

How to Make Your Parents Happy

(appropriate for mid-schoolers and older)

Michael R. Daily (2/5/09), 30 minutes

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Tonight we are going to talk about how to make your parents happy. But first, why would you want to make your parents happy?

Hebrews 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Obey - To carry out or fulfill a command, order, or instruction

Submit - To yield or surrender (oneself) to the will or authority of another.

One of the reasons we want our parents (and our leaders in general) to be happy is because if we give them grief God says that it will be "unprofitable" for us. In other words it will cost us something of value.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

Honor - To hold in esteem. To show respect for. To confer distinction on. To accept their position as valid.

If we do not honor our parents the Bible says that life will not go well for us and our lives may be shortened. The reason is because when we don't honor and obey our parents God does not help us.

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.

Mocking and scorning our parents leads to an early death!

Wow, this is a really big deal to God, isn't it?

Let's see what God compares disobedience to parents with.

II Timothy 3:1-5

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

God puts people who disobey their parents in the same category as people who are:

Lovers of self, Lovers of money, Ungrateful, Unholy, Unloving, Brutal, Haters of good, No self-control, Irreconcilable, Lovers of pleasure

Boastful - to talk in a self admiring way

Arrogant - Arising from a feeling or assumption of one's superiority toward others

Revilers - assail with abusive language

Malicious - A desire to harm others or to see others suffer

Treacherous – seemingly safe, reliable, trustworthy – but not really so.

Reckless – Having no regard for consequences

Conceited - characterized by an unduly high opinion of oneself; vain.

Romans 1:25-32

For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. 28And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

God puts those who disobey parents in the same class as people who are:

Insolent - outrageously rude or disrespectful

Deceit – trickery

Strife - heated, often violent dissension; bitter conflict.

Depraved – twisted, perverted, abnormal.

Homosexual

So disobedience to and dishonor of parents is a really big deal to God.

Do our parents deserve to be honored and obeyed? What do you think?

The truth is your parents do not deserve to be honored and obeyed! The Bible never says they deserve to be honored and obeyed. What it says is that God expects you to honor and obey them, not that they deserve it.

Key Point: If you are waiting for them to deserve your honor and obedience you are going to be waiting a long time and while you wait you are not going to honor and obey them and then God is not going to help you and then life will not go well for you.

It's a bad strategy to wait for your parents to deserve to be honored and obeyed.

Do or Do Not, There is No Try

As a teenager you are about to face one of the most difficult challenges of your life up to this point. Its because human fathers and bosses have a problem that you are going to run into.

Ephesians 6:4-9

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. 5Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. 9And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Do Not Provoke - do not exasperate them to resentment

Exasperate - To make very angry or impatient; annoy greatly.

Human fathers have a natural tendency to irritate, greatly annoy, and make us angry and resentful in the way they treat us. Bosses have a tendency to threaten us. When this happens what are we supposed to do?

Let's run through a couple different scenarios and see what makes the most sense for us to do.

The harsh reality is that your parents have the power to make decisions that will “ruin your life” don’t they?

What are some examples of things your parents could do to you that would ruin your life?
(list them on the board)

Ground me, take away my cell phone, not let me drive the car, prohibit me from seeing the “love of my life”, etc. (once they get going the list can get quite long but go ahead and list everything they mention).

OK, first let’s work through a scenario with me, as an adult, and my boss at work.

Adult Scenario

One day I am at work talking to my boss. My boss says, “I’ve been thinking and I have come up with a great way to grow our business. I’m going to put you on an airplane every week and send you out to visit potential customers. You’re good at talking with them so that’s what we’re going to do”.

So, I think, “Holy mackerel! I’ll never see my wife and children again. I’ll never be able to go to AWANA again and see your cute little faces! I’ll end up a divorced, lonely old man living in a cardboard box. My life will be ruined”.

So how do I handle it?

