

Living Beyond Your Parents

Introduction

- A. This will be my last opportunity to do a kids night lesson.
 1. Several things prompted us to begin this tradition almost seven years ago.
 - a. We have a lot of kids, 175 to 200 over the last ten years. At any given service, more than a third of our crowd is young people.
 - b. We also recognize that our kids are the most at risk group among us. Denominations lose 80-90 percent of their kids. Our brethren lose about 60 percent.
 - c. We've said over and over again that we want to do better than that. So far so good – roughly 70-80% of our kids are hanging in there.
 2. Working with these kids has been my special privilege and one of my very favorite things about the time we have spent here at Dowlen Road. We've done a lot together and Heidi and I will carry away a lot of very found memories...
 - a. Our Revelation class (and your pathetic artwork)
 - b. The devotions at our place
 - c. Prepping for the 5:30 devos and the nights when young men would lead
 - d. Our trips to Mexico and Dallas
 - e. Teen weekend
 - f. The Valentines party
 - g. Those nights when devo was over, but some of you would hang around until midnight just talking
 - h. Text messages from Chelsea at 1:15 a.m.
 - i. And these nights...when you guys would sit down front like this and we've had the chance to talk about some things God says to you...
 3. Those are very special memories that Heidi and I will treasure forever. You are like our own kids and we love you very much.

- B. But for my final kids night sermon, I want to say something to you that I suspect you never imagined you would hear from me.
 1. I want to say don't follow your parents; don't do what they did. Even if they are very godly and strive to serve God, don't do what they have done.
 2. I know that will strike you as odd; in fact, it may seem to contradict everything I've said to you about your parents over the last nine years. How many times have we talked about honoring your parents and listening to their guidance (**Ephesians 6:1-3**)?

3. Obviously I'm not trying to contradict what is taught in this passage. But I am trying to make a point.
 - a. Looking at this relationship from one angle, it is certainly true that young people should listen to their parents and even follow in their footsteps.
 - b. But I want you to appreciate that there may also be times when you must not listen to your parents. There will be times when it will not be enough to simply follow in their footsteps. There are times when you will need to live beyond your parents.
 - c. For a little while, I want to talk about three situations in which you will have to do that if you are to be the disciple God called you to be.
 - d. So, when would I ever need to live beyond my parents?

If your parents were not godly, you will have to be godly.

- A. I think about that every time I preach lessons to young people about honoring and obeying their parents.
 1. The Bible teaches you to do this (**Proverbs 6:20-23; Ephesians 6:1-3**).
 2. And yet, even as I read those passages, I realize that there are some young people who cannot do this.
 - a. You can't do this because, while you love your parents, you love Jesus more (Matthew 10:37); and recognize that God must be obeyed before man (Acts 4:19-20).
 - b. To put it simply, you cannot obey your parents because, if you did, you would be disobeying God.
 3. If some of you listened to your parents, you would not be here – because they do not want you to come here.
 - a. Some of you would be at another church where error is taught and practiced because that's where your parents want you to be.
 - b. It can get pretty intense for some. I know of kids who've been threatened, disowned, even put out of the house because they were doing what God wanted them to do.
 - c. They could not obey their parents because their parents were demanding that they disobey God.
 4. However, the circumstances are not always this intense.
 - a. It may simply be that, as you get older and learn more about God's will for your life, you discover that His will does not always match with what you saw at home. Maybe they didn't always put God first, treat each other right or they were not always honest like God requires.

- b. This isn't a very pleasant discovery, but it does raise a critical question for you. If you should realize that your parents were not the people God wants them to be, what will you do? Will you stop being a Christian? Will you follow in their footsteps and imitate their ungodly life?
- B. This is one of those situations where you must live beyond your parents.
 - 1. Obviously, this is what God demands. I don't get a pass on doing right because my parents were not so great. We each answer for our lives (**II Corinthians 5:10**).
 - 2. But let me also emphasize that YOU CAN live beyond your parents.
 - a. None of us are pre-wired to do whatever our parents did. Some make the choice...but it's a CHOICE.
 - b. You can also choose to reject their ungodly life and do better.
 - 3. Think about King Josiah.
 - a. His grandfather was perhaps the most evil king Judah had (II Chronicles 33:9). Although he later repented, he was never able to completely undo the damage he had done.
 - b. He was followed by his son, Amon, who was also very wicked (II Chronicles 33:22). After his servants assassinated him, eight-year-old Josiah was made king (II Chronicles 34:1-2).
 - c. But notice, he made a different choice. In spite of the evil family from which he came, he chose to seek the Lord and to do right.
 - 4. My point is that each of us has the capacity to do that same thing. Whether I come from a family that disowns me for serving God or one that simply is not very dedicated to the Lord, I can choose to be different. I can choose to live beyond my family.
 - 5. But maybe this isn't your situation. Maybe you had great parents who taught you to serve God. May I suggest that there is still a sense in which you must live beyond them?

