

"A Family Affair-A Word to Children" - Colossians 3:20

Tonight we would like to look at Colossians chapter 3, and would like to draw your attention to verse 20. And I've asked the teenagers to come in, because it has to deal with their lives and what it means to "obey parents". But I wanted some kids to look at if I was going to be teaching this. Next week I want to encourage them to come back because I want to deal with parents. How parents need to learn to work with their children and how they need to begin to understand the dynamics of the relationship. But tonight in Colossians 3, we are going through the Bible taking a look at "Family Affair". We have taken a look at the husband. We have taken a look at the wife. Tonight we want to take a look at the children being obedient to the parent. And then next week we take a look at the parent. And then the following week we want to take a look at fathers and mothers together. How a father can really encourage in a different way than being a parent, to encourage a son or a daughter in the ways of God.

As we look at this area you might think, well Steve, what does this have to deal with me? Well, the word "children" in the Greek is a word that means "under the roof" or "under-authority". It's a word that embraces more than just children, but children of God. Although I'll be speaking to them about their relationship with their parents in the home, it also has to deal with us in our submission and our obedience to God. And as we looked at concerning husbands, we are to love our wives. And wives are to be obedient and submit to their husbands. The word that we want to look at tonight is that interesting word meaning "obedience". It means to "listen under" or "to be under" someone, to begin to mature. And so it says in Colossians 3:20, "**Children obey your parents in all things for this is well and pleasing unto the Lord**". Let me read

that again to you. "Children (or church), obey the Lord or your parents in all things for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

US News and World Report did an interesting comparison concerning different years in which generations have grown up. They did a comparison on what were some of the major complaints in the schools in 1940. One of the major complaints were talking out of turn, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, cutting in line, and dress code violation. Well, we laugh at that and think, "My goodness, God, why can't it be like that now?" Then they did a report in 1995 and these were the major concerns of the schoolteachers: Drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, robbery, assault and now you can add murder since Columbine and some of the other schools have taken place. Within generations, we have seen things turn complete upside down, and the school's under lock and key. You can't even get into school unless it's under lock and key. We find that teachers are beginning to leave because they are so concerned about their life. I saw a young man today with a tattoo on his arm. The tattoo was angry on one side and mean on the other side. I thought to myself, what a generation. From my generation that was the "love in", to now, a generation that really enjoys violence. They enjoy being able to just be different. And there is nothing wrong with being different, but I think that teenagers are teenagers and they are always going to be different. The destructiveness of the kids today in the home and the disrespect is unbelievable, because now it seems that children are beginning to run the home and beginning to threaten their parents in such an interesting way. We find teenage suicides are rising. Five hundred thousand teenagers commit suicide every single year. Five hundred thousand. Suicides have increased three hundred percent since 1960, and suicides are now starting at the age of six years old. Can you imagine a six-year-old beginning to take out their life? The pressure is beginning to come too strong. Ten million children have venereal diseases, five thousand sexual diseases every day. One in five teenagers are using drugs that we know, one million teenagers are working the streets before sixteen as prostitutes, and we find that twelve million children are alcoholics. Teens are also beginning to kill one another in the schools.

I read this thing that I want to read to you, and especially to the teenagers because it really says what I want to say. Then I want to give you four things to really think about. Eighteen-year-old Brent staring at the doctor in disbelief. Until today Aids has always been something that has happened to other people. Sure, he had a fling when he was fifteen years old, but is it fair he should earn a sentence of death? Todd, a college bound track star, had everything going for him - looks, brains, ability - and he also got Herpes. It's miserable, it's incurable, but at least it's not Aids, he says. Jessica, a bright and beautiful honor student from a Christian home. Until the color stick from her home pregnancy test turned blue, her future looked rosy. Every turn of society tells our kids if it feels good, do it. Life only comes around once, so live it to the fullest now. The radio speeches and the songs, like "tonight is the night", and MTV, the illustration of lewd suggested lyrics. By and large, secular broadcasting media did little to re-enforce moral values or demonstrate the consequence of irresponsibility of immoral behavior. When was the last time you saw a secular program show a person contracting a sexual transmitted disease, or a portrait of a broken teenager, or suffering through unplanned pregnancy? Society faults and distorts the message of love and sex and have devastated effects on the basic moral convictions of our young people. Those basic moral convictions once held by a previous generation are apparently not being passed on to our present generation. A generation without moral conviction is a generation crumbling under the pressure of a secular world view. Prevailing attitudes about sex have been drastically changed during the last couple of decades.

