

# The Structure of a Healthy Home (Part 2): Parent-Child Relationship

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[ 0 : 00 ] What would you call the most important teaching or learning center in Pickens County? In Pickens County, the most important teaching center, or you may refer to it as a learning center.

I'm going to guess that a lot of people think about public schools in general, maybe a particular school, maybe a particular level of school like elementary school. Some people, what came to your mind was the church.

Hopefully this church, if that's what you're thinking. Well, both certainly are true. Schools are teaching centers.

Our church is a teaching center. But I want you to think of this. Before anyone ever sets foot in any church or school building, they have spent their earliest and most life-shaping years in a home. For good or bad, we, we all begin, we all start out in life in a home that really is the most crucial, most important teaching and learning center in our lives.

[ 1 : 32 ] Chuck Swindoll agrees. He wrote a book on the home called Home, where life makes up its mind. Here's how he describes the influence of the home. Home, your home, that unique place where character is developed and patterns for life are determined.

It is the first and most influential teaching center for every child. And I want to emphasize, because a lot of teachers here know this better than anyone, both good and bad.

Today, I want us to look at the second most important relationship in the home. Described in Ephesians chapter 6, verses 1 through 4, we're talking about the parent-child relationship.

This is the third and final in our series on building a healthy home. The first two studies focused on the most important relationship in the home, the husband-wife relationship.

The husband-wife relationship sets the foundation, sets the tone for everything that goes on in a home. We looked at the husband-wife relationship as found in Genesis 2, 24 and in Ephesians chapter 5, verses 21 through 33.

[ 2 : 52 ] Today, we're going to look at chapter 6, verses 1 through 4 at the parent-child relationship. The second part of the structure of a healthy home.

Let's read together. 6-1 of Ephesians. Children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother.

This is the first commandment with a promise, that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land. That's recalling the fifth of the tenth, of the ten commandments.

Verse 4. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We're going to begin the way the passage does.

Verses 1 through 3, instructions to children. Now, I realized today is children's church. So, our little ones, children, elementary age and under, are over there.

[ 4 : 00 ] I thought about it toward the end of the week about maybe going over there at the first part of the service and talking about this a little bit over there, but they'd already had everything planned.

I didn't even bring it up. And so, here's what we're going to do. you, as parents, you teach what they need to hear from this message.

As part of what we're going to look at this morning, that is your responsibility to teach your children. So, I want to encourage you to listen carefully and don't just tell them the parts that you want them to hear.

Tell them the whole thing in its context. Let's look at it. God's instructions to children can be summarized very simply, obey and honor your parents. Obey and honor.

Look at verse one. God intends for children to obey their parents. It's real simple, isn't it? Children, obey your parents and the Lord for this is right. This is a command that's directed to children who live at home.

[ 5 : 08 ] If you look in verse four, there are instructions there about teaching, training, instructing, disciplining children in the home.

Children are under their parents' authority as long as they live in their parents' home and depend on their parents to provide for their basic needs.

I want you to understand that. You older kids here, teenagers, there's different ways that parents should relate to their older children for sure.

But bottom line, children living in their parents' home, children dependent upon them, and you are dependent upon them by virtue of you living in their home, you're under their authority.

Now, if you're over 18 and you think to yourself, I don't agree with that. I don't think somebody 18 years old or 20 years old should have to submit to their parents' authority.

[ 6 : 17 ] We're young adults, that's true. But, if you don't really want to live under your parents' authority in their home, there is a good way for you to become independent.

move out, get a job, take care of all of your bills. I'm not joking here now, that's what it means to be on your own.

And if you're not moved out, working, making everything yourself, you're not on your own. You may not like the way that sounds, but that's the reality that you are living in right now.

And I don't think your parents by any means should make it a burden, just hell on earth to live there. But don't misunderstand.

If you're living under their roof, you're under their authority. Children are commanded by God to obey their parents, but parents need to teach them how to do it.

[ 7 : 25 ] And it needs to start when they're very young. You know that. Children are always learning about obedience, but it may not be what their parents want them to learn, and it may not be what their parents are intending to teach.

Some children learn that they really don't have to obey their parents, because when they disobey, there's no consequences. Some children know, I'm in charge.

I don't have to do anything they tell me, because if I disobey, they're not going to do anything about it. I'm going to get by with it.

Some children learn they don't have to obey their parents until their parents just lose control, yell, get angry. For an example, I hope you haven't been there and done this.

Supper's ready. Mom or dad? Johnny, come to the table. Supper's ready. No movement.