If your parents taught you the truth, you will still have to develop your own faith.

- A. I've always been fascinated by something Paul wrote to the young preacher Timothy (**II Timothy 3:13-15**).
 - 1. As some fell into error, Timothy was to stick with the truth.
 - 2. But notice what Paul says about Timothy's experience with this truth.

- a. He had learned it (**v. 14**). His mother and grandmother taught him as a child (**1:5; 3:15**). He had received instruction from Paul. He had learned the truth...but he did something else (**v. 14**).
 - b. He had become convinced that these things were true. Over time, with more study and reinforcement, these truths had gone from being something that others had told him to something he was absolutely convinced of.
- B. Each of you will need to have this same experience. It's another way that you need to live beyond your parents.
1. I know that most all of you have good parents who've taught you a lot about God and His will for your life, just like Timothy. You've heard a lot of teaching about a lot of stuff.
 - a. You've learned that there really is a God – remember Dr. Payne talking about that at Lamar?
 - b. You've learned that the Bible is His word.
 - c. You've learned about worshiping Him, that instrumental music is not part of New Testament worship.
 - d. You've learned about living for Him, that you should not drink alcohol or have sex before you're married.
 2. But at some point along the way, all of this must become more than just things you were taught by mom and dad. You will have to decide if you believe it's all true. You will have to be convinced!
 - a. We even have language to describe this process. We talk about developing your own faith.
 - b. I can remember being off at college my freshman year, a thousand miles from home and going through this process. I can even remember walking across campus one day thinking about some things I was hearing in Bible class and asking myself this question: Do I believe all of this because my mom and dad said it, or do I believe it because it's true?
 - c. At some point – if you are going to be a genuine disciple of Jesus – you will have to answer this question for yourself. You will have to live beyond mom and dad and develop a faith that is your own!
 3. But maybe you have parents who not only taught you to do the right things, but who have helped you develop your own faith. Even if your parents have lived right before you and taught you the right things, there is still a way in which you need to live beyond them.

If your parents were very devoted to God, you need to excel still more.

- A. I'm pulling this language from Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians.
 - 1. Twice in chapter four he commends this church for something they are doing well, and then follows with this admonition.
 - a. In (**v. 1**) he commends them for following his instructions and living a life that pleases God, but then urges them to excel still more.
 - b. Then in (**vs. 9-10**) he commends them for the love they had shown to brethren, but then urges them to excel still more.
 - 2. The point is this:
 - a. It doesn't matter how far we've come in our walk with Jesus (how much we've learned, changed and molded our lives into the image of Jesus), there is always room to grow.
 - b. Becoming a disciple of Jesus begins a learning and growing process that never ends.
 - c. Do you guys think Max is a pretty good Bible student? Recently I heard him comment that the older he gets, the more he realizes how much he doesn't know about the Bible and how much he wants to learn more.

- B. This gets us back to the point we've been making about your parents. It's yet another way that you need to live beyond them.
 - 1. I know many of you have been blessed with great parents.
 - a. They've been teaching you about God since before you can remember.
 - b. They've been showing you God's will every day by living it in their lives.
 - c. They are dedicated kingdom workers who do great things for God's cause in this place.
 - d. If you have parents like that, will you say a little prayer of thanksgiving to God right now?
 - 2. But after being thankful, you have another job to do. You need to take that foundation your parents laid and **BUILD ON IT!**
 - a. If they gave you the blessing of a godly home, you take everything you learned, keep growing your knowledge of God's word and build an even stronger home for you kids.
 - b. If they are active workers in the congregation, learn from their example, grow in your own abilities and take the work to new heights.
 - c. My friend, Mark Roberts, has worked with Todd for four summers in a preacher-training program. He reminds me constantly that he's going to be twice the preacher I am...I hope so!

3. Wherever your parents brought you, whatever you have learned from their example, be determined to raise the bar, excel still more, live beyond them.

Conclusion: II Corinthians 5:10

In this passage Paul explains why all of this is so very important. When judgment day comes, I will not be able to blame my parents for my ungodly life or get to heaven on the back of their faith. It's going to be about me, my choices, my life.

What choice have you made about serving God?

- David A. Banning