

Title: Things to Know Concerning Precepts

Text: Ephesians 6: 1-3

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Subject: Things to Know Concerning Precepts

The back half of the epistles are full of precepts for God's saints to obey. The problem is that many preachers preach those precepts without preaching the gospel of Christ. Therefore, men and women leave thinking that it is by obeying these precepts that we are made righteous and holy. The front half of each epistle is full of the gospel of Christ before they give the precepts. So when we consider any precept in the scripture, we must receive it in the light of Christ.

In every precept we must remember these three things:

One, no sinner is made righteous or holy by obeying any precept in the bible.

Two, Christ is the righteousness and holiness of his people because he fulfilled every precept in perfection and put away all the sins his people.

Lastly, if the Spirit of God blesses the first two points to our hearts then the motive of the heart will be faith in Christ, constrained by the love of Christ for his people.

God looks on the heart. It is the motive of our heart that makes any work good or evil before God. If it is done from a legal motive--trying to make ourselves righteous or holy, trying to earn a reward from God--then before God it is only sin. If the motive of the heart is faith in Christ, constrained by the love of Christ for us, then God receives it in Christ's righteousness and holiness as a good work. God worked it in his child.

We will take this one precept as an example.

Ephesians 6: 1: Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2: Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3: That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

As a child this was the first thing I remember my parents teaching me from the scripture. But neither of my parents believed Christ at the time. They taught me this precept simply to make me obey them. As a child, I thought if I obeyed this precept, God would save me. That is how many hear all the precepts.

Now, there may be one of God's saints here whose parents have passed from this life, so you may not think this message applies to you as children. But, remember, God says to his saints,

Ephesians 5: 1: Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

One reason this is the first commandment with promise is because there are two sons, each with the same father, and what these two sons did determines the condemnation or the salvation of all men.

THE DISOBEDIENT SON.

Adam is the disobedient son. God was Adam's Father and Adam his child. God the Father gave his son one commandment.

Genesis 2: 16: And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

But Adam disobeyed God his Father. Therefore, Adam did not live but died. Adam was Head of every child that would be born of him. So when Adam disobeyed God in the garden, all Adam's children--all men without

exception--disobeyed our heavenly Father in the garden. We all died in Adam. Pay attention to the word "offense."

Romans 5: 12: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:..16...the judgment was by one [offense] to condemnation...17...by one man's offense death reigned by one. 18: Therefore, by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation...20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.

God gave the law to teach his elect how *abounding* our sin was in THE OFFENSE which Adam committed in the garden.

Romans 3: 19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

So what law given at Sinai declares the heinousness of THE OFFENSE in the garden, concerning disobedience to parents? But here is the law that shows the offense as children disobeying our heavenly Father in Adam.

Leviticus 20: 9: For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.

Adam cursed God his Father by his disobedience and we all did the same in Adam--therefore, in Adam all died. How did Adam die and we in him?

Adam died legally--he became guilty of breaking every law of God and we in him.

Adam died spiritually--his nature became corrupt. He passed it on to us--"we were conceived in sin"

Adam began dying physically--the reason we die physically is sin.

After physical death, but for God's intervening, saving grace, all would face *the second death*, which is eternal condemnation.

So you see by THE ONE OFFENSE sin abounded. One child disobeying his Father is the first cause of every evil ever committed in this world. By our first birth, we are all disobedient sons and daughters--all disobeyed God our Father in Adam. Due to our sin-nature, even a disobedient thought toward our parents, is breaking the precept in our text--and to break one law is to break every law! Therefore, we can by no means obey any precept so as to be accepted of holy God by our obedience. How then can a man be just with God?

THE OBEDIENT SON.

God the Father has only one, perfectly obedient Son--it is the only begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus.

Matthew 17: 5: [God the Father said of Christ]... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

In eternity, God chose his Son to be the Savior of God's elect sons and daughters to glorify his Son as Head of his house.

Romans 8: 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Psalms 89: 27: Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

Hebrews 1: [the Firstborn Son is greater than the angels] 5: For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

The purpose of God in creating this world was to glorify his Son and give his Son all preeminence in all things--the purpose of the precept in our text is to give Christ all glory, like all the law of God. God's holy, just and good law is to glorify the one, holy, just and good obedient Son of God, Christ Jesus.