Adult Scenario - Option #1

I go up to my boss with tears in my eyes and I yell at him, “Who do you think you are? All you care about is yourself. You enjoy ruining my life. I never get to do what I want to do. I hate your guts! I wish I’d never been born!” Then I stomp out of his office and slam the door as hard as possible.

What do you think would happen to me? Would this be a profitable approach? Would this approach convince my boss that I should be given more responsibility?

I would probably get fired or demoted or my pay would be cut. The best thing that could happen to me – the best thing – is they send me to see the company psychiatrist!

Or perhaps I should choose option #2.

Adult Scenario - Option #2

Proverbs 2:7-8 - He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones.

Although I am feeling some panic I remind myself that God is in control and will help me go the right way. I acknowledge my boss’s idea and I say to him, “I see what you are trying to do. Increasing business is so important it far outweighs the cost of all that travel. Let me give it some thought”.

So I spend some time with God asking Him to show me a way to help my boss without having to do all that traveling. God will help you figure something out.

Then, I meet with my boss and tell him that I have been thinking about what he said and ask him if he would be interested in hearing about a way to increase business with less travel costs. I am not attacking him, I am helping him solve his problem.

Let’s go back to one of your scenarios.

Teen Scenario

Your father (in a very annoying, exasperating way) says to you, "I am unhappy with how rudely you have been treating your mother. As a result I am taking away your cell phone for an entire month and that's final!"

As you hear your worst fear being decreed by your parent you are going to feel an overwhelming sense of panic and horror. You are going to feel like you are about to explode. But before you say anything you need to remind yourself that God is in control. He is going to help you find a way through this. Remind yourself that the overwhelming emotions of anger and murder you are feeling are temporary even though it does not feel that way right now. No final decisions have been made yet and its going to be OK because God will help you.

So, you calmly acknowledge your father's idea. "I see that you are concerned about the way I have been treating Mom lately. Let me give it some thought".

Spend some time alone with God asking Him to show you a way to address your parent's concern. Later, talk to your Dad again. "Dad, I agree that I have not treated Mom the way I should and I am willing to accept the consequences".

Then your Dad will probably say, "Well, I meant what I said, no cell phone for a month, and that's final!" (Dad's can be so irritating)

What would your parents think if this is how you responded to them? At first they will probably think you are sick or something but once they figure out you are not sick they will actually be impressed by your response.

What is it about this type of response that parents find impressive?

Proverbs 25:28 - Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.

It's the fact that you are able to control yourself the way an adult would – very impressive.

So, if your Dad is impressed why is he still being so unreasonable – taking away the cell phone for an entire month? And if he is impressed how come he does not show it? First, remember that adults control the display of their emotions so even though he is impressed he won't show it right away.

Second, although he is impressed he suspects that perhaps you are pretending and don't really mean it – its some kind of trick. So, he is testing you. Therefore, the penalty will not change.

Then, what will happen is, your dad will watch you for the next two to three days waiting for you to "break" and explode emotionally. If you do, or if you keep bringing up the topic of the cell phone, then you failed the test.

If, however, you go about your life, happy & content without your phone, never mentioning it (not even once), trusting in God, knowing that you are obeying God and He is your help, then interesting things often happen.

After two or three days your Dad will realize that you have passed the test. This is not a trick. You really meant it when you said you would accept the consequences - very impressive. Then he will think, "I guess my child is not who I thought they were. They are acting more like an adult. I guess my child really is becoming an adult".

At this point God (not mom) steps in on your behalf and convicts dad that perhaps "an entire month" was a little extreme. After another day or two your dad will probably say to you something like, "I think you've handled this cell phone thing very well. I've decided to let you have your phone back a few days early". And he gives you the phone back. It won't always happen this way but it often does.

But what is really interesting is your parents will no longer think of you in the same way. They will begin to think of you as someone who is becoming an adult and who can, perhaps, be trusted with more responsibility.

You are acting like an adult. Keep it up and people will start treating you like one.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How To Make Your Parents Happy*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 13:17, Ephesians 6:1-3, Proverbs 30:17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

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