[ 8 : 35 ] No sounds. Johnny, did you hear me? It's time to eat. This is awful.

Johnny, I'm going to count to three. And then finally, a lot of us have been here and we don't want to admit this.

If you don't get your rear end in that chair right now, I'm going to wear you out. And then they come. And what they have learned is, I don't have to do anything until they are mad, angry, yelling, and threatening to hurt me.

And we know as parents, that's true. Not a lesson we intend, but one that they learn.

When it comes to teaching children to obey, it is very important for parents to take into consideration the age and maturity level of their child. Little children, they need to learn or be taught to obey just because it's the right thing to do.

[ 9 : 50 ] We're going to talk about that a little bit more in a moment. But little children, they don't understand a whole lot about why you do this or that. But little children just need to know that if mom and daddy tells them to do something, they need to do it because it's just the right thing to do to obey mom and daddy.

That is where they learn to respect and obey authority. And that's important. You should not have to explain to your five-year-old why you tell him or her to do this or that.

The fact that you as a parent are telling them should be sufficient. Now, a lot of parents like that. Some of you say, oh, that's archaic.

No, that's true. That's what's right. If you've listened to that liberal junk, I can tell right now you're already in trouble.

Now, as children mature, let's emphasize this. As children grow up, they're able to think and reason and understand.

[ 11 : 02 ] They need to learn why some things are right and wrong. They need to learn some, they need to learn reasons why you don't want them to do this and you want them to do that. That helps them to learn to think, to reason, to understand basic right and wrong or to understand rational reasoning.

Children need to be taught to be responsible as they grow up. That includes helping them to think, to make decisions, to make choices and it also includes also it involves letting them sometimes suffer the consequences for their bad choices.

And I want to think here for a moment, I'm not talking about sinful choices. A learning experience for children is to suffer consequences when they're just being irresponsible, when they don't think, when they don't take things necessary.

If you've got a child who, they don't, they just, it's like pulling teeth to get them to do their homework. They won't finish their homework and put it in their backpack.

They won't take the responsibility day after day after day to do the homework, put it in the backpack and take it back to school. You need to let them learn some consequences of not taking the responsibility to put it in their backpack and take it to school.

[ 12 : 41 ] Let them stay in at recess some. Let them suffer whatever the consequences are some. Don't always help them.

If you've got a child who's just, they won't think, they won't take the time to be responsible, and they're always leaving their coat here or there in the wintertime.

let them be cold some days. Let them go to school without a coat and go out at recess or go somewhere without a coat and freeze themselves during that time, and that may wake them up.

Hey, I better remember my coat. And I, there's all kinds of situations here in a room this size. The light's gone on for some of you. You're bailing your children out everywhere you turn.

Teach them to think, to make choices, and be responsible for their choices. Now, this command to obey. As children get older, especially teenagers and older teenagers, it should not be wrong in your house when situations come up it shouldn't be wrong for a child to ask why in a respectful way because they'd like to know what's wrong with this.

[ 14 : 11 ] Or they'd like to know why I need to do this. And they're just wanting to learn what I'm talking about. They're not being defiant, not being disrespectful. It should not be wrong for children to be able to enter into discussions about some things.

it's not rebellious to ask questions. It's not rebellious in some situations to ask would you reconsider? Is there any way it could be different?

I want you to understand older teenagers and older teenagers. it's the way you go about it sometimes that causes the conflict. But I want you to understand as a parent as your children are older explain things to them.

Let them understand you're being reasonable even if they don't agree. Even if they still will not be happy about it have some give and take.

but it's important that everybody at the table have a good attitude. No disrespect on either end. Ideally older teenagers especially those who are college age should act like young adults and be treated like young adults at home.

[ 15 : 35 ] Parents should have reasonable rules of the house. when it comes especially to older people older children living at home.

And young adults should honor those reasonable rules as a part of respecting and honoring their parents. I want you to look at the reason why children obey their parents.

Children should obey their parents in the Lord for this is right. In the Lord means that a child's obedience is a part of their obedience to the Lord. If you're a Christian as a child or teenager one of the reasons you ought to obey your parents is because that's what the Lord wants you to do.

If you're serious about living a Christian life that's a part of living a Christian life to obey your parents. Look at the last phrase for this is right.

This is just part of God's created order for life. It's just the way God made things to be. It's been in every culture. Children are to obey their parents.

[ 16 : 46 ] It's also how God intends for children to learn discipline and respect and authority as they grow up and become mature adults. There's another reason though why children should obey their parents.

