

COUNTER CULTURE – PART 4

2 Timothy 3:1-5 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, **disobedient to parents**, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

We live in a culture that is headed the wrong way. Paul was describing our day when he wrote to Timothy, and it's not a pretty picture. If you really want to live for God, you can only do it by living COUNTER CULTURE.

Notice that one of the common signs of a generation in trouble with God is their attitude toward their parents! DISOBEDIENT means "obstinate rejection of the will of God, spurning belief, unwilling to be persuaded."

Romans 1:29-31 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, **disobedient to parents**, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Our problem in the first part of the 21st Century is that we don't only have to oppose SECULAR culture, but much of what is called CHRISTIAN culture!

Imagine God looking down on the LIFESTYLE of many so-called Apostolic Christians today. **They say they believe in God, but they live as though He doesn't exist.** They are, quite literally, APOSTOLIC ATHEISTS.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE A CHRISTIAN AND DISHONOR YOUR PARENTS AT THE SAME TIME! The Bible tells us to honor our parents in spite of the fact that becoming a Christian can actually divide families! This is definitely the way it was in the first century.

Luke 18:28-30 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Luke 21:16-17 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

Why does Satan attack the family so viciously? Because in God's plan the family plays an enormously important role. It is to offer unconditional love and lifelong companionship to its members. It is to be the first church, the first school, the first hospital, and the first government! It is where children learn about their male and female roles, how to communicate their ideas and feelings, how to enjoy life and endure pain. Family life provides the safest parameters in which to discover acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In short, the home is the principal place for spiritual, emotional and moral training. Our parents are our first teachers – and they deserve honor!

It is possible for ALL of us to honor our parents, no matter what their condition, behavior, or our relationship to them. Wherever there is God's will, there is always a way to obey it!

Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

The Bible says to love God, the stranger and our neighbor, but nowhere does it specifically command us to LOVE our parents. Instead, the command is to HONOR our parents. God, strangers and neighbors do not put the same ego demands on us that parents do. We are commanded to HONOR our parents because it is the best way to compensate for the tension-filled parent-child relation, in which "love" may take a beating.

The word honor is "kaw-bad" in Hebrew, which means "to add weight," taken from the ancient concept that something heavy was thought to have greater VALUE. We are to VALUE our parents. The rabbis taught that parents are to be honored because they are partners with God; He is the author of life, but they cooperate with Him by bringing a child into the world.

In the NT passage where this commandment is repeated, the concepts of OBEDIENCE and HONOR are tied together. If your parents are "in the Lord" you are commanded to obey them! **Obedience means submission!**

Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Notice that there is also an obligation commanded for parents!

Colossians 3:20-21 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

"Not provoking" doesn't mean "not disciplining!" DISCIPLINE is an obligation of loving parents. It requires instruction, reinforcement and punishment. Even when children don't like discipline, they are to obey!

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

PRINCIPLES FOR DISCIPLINE:

1. Get connected EARLY (discipline depends on relationship).
2. KNOW your child (age appropriate behavior and discipline).
3. Help your child to respect AUTHORITY (warm and wise).
4. Set LIMITS and provide STRUCTURE (children test limits).
5. EXPECT obedience (parents are supposed to be controlling).
6. MODEL discipline (you are the example children will imitate).
7. Nurture your child's SELF-CONFIDENCE (right feelings = right action).
8. SHAPE your child's behavior (show them the consequences).
9. Raise kids who CARE (you are planting your passions in them).
10. Talk and LISTEN (you will want them to do this later).

In the NT, this "chastening" from parents is compared to the discipline the Lord brings into our lives from time to time. It is not pleasant at the moment, but it yields long-term results that bless our lives! Parents, when you CONSISTENTLY discipline your children, you are preparing them to understand and submit to God's lifelong dealing with them!

Hebrews 12:9-11 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

THERE ARE NO PERFECT PARENTS – AND NO PERFECT CHILDREN! Only God is a perfect parent! The rest of us have weaknesses, faults, and inconsistencies. What if my parents were abusive, manipulative, neglectful, and unworthy of honor? Am I supposed to ignore the pain and pretend everything is great? No, but God does say that we must honor the POSITION of parenthood, regardless of the PERSONALITY behind it. Why? Because how I relate to my parents will affect every other relationship!

How you relate to your parents is the major forming factor in your life. Your style of relating to others is set while you live at home. Even today as an adult, when you act in ways you don't understand and you can't figure out your behavior, many times it's because you are still reacting to your parents. Many marriages have been ruined because a spouse has never resolved a relationship with a parent, and they're taking it out on a spouse or their kids.

Regardless of who your parents are, and what they did or didn't do, you can at least appreciate their effort and sacrifice. Parenting is a difficult, time-demanding, energy-draining job. Have you ever considered how much easier your parents' life would have been if they hadn't had you? Parenting is also expensive. When a couple chooses to have kids, they are choosing to do without some other things. Today, it has been estimated that it will cost the average parents nearly \$250,000 to raise one child from infancy to eighteen years of age.

2 Corinthians 12:14-15 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

PARENTS, SPEND AND BE SPENT FOR YOUR CHILDREN!

As life moves on, the parents eventually become the children, and the children become the parents. And this is God's design for the family!

1 Timothy 5:3-4 Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

1 Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

As a Christian parent, your number one goal should be to ensure that your kids come to know the Lord as soon as they are old enough to understand. Don't rest until all of your family is serving God!

For some of you, this may be a very painful message. It is easy to honor your parents if they have been good, godly people. But some of you had parents that hurt you deeply and devastated your life.

Many of you are still carrying unfinished business with your parents. You're venting your anger on your family or friends because you've never resolved it. The ironic thing is that, if you're still angry with your parents years later, you're still letting them control your life.

If your parents abandoned you in some way, you are a special person to God – the Bible says God assumes responsibility for abandoned children!

Psalm 27:10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

The church is a family that will last longer than your physical family. In terms of eternity, it's far more important. If you have hurts in your life because of your upbringing, get involved in the family of God through the church!

Psalm 68:6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

God knows the pain you feel and He can help you overcome it – He can even bring some good out of it if you will let Him!

John 9:2-3 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

GOD'S DESIGN

You are who you are for a reason
You're part of an intricate plan
You're precious, a perfect unique design
Called God's special woman or man.

You look like you look for a reason
Our God made no mistake
He knit you together within the womb
You're just what He wanted to make.

The parents you had are the ones He chose
No matter how you may feel
You are custom designed with that plan in mind
Your life bears the Master's seal.

The trauma you faced wasn't easy
God wept that it hurt you so
But it was allowed to shape your heart
So that into His likeness you'd grow.

You are who you are for a reason
You've been formed by the Master's rod
You are who you are, beloved
Because there is a God.