In 1969, a gallop pole found 68% of all adults felt that premarital sex was wrong. However, less than twenty years later in the United States, the U.S. and News World report showed that 61% now find premarital sex acceptable, and a whopping 78% of young adults aged eighteen to twenty-nine approved of premarital sex. One night on a television talk show, a guest told Hollywood actors he stepped out on his wife and picked up a beautiful gal in a bar. He slept with her that one night, only to wake in the morning to find her gone and scribbled in lipstick on the bathroom window was,

"welcome to the world of Aids". Seventy percent of all pornography magazines end up in the hands of minors. One member of the commission estimates that the chief consumer of the hard-core pornography are men between the ages of fifteen and seventeen. In the next twenty-four hours, more than thirty-five thousand American teenagers will have sexual transmitted diseases. That is thirteen million people in a year. A few years ago there were just five of these diseases; today there are more than thirty-four different diseases. And with adversity of the killing, of Aids virus, medical doctors are becoming prophets of doom; the contemporary teen sex scene is not a pretty picture. Three thousand adolescents will get pregnant today. That's more than a million girls a year. Thirty thousand of who will be under the age of fifteen. Of these teens, 60% will be pregnant again within two years, and more than four hundred thousand will have abortions this year. Of those who carry their babies full term, 93% will keep their children, costing the government an estimate of eighteen billion a year in federal expenses for aid to families and department of children. Medicare, food stamps, in addition to the problems of unplanned pregnancy. Seven thousand teens will contract a sexual transmitted disease every day this year. Added to the cost of lost dreams and family heartache, the stunt of spiritual growth, the price tag of teenage sex; kids today have not much to look forward to.

What accounts for all this increase in sexual activity? To be sure the media has played a major role in making sex outside of marriage a social acceptance. By the age of twenty, the average viewer has seen 90,000 suggestive acts of sex on television. And screens referring to 80% portrayed sex outside of marriage. The number of never married teenage girls having sex increased by two thirds during the decade. Most researchers show that the average age of the first time of a teenager having sex is fifteen for the girl and fourteen for the boy. Statistics reveal that 29% of middle school ages eleven through thirteen and 54% of high schools ages fourteen through eighteen surveyed in Culver City say they are sexually active. Among the middle schools, boys admit that they are active at the age of eleven and girls at the age of twelve. Teenage pregnancies are at a near all time high. A 25% decline in birth rate between 1970 and

1984 is due to a double abortion rate. During that period more than four hundred thousand girls have aborted. Of teens who marry because of pregnancy, 60% will be divorced in five years. If the present trend continues, 40% of today's fourteen-year-old girls will be pregnant before the age of twenty. Since the popular push for condoms, the increase of pregnancy is up 400%. A Baltimore medical clinic with eighteen thousand patients under eighteen reported recently that 51% of all hospitalizations related to sexual activity: abortion, birth, and sexual transmitted diseases. Let me end here.

As Christian parents, we like to think our kids aren't "doing it". However, a study of fourteen hundred teens show that two thirds of young adult teenagers are sexually active. What may be even more disturbing is that 82% of the teens who answer this questionnaire suggest and admit they are in a church and committed to Christ. A third of them don't believe there was anything wrong with sexual intercourse before marriage and the survey shows a very little difference between sexual behavior of Christians and teens across the board. Billy Graham almost floored the large crowd attending a 1988 meeting of the National Religious Broadcasters when he revealed extremely damaging information about Pastors Conventions at a large hotel. A spokesman from the hotel stated that 75% of the rooms occupied by Bible believing Pastors and Youth Pastors turned on x-rated movies. No other group - lawyers, doctors, morticians, politicians, and educators - used the pay for sex channels as much as the Pastors and the Youth Pastors and their families. The temptation is out of control.

When I look at this, I begin to realize that what we have in front of us is a devastating report. When you read what Paul was saying, that the importance of "honoring your parents", and looking at the importance of a "life of obedience". Again, one of the great things that I have come to walk away in these studies is that women are to submit unto the Lord; they are to look to God and they are to submit, but they are to look to Jesus Christ. Husbands are to love the Lord with all their heart and they are to

love their wife as Christ loved the church. We come now to the teenagers, or to the children, and they are to obey the Lord as unto the Lord. So the obedience that God is looking for, the commitment God is asking for, is far beyond the church. It has to deal with the relationship of Jesus Christ. God has made you in his image and God has given you the power of his Holy Spirit to be able to be obedient before God. Every one of us tonight in this room, teenagers or adult's, must understand the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit within our life because we are living in perilous times. We are living in difficult times. And once again we see, and I find it very interesting, that one of the signs of the last days will be "disobedience to parents". You remember, in (Proverbs 30:11-17), **"There are people who curse their father and do not show their appreciation to their mother. There are people who think they are pure when they are filthy as they can be. There are people who think they are good. Oh, how good they think they are. There are people who take care of advantage of the care of the poor and the needy and the way they make their living. (now look at this) Anyone who makes fun of his father or despises his mother in her old age ought to be eaten by vultures and have their eyes plucked out by wild ravens."** This is in the Bible. And you begin to get the picture of the responsibility we are to have towards our parents. Now, I am not one to really speak of this because I was a horrible son in my home. I was out of control on LSD and chased my mother down the street trying to kill her with a machete. I did everything that a good boy should not do.