Really the main focus here verses two and three God intends for children to honor their parents. Honoring involves more than obedience doesn't it? Honor involves the right attitude. Honor involves love and respect. Let's just take a little point here. Children, teenagers, one way to honor your parents is to talk to them.

Don't act like they don't exist. Do things with them. Act like you are a part of the family.

Help around the house because you live there. Don't ignore your parents.

[ 17 : 50 ] Don't leave them out of your life except when you want something. If you're doing that your parents know they're not stupid. They know that you're using them if that's what you do.

See some of you younger people and let's don't get too harsh because a lot of us older people we developed this well when we were young. Some younger people are kind artists.

Kind man, kind girl. Well a lot of parents see through that and they know it. And I want you to understand when parents see that all they care about is what they can get out of me.

All they want to do is use me. I want you to know that hurts. Parents that you know, love you, they've given much of themselves and what they can and there's never anything in return in terms of an attitude, a word or an action that hurts and it gets old.

You need to know that. There comes a time when children outgrow the command to obey their parents when they go out on their own, even as a single adult or as a married person.

[ 19 : 21 ] And that's good. I don't know, no one is, nobody has ever said anything to me in this church about this, but this might ought to be said. If you are a grown child living on your own, work, have your place, do your thing, married or not, you don't have to obey your parents.

You don't have to live the way they tell you to live. You don't have to work the kind of job they tell you to work. You don't have to marry the person they tell you you should marry. You don't have to quit being married to the person they want you to quit being married to.

And if you've got grown children, they're on their own, leave them alone. Don't try to tell them how to live their life. Don't try to tell them what they ought to do, what they ought not do.

Let them be adults. Let them have a positive relationship with you and you're no longer the boss.

children outgrow the requirement to obey their parents but children never outgrow God's command to honor their father and mother.

[ 20 : 35 ] As adult children, no matter what age we are, we have a responsibility to honor our parents as long as they live and among other things that means that we don't ignore them.

We don't leave them out of our lives. As long as our parents are alive, we need to make sure that we're honoring them in the way that we relate to them, communicate with them, help them if they need it.

You know, the command to honor parents also comes with a motivating reason. Look again in verse 3, that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land. That was spoken to Israel before they went into the promised land, but that was never a guarantee that all children who honor their parents will live a long time and if you don't honor your parents, you'll die early.

This is a general principle of life. It's like a proverb. Children who honor and respect their parents tend to live longer and live better lives.

For an example, the idea is a child who grows up and obeys their parents, honor their parents.

We're talking about obeying and honoring godly parents in this context.

[ 21 : 54 ] And if you've got Christian parents, godly parents, they're going to try to help you go in a good direction in some of the choices you make.

And they're going to try to help you not go in the wrong direction and make some very foolish, life-altering choices. That is the idea.

Proverbs is filled with such warnings. Look at some examples. He says, Listen, my son, accept what I say and the years of your life will be many. Proverbs 10, The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.

Children who reject the counsel of their godly parents will often follow a path that ruins their lives or hurts their lives, maybe even cut it short.

If you are a wise teenager or child, you'll obey and honor your parents for a lot of reasons. Number one, God commands it.

[ 23 : 03 ] It's the right thing to do. But it really will, as a general way of life, it really will work out for the best for you in the long run.

Let's turn our attention quickly now to verse four. Instruction to parents. Look at it. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Fathers are taking the lead in spiritual teaching. We know, we've seen in the other study from chapter five, 22 through 33, husbands are the God-ordained leaders of the home.

If there's no father in your home, or if the father's not a Christian, or if he won't take responsibility, then by all means, mothers take the lead. Don't let it slide.

If there is neither parent a Christian, or won't take responsibility, grandparents, you step up, aunts and uncles, family members, members of this church, do whatever you can to help children who have no other spiritual guidance, help them be a spiritual influencer in their life.

[ 24 : 18 ] Now, from this point on, I want to refer to parents, both mother and dad. Let's look. What children don't need from their parents, verse four, the first part, fathers do not provoke your children to anger.

Now, I think it'd be common sense that you know that does not mean you should never do anything to make your children angry. Sometimes just doing the right thing makes some children angry. Sometimes good, healthy, proper discipline makes a child angry because they just got punished. Sometimes doing what your child, making your child do what is right, or not allowing your child to do something that you know is wrong will make them angry.

That's not what he's talking about, and I think common sense helps us to understand that. He's talking about the kind of things that parents can do that cause unnecessary, harmful, resentful anger in children.

Look at the few things that Kent Hughes, a pastor, describes ways to avoid provoking anger. Number one, don't have unreasonable expectations.

