

Biblical Parenting – 7 Teaching Obedience

GOD'S TWO BASIC COMMANDS TO CHILDREN: *Obey your parents and honour your parents.*

First command to children: *Obey (6:1)*

Parents make real, visible, and understandable the authority of the invisible God.

The benefit for children:

- They learn to submit to authority, one of the keys to a peaceful childhood and adult life.
- They are prepared for the gospel, realising that they are under God's rule, and need His grace because they so frequently violate His authority.

A qualifier:

When we speak of parental *authority*, we're not talking about some kind of oppressive, Draconian, abusive approach to parenting.

Applying *Children, obey your parents*:

The Big Five of parenting small children (Carey Hardy):

1. No.
2. Stop.
3. Come.
4. Sit.
5. Quiet.

Point: Small children don't need explanations, reasons, or parental homilies on the benefits of going to bed on time.

in the Lord

the sphere or circle in which a child obeys. Children obey within the sphere of or under the umbrella of God's authority. How children obey their parents is how they obey God.

for this is right

Children are to obey just because it is foundationally, categorically, intrinsically *right*.

Principle: First-time obedience

Children, obey your parents ... for this is right.

Summed up: *Children obey your parents ... for this is right* means that we are graciously but firmly to help our children obey right away, the first time they are told to do something.

First-time obedience explained: There is no reason why a child can't obey the first time he is told to do something. If your child hears you, but only comes the *third* time you call, he didn't obey; he *disobeyed* twice.

First-time obedience eradicates ...

- delayed obedience
- partial obedience
- debating parental instructions
- challenging parental authority
- excuses
- manipulation

First-time obedience excludes ...

- a parent having to repeat an instruction three times, ending with yelling and anger.
- arguing with a person who can't even tie his shoes yet.
- saying things like, "How many times have I told you ... ?"
- threatening: "I won't tell you again ..."

First-time obedience is hard work, but it brings peace and joy to homes previously filled with conflict and anger. Proverbs 29:17.

Teaching first-time obedience: As Lou Priolo points out, the first rule for disciplining children is you must have more discipline than your child. (*The Heart of Anger*, 60)

Principle: You need to do what is right one more time than they do what is wrong.

Explain the rules, and from that point on, give your child a legitimate, biblical hiding every time he ignores your instruction to *Come*, *Stop*, or whatever. Once he realises that it hurts *every time* he disobeys, he'll learn pretty quickly to do what is right the first time he is told.

Children sense inconsistency immediately and will start to push the fences to see how much they can get away with.

Key verse: Ecclesiastes 8:11. If there are no consequences, their hearts will only be more and more given to do evil.

The importance of children obeying the first time: According to Romans 1:28-31 and 2 Timothy 3:1-2, disobedience to parents is a key component of depravity.

Objection: *But my child is not a believer: how can he or she be expected to obey?*