So as I'm putting this study together, all I could think about is I wished I would have had somebody who had enough heart and guts to say "this is the way that you should have lived your life". Because when I look at my life and I see the scars, the pain, the agony, and the insecurity that I caused within my own family, I am ashamed. When I look at someone like Skip Heitzig, Jon Courson, Don McClure, or a Chuck Smith who were raised within a Christian home and who made a decision to surrender their life to Christ early in their life, there is just something different about their life. They didn't

have to go down the path that many of you are going down. They made a decision, a good decision, but that decision was based on a strong foundation of Biblical principals.

So even though you are in church and even though you're committed to Christ, God is asking that you would understand that your obedience in the home is like your submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. So if your rebellion at home, or in rebellion at home, and you are out of control at home, than you cannot say that your relationship with God is great. And so you come to church and you begin to have problems here among us. And the reason why is because you're looking, searching, longing to find that peace within your heart. Wanting to be accepted, wanting to be loved, and wanting to be used by God. God made you with the capacity to be used by God. But often times, your parents have not raised you in the Lord, or have not put their foot down in your life. And have not dealt in your life in the way that should have been dealt with, because they were afraid of the consequences that you threatened them. Often times you have been able to override certain things. But I want you to know it's only to your own hurt. Because if you have a desire as a team to please God, then the way you please God is that you are obedient at home. It doesn't mean your parents are always right. It says you are to obey in all things short of sin but you are to obey in all things of your life.

In (2 Timothy 3:2) it says, **"For the people will be lovers of themselves and they will desire money; they will be boasters and proud, scoffers at God, and disobedient to parent."** And then you remember in (Romans 1:30) he says, **"They are backstabbers, haters of God, they are proud, boastful, they are forever inventors of new ways of sinning, and they are disobedient to God."** So one of the key factors in the very last days is a generation that is totally disobedient to their family. And I suggest that we are living in that generation. And I suggest that your relationship with God is something you need to take a good hard look at. Because the blessings of God, the favor of God, the prosperity of God, and the goodness of God is based upon your obedience; here in the fellowship, in the home and where you go and

what you do in your life. And Paul now opens the door and I want to share four things with you tonight. Four things I think I did pretty well with my own son. I was pretty strong with him. But he is today thirty years old, vice president of a bank, and now going to be a senior vice president in just a little bit. And God has blessed him in a wonderful way. I received a wonderful card on Fathers Day saying, "Dad, you were hard but the principals you taught are the reason I'm so successful today."

And so I want to address the teens in a way that you would prepare your life for the future in a very powerful way. Jesus, it says, **"He grew in wisdom, he grew in knowledge, and he grew in obedience."** (Luke 2:40) - Wonderful things. So number one, you must have four things if you're going to be a teenager today in this world and be blessed. Number one, you need to learn the importance of "relationships". Four "R's". The importance of "relationships" within your life. Secondly, you need to learn the importance of "respect" within your life. Thirdly, you need to learn the importance of "responsibility". And number four, you need to learn the importance of "reverence" in the ministry of Christ. Four simple "R's": Number one, that you are to understand relationship; number two, that you are to have a respect; number three, that you are to have responsibility; and number four, you are to have reverence. So let me lay this out in the very best way I can, to build you up and encourage you. Get it on tape, maybe your kids could listen to it, I'll listen to it later on. But these are the foundations of the building block that God wants to do in and through your life.