[ 25 : 30 ] Do not have unreasonable expectations. Don't expect your five-year-old to be able to do what a 10-year-old can do.

Don't expect your 10-year-old to be able to do what, or think like a 15-year-old. I can remember when my oldest, David, was very young.

I can remember, I don't know what I did, what I said, but I remember my dad sort of standing off to the side and doing it in a real positive sort of a smile on his face, but I remember him telling me, don't expect him to be a grown man.

Whatever it was, my dad thought it was unreasonable. He just looked at me. Don't expect him to be a grown man.

I've never forgot that. Number two, don't constantly criticize. John Newton, the hymn writer, he wrote Amazing Grace.

[ 26 : 37 ] He said he experienced a difficult childhood. Here's a statement he made about his dad. I know that my father loved me, but he did not seem to wish me to see it. I know my father loved me, but he just didn't show it is what he was talking about.

Don't, number three, don't be harsh and overly strict. Don't be harsh and overly strict. Don't let no be the automatic default response to everything your child asks you.

You know, our goal as parents, one of our goal as parents is prepare our children to leave home and be independent adults.

I hope you all know that. It's a gradual process throughout life, but when you take that little baby home from the hospital, you're looking at him or her, their fifth birthday, their tenth birthday, fifteenth birthday, whatever it is, the ultimate goal in your parenting, in this, what we're talking about right here, the ultimate goal is for you to raise a child who is mature, who is independent, who can think for himself or herself, who has some wisdom and can go out in this world on their own and be productive, be self-sufficient.

The ultimate goal is that they be a boy or girl, man or woman who has a close relationship with God and seeks to know and do his will, but I'm talking about just in this world as a human being, our goal is to make our children self-sufficient, independent.

[ 28 : 27 ] Well, that can't start when they're fifteen. It's got to be a lifelong process of increasingly giving them freedom and responsibility.

Freedom and responsibility. Let them learn some things. Don't always say no. And then number four, don't fail to give your child your attention.

Don't fail relationally, one-on-one. Don't fail at FaceTime. What gets most of your FaceTime?

Your smartphone, iPad, computer, TV, book, or your child. Meaningful relationships require FaceTime, eye contact, listening, talking.

You see this as well as I do. Everywhere you go today, people together, but they're not.

[ 29 : 39 ] Because even at a restaurant, people not talking to one another, not looking at one another, but looking at an iPhone, scrolling down the iPhone and avoiding basically one another.

Not too long ago, I was in a restaurant. There was a lady about my age, we'll say, and she obviously had her mother, who would look to be a sharp, alert, older lady.

This mother was sitting there, and her 60-year-old daughter, say, was sitting beside her with her face in that phone, flipping through it, and in completely ignoring her mother.

You see it at every age. This probably is more like meddling than preaching, but I'm going to do it anyway. If I have children, my children with me at a restaurant, and they've got an iPhone that I'm paying for, they will not sit there and ignore me and look at that phone long, because I'll take it.

It's mine. Let me tell you something, kids, of all ages, if your mom and daddy is paying for the car, it's theirs. If they're paying for the cell phone, it's theirs. And I want to encourage parents to be parents and be in control of some things.

[ 31 : 12 ] Don't let your children control your life and your home like so many do today. And I would not sit there and complain about a child looking at the phone instead of looking at me.

If I'm paying for it, you can take it. And that's not being overbearing. That's not being wrong and going too far.

That's your children being disrespectful of you and you intervening and not allowing it to happen. Now, I might need somebody to stand with me at the door this morning.

Some of you younger people may be mad at me, but you'll get over it. Because sooner or later, you'll know that's right. You may not know it until you have your own children and you're ready to knock that phone out of their hand just like your parents are you right now because of the disrespect.

Nothing wrong with a phone. I use one every day. Nothing wrong with computers. All this technology, we all use them, enjoy them, profit by them, work with them. But they should not rob us of FaceTime, personal interaction, and especially with people we are the closest to.

[ 32 : 29 ] What children need from their parents. Look at the last part, verse four, the last part, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. The phrase bring them up.

It could be translated nourish them up because that word translated bring, it's the same word that you find in verse 29 of chapter five that is translated nourish.

Paul describes how a husband should care for his wife just as he does his own body and just as Christ cares for the church. So here in verse four, the idea is that parents should bring their children up in a gentle, caring, and loving way.

That's what a nourishing, healthy environment is. Just think for a minute, how would you describe the environment of your home right now? What kind of emotional atmosphere is there as a general rule?

