

# Notes on Ephesians 6:1-4

Raj Balasubramanian, iyer@brahminbeliever.com

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In the previous post , we saw the instructions to husbands and wife. Now we look at the instruction to children.

Paul starts with a command to the children to obey their parents [Eph6:1] as its commanded by God in various verses-

- [Prov6:20] asks to observe your father's commandment and not forsake your mother's teaching
- [Prov23:22] listen to your father and not despise my mother when she is old
- [ Col3:20] commands children to be obedient to parents in all things as its well-pleasing to the Lord

This was one of the most challenging verses for me as my parents have said upon my conversion and baptism that I have forsaken them and are not their son. Basically, its directly against what I believed in before and now after I came to Christ. Am I forsaking my parents and hence not disobeying God? Am I not listening to my father and despising my mother? Did I displease God?

I had to look at other verses in Bible to educate myself on the truth around my current situation.

- [Gen2:24] commands me to leave my father and mother and be joined to my wife, hence I am not to live with my parents (as is expected) and make my wife a priority over them; ofcourse this is not disrespectful, but the renewed priority in becoming a man and husband. Jesus commands the same in [Mat19:5] and [Mar10:7]
- [Luk12:53] talks about son against father, as Jesus warns he didnt come to bring peace
- [Mat10:35] repeats about how Jesus came to set a man against his father and the house will be divided

It was these verses which showed me the price of following Jesus. Culturally, I was very reverent to my parents, calling them almost daily at times and atleast once a week, sending money every month (more regularly when I became a

believer) and feeling guilty about the pain I had caused in disobeying them when I married against their wishes etc.

But the more I meditated on the Gospel, it was clear the sacrifice I was making was to give the place of God as the primary focus and not any other idol - including my parents. [Mat10:37] was the consoling verse for me, as it declared if I love my father or mother more than my Lord Jesus, then I am not worthy of Him. The same is true if I love my children more than Lord Jesus

I still feel pain for my parents, not because I upset them, but because I want them to find Jesus and see for themselves and that I am unable to talk, since they have asked me to not reach out to them or send money. Stef and I pray for their salvation and for the healing of their heart, if its in God's will.

I dont feel guilt or shame anymore of any of my past decisions. I am not in denial either, but something about being a believer is freeing.

I continue to pray to God daily to make sure that I am not disobeying my earthly parents while still obeying God's commands.

Although I feel like I might have missed the promise [Ex20:12] by what my parents have expressed in my disappointing them, I havent disobeyed my Heavenly Father, by following Jesus as the true path to One True God. Hence God will be the judge of my walk.

Switching to a deeper concern around [Eph6:4] to not provoke my children to anger, I feel like I struggle with this every day. By nature, I am a martinet, a ball buster (as some have said) with my sons. If it werent for my wife, I would be a horrible father. Her wisdom and insight has helped me to see when and how I have roused the anger of my children by taunts or misguided humor or unwarranted discipline action or elaborate chiding and lecture.

The words *bring your children up in discipline and instruction of the Lord* is probably the most tough advise for me as I have to change in order to follow that command. A change that can only come from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The word *provoke to anger* actually has several meaning, but primarily its of emotional excess. This is my natural tendency. But on the other hand, bring them up in discipline has a much deeper sense. *Bring* here means nurture, establish, exalt, escort or spring. The word *discipline* is *paideia* in Greek. This has a robust meaning, from Blueletter Bible's Strong's reference

- the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment) It also includes the training and care of the body
- whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing passions.
  - instruction which aims at increasing virtue

– chastisement, chastening, (of the evils with which God visits men for their amendment)

Further [Ps78:4] tells me to pass on and talk about God's wondrous works and strength to my children. [Prov22:6] asks me to train up the child in the way he should go.

Hence for me to really obey this, I must first walk with the Lord, so that I may teach it to my sons through the days [Deu11:19]. I demonstrate to them how to praise the Lord and fear the Lord, how to pray and worship and fall on my knees when I need the strength during peaks and valleys. I need to give them permission and guidance [Gen18:19] as well as teach diligently as I walk and live my daily life [Deu6:7].

To properly do this, I need to make my sons a priority, next to God and my bride. This will require time - both quality and quantity as that is the way I can impart practical knowledge and not just academic lectures which I give, which to me is easy and comes naturally. It also means I need to be available to them. I have to be present. This means I can't be pre-occupied in my conversations with them. I need to set aside work and other worries that might be on my mind, to focus on them as I impart the knowledge of God to them.

We just finished reading Joshua 4-6 in our mens daily bible reading and one of the items we talked about at length was what is our stone that we take for their children and my grandchildren as God commanded Joshua to tell his men to take stones from the dry river bed of Jordan, which the Lord made dry so they could cross. They brought it back to Bible, character, stories from the Bible readings, playing baseball and discussing what it means to be obedient to God, as they have seen me be an idolator and now following Jesus. They then stated that the Word of God and the promises of God is far greater than the physical symbols that we might have, although we all agreed, it would be cool to have picked a rock as we just crossed Jordan, on our way to take Jericho without shooting a single arrow.

In the end, my prayer and consolation is [Psa127]

Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted.  
Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good.

It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.

Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him.

Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands.

How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them! He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.