Proverbs 1:8** Hear, my son, your father's instruction And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

**Proverbs 10:1** The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

**Proverbs 20:20** He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.

**Proverbs 23:22** Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

**Proverbs 30:17** The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

**God’s Basics**

 All of these Scriptures seem basic to us Believers and foundational to a civilized society that perpetuates God’s design for family. Without this cultural norm (children obey your godly parents), society is destroyed. Case in point . . . children who are born into and grow-up with parents **not** pursuing God’s child-rearing instruction. . . these parents not only fail their child . . . they also contribute to the ever present and child-teen delinquency population, illegitimate birth rate and adding to the world’s largest prison population here in America.

 For a child to learn these Scriptures, they must know about God’s Word and have His Word read to them. This means they should be taught by their parents that the Bible is not another good book with suggestions on how to live life . . . the Bible is God talking to them directly. When we introduce the Bible to children, we must teach them that the Bible was produced by God and not people. We can explain that God worked through men to write His message to us but the message is created by God.

 In our Afterschool Program, I draw a historical timeline on a big whiteboard and show the children that God directed Moses to write down His Word about thirty-five hundred years ago. And the New Testament was written down about two-thousand years ago. This is what fathers should teach their children. God’s Word has been with humanity a long time. This leads us to verse 4 addressing fathers.

 **4 Fathers,**

do not provoke your children to anger,

but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

This verse addresses three relationships: between fathers and God, children and God, and fathers with their children. All three of these relationships are called to be in sync with God’s plan for family. We all see that God has designed for fathers to teach their children about Him and his ways. “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). This, and many more scriptures highlight the importance of God’s Word detailing guidance for parents, particularly – fathers.

**Deuteronomy 6:7** You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

**Deuteronomy 4:9** "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.

**Deuteronomy 31:13** "Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."

**2 Timothy 3:15** and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

**Genesis 18:19** "For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."

Once again, this verse (4) points to a basic life-understanding. We Biblical Believers see this as common sense. I mean. . . does anyone really have to tell us? Most of us get it. However, outside the Church, we see wide-spread failure of parent to child life-instruction. We see teen parents raising children, and we have above a 50 percent illegitimate birth rate in some areas of American society.

Since 1970, out-of-wedlock birth rates have soared. In 1965, 24 percent of black infants and 3.1 percent of white infants were born to single mothers. By 1990 the rates had risen to 64 percent for black infants, 18 percent for whites. Every year about one million more children are born into fatherless families. If we have learned any policy lesson well over the past 25 years, it is that for children living in single-parent homes, the odds of living in poverty are great. The policy implications of the increase in out-of-wedlock births are staggering.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/an-analysis-of-out-of-wedlock-births-in-the-united-state>



The out of wedlock birth rates by race in the United States from 1940-2014. The rate for African Americans is the purple line. Data is from the National Vital Statistics System Reports published by the CDC National Center for Health Statistics. Note: Prior to 1969, African American illegitimacy was included along with other minority groups as "Non-White."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American\_family\_structure

**What happened in the early and mid-1960’s that expanded the illegitimate birth rate?**

**Do not allow for an economic disaster opportunity to expand government to pass by a liberal politician.**

 The “war on poverty” (Economic Opportunity Act / Aid to Dependent Children), as LBJ used the term, was more directed at creating a dependent class of voters. After about 60 years of the impact of Johnson’s “Great Society” programs, we all can see that the welfare programs were designed to just give people the fish and never teach them how to fish. . . so they would always need the fisherman (Democrat Party).

**What happened in the 1960’s that brought about the breakdown of God’s family plan?**

At the time these federal welfare programs impacted America (through the 1960’s), there was a breakdown in social and culture order. The traditional family values that built America were not sufficiently passed onto the next generation. Men worked to build a post WWII America but failed (on a large scale) to effectively pass onto their children God’s structure for family and community. There was too much emphasis on economic growth at the expense of spiritual growth. The motto “my child will have a better life than me” was a directive to work and save money to afford a college education. However, in my opinion, the plan had unintended consequences. Liberal-atheistic professors were waiting on American college campuses (and still are) to alter the hearts and minds of teenage college students. Parents of traditional Biblically based families worked hard to afford sending their children to college but unknowingly/ultimately to the arms of atheistic wolves.

Post WWII, America produced churched youth that had gone through the paces of Vacation Bible School and Summer Church Camps but were not prepared to answer the challenges of professional academics. Too many of them had an understanding of being a Christian but did not have a ‘heart’ change. They were in agreement with God but had not surrendered. It is like those in John 6 when Jesus challenged them with deep acceptance and understanding of spiritual life. They did not understand Jesus’ words . . . “eat my flesh and drink by blood”.