Is it stressful, harsh, sad, strict, verbally and or physically abusive?

[ 33 : 39 ] Or is it truly more nourishing, more gentle, more joyful, more loving, open, inviting?

Older children and teenagers, you've got a responsibility for helping to make your home environment this way. It's got to go both ways, parents and children.

Number two, children also need consistent, loving discipline. Look at that word there. The word discipline here is a strong word. It means training by discipline. It can even include the idea of punishment.

It's the same word used in Hebrews chapter 12 to describe God's discipline. The emphasis in Hebrews 12 is that God disciplines His children out of love for us.

Just as Christian parents discipline their children because they love them. As we talk about discipline, it is very important.

[ 34 : 41 ] You can't have a healthy home without it. But the way we go about our discipline as parents, we need to be careful that we go about it the right way. It's always dangerous for us to discipline our child when we're mad, when we're hurt, when we're not in control of our own emotions.

Martin Lloyd-Jones made this statement that all parents need to take to heart. He says, when you discipline a child, you should have first control with yourself.

What right have you to say to your child that he needs discipline when you obviously need it yourself? Self-control, the control of temper is an essential prerequisite in the control of others. Children certainly need discipline. And spanking is not abuse. But we must make sure we do it the right way. And it begins with our own attitude, our own being in control.

One more. Children also need intentional Christian instruction. instruction. They need instruction about the things of the Lord tells us here. Most Christian parents do take their children's instruction in school seriously.

[ 35 : 59 ] Most good parents, Christian parents, they make sure the child goes to school every day, they're on time, they do their homework, they're prepared for testing like we've just gone through not too long ago.

But let me ask you, parent, how much effort do you put into your children's spiritual education at home and then at church?

Do you pray with them? Do you read the Bible with them or read Bible stories when they're little? Do you encourage them to read the Bible themselves? Do you talk to them about the things of God?

Do you talk to them about Jesus? Do you try to roll, help them to see how God's involved in all of life? Do you bring them to Sunday school regularly, or wanna regularly, other things that we have here?

Do you bring them here on time? Is it as important to come to Sunday school Bible study on time as it is to go to work and school on time? That's important.

[ 37 : 01 ] It's teaching children. It's tough being a parent. I think being a parent is the most difficult thing I've ever tried to do.

I really do. But with God's help, we can be godly parents. We can do what we're being instructed to do.

God has put His Spirit in us to equip us, to give us the desire and ability to do it. He's put us in His Word what to do. We've just gotta be faithful to the best of our ability.

I wanna close this message with a quote from Cal Thomas. He talks about the responsibility of parents when all is said and done. Look at it. Think about it carefully.

He says, make sure that at the end of your life, regardless of how your child turns out, that you can honestly stand before God and say, in a fallen world, being the sinner that I am, I did the best I could through the power you gave me.

[ 38 : 18 ] If you can't say that, whatever else you have accomplished doesn't matter. Let's pray together. Father, help all of us to know how we should respond to what you have taught us in this passage.

Father, if there are parents here who've just failed, they haven't put forth any effort, they haven't prayed, they haven't sought to be true, spiritual examples and leaders to their children, help them to confess that as the sin that it is and truly repent of it.

Help them, Father, right now to make a new commitment to seek your help day by day to live a faithful Christian life before their children and then to seek to be the spiritual influence influence in their lives that you've called them to be.

Help them to see, Father, that they can't be perfect parents and they don't have perfect children, but you will work in them to help them to guide and influence their children in a good way.

Father, if there are parents in this room that while they know they've not done everything right, they do see some good signs in their life, but they're very difficult, they're very concerned, they're tired, they have a lot of unanswered questions, I pray, Father, that you will comfort them, that you'll encourage them not to give up, not to quit, but to persevere in being that faithful parent, influencer, teacher of their child.

[ 40 : 20 ] Father, if there are children in this room who are disobedient, disrespectful, they have bad attitudes, I pray that you will convict them of that sin right now.

you'll cause them to not only seek your forgiveness, but seek their parents' forgiveness. Just as, Father, you cause parents to seek their child's forgiveness in addition to yours.

I pray, Father, that you'll just do the work in the life of each parent and child, each influencer of children in this room that will all profit from what you've said to us.

Lord, help us to see that none of us can do this on our own. We need your help. Help us to look to you, talk to you, cooperate with you every day.

and just in an attitude of prayer, you listen to the Lord and you obey Him about this matter. If I could pray with you during this time, I'll be happy to here at the front.  
[ 41 : 33 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.