

Text: Ephesians 6:1-4

Title: "Bring Them Up"

Introduction: Happy Father's Day!!

Today, we wrap up our series on relationships. Over the past few weeks we have been working under an assumption. The assumption is, for this series on relationships, that God is the Creator of all things including women and men made in God's image. Not only are we made in God's image, God loves us way beyond our imagination and wants the best for us. That's why we have in front of us our Bible ... an instruction Book for the optimum operating procedures for the human being.

God knows how we are made and how we function the best. God knows that we are created to be in relationships. The problem is that we often set aside the instruction book and try to figure it out on our own.

(Insert story of building Lily's toy kitchen here)

Okay, let's get right at it as we talk again, like we did on Mother's Day, about the parenting relationship. So, we are going to go back to the Book of Ephesians. This is a letter written from Paul to the people in the church that Paul started in a city called Ephesus (MAP?). In this letter Paul is encouraging the Church there to be the Church that God was calling them to be. Again, Church is a movement of people, not a building! In order to be the Church that God calls us to be, we have to be in relationship with each other ... people working together. Paul spends some time telling the people of Ephesus how Christian relationships work...

Well, here is where we want to get to today ... We are going to start out with finding out how to know if we are ready to be in Christian relationships. Then, we are going to talk about parenting and specifically, the Father's role.

I think that now is a good time to PRAY!!!

If you haven't already, I invite you to take the insert out of your program. On one side you will see our Scripture for today from Ephesians and on the other side you will see a brief outline of how we are going to get where we are going. I invite you to fill in the blanks. Write down whatever else you feel is relevant to your life or someone you know and then take this piece of paper home with you and post it on your refrigerator. Re-read the Scripture and your notes so that you can remember what you need to be working on this week. For those of you listening on line or IPODing this, you too can download the program and fill in the blanks.

I have a plaque in my office that says, "If you were accused of being a Christian, what evidence would they have to convict you?"

Well, here is what Paul is teaching leading up to our Scripture for today. Now, remember that Paul is working with a Church that is in a city that has been part of the Roman Empire for quite awhile. They have adopted many of the Roman ways, so what Paul is teaching about Christianity is like, the opposite of what the people have learned all of their lives.

In almost every phase of history, the Christian faith has been recognized as counter-cultural. The Christian faith, more often than not, goes against what our culture teaches us.

Paul teaches in Chapter 5 that in order to live life the way God wants us to and be in relationship with others the way God wants us to, we have to be filled with the Holy Spirit. To be Christian, we have to invite Jesus to come into our life. We can't just ask Jesus to be close by to bail our tails out when we need Him. Being a Christian is NOT just being saved from an eternity in HELL. Being a Christian is living this life the way God wants us to by the power that God puts in us through the Holy Spirit! Daily!

Ever wonder if God has filled you with His Holy Spirit? Paul says that in order to know there had ought to be some EVIDENCE! In Chapter 5, Paul tells us that if we are filled with the Spirit there will be THREE (3) evidences! Paul says that if you are truly filled with God's Holy Spirit, you will truly be 'full of it'!

I. I Want Evidence

A. Joyful (5:19)

1. This "Joyful" is not a shallow emotion that comes when things are going well and goes away when things aren't going well.
2. You will know that you are 'full of it' when you have a deep experience of confidence and adequacy even if things are not going so well around us.
3. Think of it like this ... normal "Joy" runs on a "thermometer". You have seen people show intense JOY when things are going well in their lives, but if things start to go sour; so do they! You can tell by that person only what is happening on the outside...
4. Christian "Joy" is more like the "Thermostat". Joy in a person is set on God's transformation on the inside of the person. It doesn't much matter what is going on around them, they have a deep-seeded joy regardless...
5. If you have this "JOY", you could be convicted of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

B. Grateful (5:20)

1. Another "Evidence" that you are filled with God's Spirit and you have totally surrendered to God is that you are "GRATEFUL".
2. Again, this is a little different than what the world tells us. The world tells us that if someone does something nice for us or if we sense that God has made something good happen, we need to say, "Thank You". (My Mom used to make me write cards...)
3. The Holy Spirit kind of Grateful is that we go back and thank God no matter what is going on. When we take time to thank God regardless of our circumstances that thankfulness stops us from worrying ... which is not trusting God.
4. When we have a spirit of Gratefulness, we know that God's Spirit is working inside of us.

C. Submitful (5:21-33)

1. Finally, is there ‘evidence’ that we are willing to submit ourselves to God? If so, the wives here are willing to submit to their husbands. The husbands submit to and love their wives.
2. Like we talked about last week, this is not submitting because of rank or power or position, it’s putting other people’s DWDs ahead of our own.
3. Why? Not because the other person deserves it, but because we SUBMIT “as unto the Lord”. We treat our spouses with love and respect, not because they deserve it, but because God says to!
4. If you find yourself more able to submit to your spouse or a friend, you have evidence of the Holy Spirit.