**John 6:63-65** 63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

 64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

Note: Jesus points to the role of “God the Father”, being all-knowing, who knows the hearts of people and what they really believe. Thus, God grants those, who really have surrendered their heart to Him, eternal life. God, as the incarnate Jesus, knew from the beginning who did not believe.

**Jesus also explains true belief in teaching the parable of the seed.**

**Mark 4:16-19**

16 In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy;

 17 and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

 18 "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,

 19 but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

**So, what else contributed to the demise of God’s family plan through the1960’s era to 1975?**

 There were landmark Supreme Court (1962) decisions banning prayer composed/presented by school staff. In 1972, Roe v Wade legalizing abortion worked cultural seismic shifts coinciding with the Drug-Sex-Rock & Roll youth revolution. All of these cultural shifts were to some degree centered in American college campuses that were also protesting the war in Vietnam encouraged by socialist liberal professors and the communist party.

One hot spot was at Kent State University near Cleveland, Ohio leading to “four dead in Ohio” (Kent State), shot by national guardsmen. The night before the shooting, government and private buildings had been destroyed by protestors. The protestors came on campus the next day and were confronted by jittery guardsmen who panicked and fired into the on-coming crowd. It was in this decade of the 1960’s that an American President (JFK), presidential candidate (Bobby Kennedy) and the leading Civil Rights Leader (Martin Luther King) were assassinated. Many historians view this period of turmoil to encompass the Watergate era and ending in 1975 with the fall of Saigon in Vietnam marking the end of American involvement in Southeast Asia . . . costing America over 58,220 soldier’s lives who had bravely served under the command of misguided politicians. Children lost their fathers and many who returned were never the same fathers they would have been.

 **WOW**. . . a lot happened from the assassination of President Kennedy to the fall of Saigon. All of these events shook to the foundations of a God-centered American Family and Church. The development of untrust in government and in Church leaders who failed to take the lead on Civil Rights and who were too centered on institutional enlistment of youth into liturgical religious structures by fear, guilt and obligation to community traditions - all contributed. To this date, there has not been a recovery. The simple call from God for fathers and mothers to teach their children God’s Word was not practiced by enough families. The fire and brimstone approach practiced by many Church leaders failed. God desires that we surrender to Him under love, not compulsion.

**No Fear in the Love of God**

God does not want children or us to fear Him (1 John 4:18). And, at the same time, there are consequences when we sin that we should fear. We should have fear of what sin does to our lives. This fear is derived from the nature of our conscience. We see this in Adam and Eve after the Fall and with Cain after he murdered his brother Abel.

Due to Adam’s sin, he became afraid of God in His new sinful state. But God did not want Adam to fear Him. Adam did not fear God before he had sinned. Adam feared God because of his feelings of regret and remorse. . . for then Adam knew the difference between good and evil. Adam’s fear came from his own consciousness, not God. Adam looked at himself with no cloths and self-imposed guilt for not covering himself in the presence of God. However, before the sin, Adam was not ashamed, and we have no record of God bringing his non-attire to his attention.

This biblical account reveals adult and child human nature (which is the same) before and after the Fall. When we sin, we will have feelings of regret and remorse that makes us fear the consequences of our actions. God’s cure is for us to seek forgiveness from Him. If others are involved, we should seek forgiveness from them.

10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

 12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." (Gen. 3:10-12 NAU)

 The commission of sin brings feelings of regret and a propensity to always be looking over our shoulder to see who is watching when we mess-up.

However, our relationship with God as a Believer is one of reverence based upon our love for God. I, for one, do not want to disappoint God and the Church. I see that when we commit sin it has its own consequential spiritual gravitational force.

**1 John 4:16-21**

16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

 17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

 19 We love, because He first loved us.

 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

We read Old and New Testament Scriptures about disciplining people and children. Love is the catalyst for discipline.

**God’s General Guidelines for Discipline**

**Deuteronomy 8:5** "Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.

**Hebrews 12:6** FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." **7** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

**God’s Direction in Disciplining Children**

**Proverbs 10:13** On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.

**Proverbs 19:18** Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.

**Proverbs 22:15** Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

**Proverbs 23:13** Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die.

**Proverbs 29:15** The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. Proverbs 29:17

**Proverbs 23:14** You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol.

**Love, Reverence & Respect**

 **In Ephesians 6:1-4,** we see an all-encompassing structure God has for families and communities. This structure is built upon the foundation of love, reverence and respect starting with God and working through fathers and mothers to children. This is foundational to a civilized society that God has planned. A society that perpetuates life and life to its fullest.

**Proverbs 3:12** For whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.

**AMEN**