How was the Firstborn Son of God obedient to his heavenly Father? God the Father commanded his Son to save his elect children by taking our nature and laying down his life in our room and stead.

Hebrews 2: 14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16: For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. 17: Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18: For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

In all points, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. Therefore, in perfect obedience to his Father, God's obedient Son was made of a woman, made under the law, made sin for his people and made a curse for his people. Now, he is made higher than the heavens and all his people are seated there in him.

Why must Christ be perfectly obedient as a Man in place of his people? Take our text--this one precept--

Ephesians 6: 1: Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2: Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3: That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

We broke this law and all the law of God. So the only way we could be made righteous and holy is for Christ to obey, not only this precept, but the whole law of God on behalf of his people. He must honor God the Father by his obedience to God the Father in righteousness on our behalf and he must do so from a holy heart in perfect faith and love for his Father and for his brethren

Christ alone obeyed God. He alone made his people righteous and holy before God. That is what Christ accomplished for his people! Concerning obedience to his heavenly Father, as Christ walked this earth, he said,

John 5: 30...I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

John 8:29...I do always those things that please him.

In obedience to his heavenly Father, Christ was perfectly obedient to his earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, though Joseph was not his biological father. As parents, can you imagine what it would be like to have the Lord Jesus as your son growing up in your house? He was the only perfect child to ever walk this earth!

But even more obedience to God his Father was required. The law said, "*everyone that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.*" So for every elect child of God, not only for our sin of being disobedient to our parents, but for our sin in breaking every law, Christ bore our sin and our curse under the fury of God's wrath.

When a child disobeys their father, a faithful father shows his great love for his child by chastising [chastening] his child. Oh, we see the great love of God our Father toward his elect children when Christ bore the sin of his people,

Isaiah 53:5 [Christ] *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Our text says the child who obeys his father shall be given long life. Christ so honored and exalted the Father by his obedience.

Philippians 2: 9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

And God raised up all his elect in Christ

Ephesians 2: 6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus is that the Spirit of God makes each one Christ redeemed to be born-again of the incorruptible seed. By his grace, he gives us faith to rest in Christ as sons of God. And in Christ, we have obeyed and honored God our Father in perfect righteousness and holiness--not only in the precept in our text--but every law of God. Before God in Christ--we have no sin, only perfect righteousness--perfect obedience to God our Father!

THE PRECEPT

Ephesians 6: 1: Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2: Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3: That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Now, let's talk about the precept. Our text speaks of obeying and honoring our parents. Preeminently, it applies to honoring and obeying God our Father. Christ declared the one way we obey and honor God our Father is by honoring his Son by faith.

John 5: 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

John 6: 29:...This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

God looks on the heart. A person could obey and honor their parents very well. But without faith in Christ, it is impossible to please God our Father. The motive of our heart must be faith in Christ--knowing in Christ, we have obeyed the whole law of God in perfection and have no sin by his precious blood. The motive of our heart must be God the Father's love for his elect in sending his Son who laid down his life for us. Any other motive of the heart is disobedience to God--no matter how well a man acts outwardly.

Ephesians 4: 32: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. 1: Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Those who honor and obey God the Father by believing on his Son, as our text says, "*it shall be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.*"--on the new earth

John 5: 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Concerning our earthly parents--notice our text says, "*Obey your parents IN THE LORD...*" All children should obey your parents. But the only ones who can do so, accepted of God in Christ, are those who first believe on Christ. If there be any child who has believing parents, listen to them teach you the gospel and believe on Christ.

When by God's grace, we see we are the sinner and the motive of our new heart is faith in Christ, constrained by his love for us, then we will truly seek to honor our father and mother because we see what a faithful heavenly Father we have.

If we believe on Christ and our parents do not, we can show no greater love and honor than bringing them to hear the good news, praying for Christ to bless it and wait on him to do so. And obey them *in the LORD*--so long as they do not command something contrary to our Lord--to separate us from Christ and his gospel--then we obey them and honor them

If our parents taught us the gospel, oh, how sweet is that bond in Christ, how easy this precept.

Ephesians 6: 1: Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2: Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3: That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Amen!