II. **Children, Obey...** (6:1-3)

A. Longer Life

1. Paul reminds us that this commandment “Honor your father and mother” comes with a promise attached ... If you do, “things will go well for you and you will have a long life...”
2. How can Paul say that? How can Paul know that if you honor/obey your parents, things will go well and you will have a long life? It’s about self-discipline...
3. If you have the self-discipline that it takes to be obedient to your parents, even if you don’t think they are smart, that self-discipline will help you in this life.
4. Those who lack self-discipline and respect tend to live shorter lives...
5. Okay, want to live longer? Honor your parents!

B. It’s Not About the Rents

1. “Yeah, but what if they...” “But, my parents don’t understand me or my friends...” “But, my parents have me doing so many chores...”
2. Here’s the deal. It’s kind of like husbands and wives submitting to each other. It’s not because that other person deserves it or has earned it. Submitting and being obedient to your parents is “AS UNTO THE LORD”!
3. If your parents ask you to do something, it’s kind of like Jesus asking you to do it ... what are you going to tell Jesus?!? You know, the Jesus who hung on a cross and died for you so that you could have a better life here on this earth and throughout eternity ... how will you respond to that Jesus?!?

III. **Dads** (6:4)

A. Do Not Provoke

1. Let me start with what this DOES NOT MEAN ... This does not mean, parents, that you cannot pick on your kids. Keep on picking on them ... annoy them, embarrass them. It is your right!
2. Remember that Paul was writing to a city in a Roman province. It was common practice to beat a child if they were disobedient or if the parent was just frustrated with the child. These were not spankings...
3. To provoke would be to harm the child physically, to play favorites with a certain child, leaving the other's out or depriving a child of the basic life needs (food, sleep, etc.)
4. My Dad used to pinch the back of my leg ... that was not to provoke me; that was so that I knew that he loved me.

B. Discipline and Instruction

1. Discipline = Please, whatever method of discipline you choose, make sure you discipline your children out of love and not out of anger.
2. Please also know that if you do discipline your child in a proper way, they will appreciate you for it ... maybe not at that moment, but they will.
3. I had to sit Lily on a chair the other day, because she would not quit whining ... She cried and carried on, but within 15 minutes she came up to me, hugged my leg and said, "I love you, Daddy!"
4. Instruction = part of the instruction that we give to our children can come from the Book of Titus...

C. Lessons from Titus (2:1-2, 6-7)

1. Titus 2:1-2 = This says that Paul is telling a pastor, Titus, to teach the 'older men' these things, but it applies to you Fathers as well. Remember: most of what our children learn is "CAUGHT NOT TAUGHT". Here is your example to your children...
 - a. Exercise Self-Control, be worthy of respect and live wisely.
 - b. Have sound FAITH, filled with LOVE and PATIENCE.
2. Titus 2:6-7 = Encourage the young men to live wisely and you yourself:
 - a. Be an Example! Do Good Works of every kind ... Men, show your kids how to "Change the World for Good"! Please!
 - b. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching...
3. Let me ask you something. If I was to ask your children, Fathers, what you are serious about, what would they tell me?!?

- a. It better not be “fishing”!
- b. It better not be “work”!
- c. Your job, Fathers, is to teach your kids that this life is all about the Kingdom of God!
4. If you are teaching that “Family” is the most important thing, you are robbing your kids. Our Scriptures say to “seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and all other things will fall into place”...
5. So, what is your top priority as a follower of Jesus Christ? The Kingdom of God! Do your children know it because they see it in you?!?
6. Our children need to learn by watching us, Fathers, a reckless abandon when it comes to our faith in Jesus. We do things that don’t make sense, but it changes the world!
7. Daddy, where have you been?
 - a. Mission Trip
 - b. Helping Orphans (Cambodia)
 - c. Food Pantry
 - d. Feeding Kids 5 days a week...
8. Why Daddy? So we can change the world for Good in the name of Jesus Christ! Every one of those things gives us a chance to put one more person face-to-face with Jesus Christ and it’s going to change their ETERNITY! That’s IMPORTANT!!

D. The Buck Stops Here

1. Guess what MEN? You are the head of your household!
2. And all the women go ... “Yeah, right!”
3. Well, you all can think what you want and you women probably do most of the teaching of the kids on a day-to-day basis, BUT guess what?!? The Father of your kids is the head of your household! Do you know how I know?!?
4. Because our Bibles say that on Judgment Day (all standing in front of God), the FATHER of the household will be held responsible; NOT the MOTHER!
5. That does not mean that all the men here have to become “MR. MOM”. That means that I hope you are being an example in front of your kids that says, “Seek first the Kingdom of God”!

Let’s Pray!!

Next Week: A New Series and we are going to be kicking it Old School!