Number one, you must learn the importance of relationship within your life. In (Colossians 3:20) he goes on to declare, **"Children obey your parents in all things for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."** Children obey your parents in all things for this is well pleasing to the Lord. The word "children" is a word that has no age requirement. Because you remember it says, **"They took their children that were drinking and took them in front of the judges of Israel, and they stoned them to death."** And so it has no ties. In other words, as long as my mother is alive I am

her child. And so I am part of her life and there is a responsibility and there is an understanding. Yes, I'm married; I'm to cleave to my wife. I'm to have a new life, but there is a certain authority God has placed over my life. The first thing you as a teen must understand, or as a husband or as a wife, is relationship. When we are growing up relationship is not important; we use and abuse, we take, we throw away. And when you get older in life and the kids go and all you have is the two of you, relationships become extremely important. The older I become, and the older Gail becomes, "relationship" becomes the essence of a life. Well, the Bible declares you have to have a relationship with God if you're going to pull this one off. Because there is not a kid in this room that's going to submit to any type of authority as long as they're alive. And there is not anyone in this room that's going to submit to authority in leadership as long as they can get away with it; unless they understand that there is that change of authority and God works within the government of God. And so there is a certain order that God must establish to bring the blessings of God in and through your life. Your home can either be a paradise or it can become a prison. You have to make the decision what you want it to become; if you're going to serve God, love God, respect God, if you're going to fellowship around the brothers and sisters, and you're going to be in the Bible, and begin to have music that's pleasing to the Lord - God is going to give you incredible freedom within your home. It's going to be a palace; you're going to find parents doing things, and they're going to be easier to let you go. But if you're disobedient, out of control - not loving God, walking in the ways of God - then they don't trust you. And they have every right not to trust you in that sense because your life is not pleasing to God. You say, "Well you can't judge me." No, put that joint in your mouth, who you hang out with, or how you're looking - those things begin to generate who you really are. And all of a sudden when parties become more important than the Lord Jesus Christ, or you begin to treat your sister or your relatives different, or begin to dump your friends, or become to change the way you dress because you're trying to impress somebody - you're in trouble. Because the relationship between you and God has now altered; therefore, you must alter your behavior so you fit in with everybody else. And I'm going to tell you, to fit into this world...I can't figure it out.

You know it really is a bazaar generation to fit into. Unlike my generation - it was tie dye's and flowers, that was about it. Now you have to have the whole body pierced. I don't have a problem with that, I got my ears pierced. I was drunk one night and they ran a sixteen-penny nail through my ear and into the wall and there I hung with this nail through my ear. And I got into all kinds of trouble. We find that tattoos are beginning to happen; and I personally feel that Satan is just setting people up for the final tattoo of the "666". And people are beginning to abuse their bodies because they're out of control inside. If you're going to wear the tattoo and if you have Christ, then you ought to live it the rest of your life for the glory of God.

So if you can live it inside, that's who you are. I don't have a problem with it. And so I have much more freedom than you think because I've been there and done it. But I've also been shot and I've also done some horrible things. But it was because of a relationship that was completely out-to-lunch; I had no relationship with my Dad, very little relationship with my Mom, and had no relationship with society. Because I was wiped out on drugs I was molested when I was young. And so I was isolated and angry and it caused me to have major problems when I was young. And so now when I came to Christ and God has given me a "new heart", he is teaching me the value of trusting, building relationships, and beginning to trust people. And you're going to have to trust somebody in your life. And the ones who brought you into this world, your parents, they don't want to hurt you as much as you think they do. They don't want to ruin your life. They are the only ones who are willing to fight for what they really believe. And though they may be wrong and make horrible mistakes within your life, their honest evaluation of you is trying to keep you down that narrow path, and you are making it difficult for them. If you make it easy, God will bless you. If you make it hard, it's going to be a fight. And if you have a Dad like me, then he needs to win all the time and you are going to have problems inside the home.

But I want to tell you, I came to Christ and I served the Lord. And then I got married and we serve God together. And then I had my children and we still served God. I'm

not going to change my philosophy for my children. If they want to walk away, then they can walk away. But as for me and my family, we need to walk with the Lord. So I can't change even if my wife changes or my children change. If I change, she can't change or my kids can't change; in other words, it is between you and God tonight. So you will never be able to get before God and say, "It's the jerky Dad I had, Lord." And Jesus will say to you, "What did you do with my Son?" "Well, I couldn't really keep my eyes on him because I had this horrible Father." Hezekiah was a great king. His Dad was Ahab, a horrible king. Sometimes you have a horrible king, you have great kid. Sometimes you have a great Dad and you have a horrible kid. I can't figure the thing out. I like what James Dobson said: He had four philosophies raising children. He had four children, now he has no philosophy whatsoever. I can't figure it out. You think you got it nailed in one, and then you lose it.

Number one, there has to be a relationship involved. And when you lose that relationship with your Mom and Dad, and all of a sudden your friends become more important than what God is doing in your home, you're in trouble – and that's the first sign. Relationships are what hold a family together and what binds a fellowship together. Relationships are more important than religion. That's why we believe that it's Jesus Christ and him being crucified. It's not a religion; it's a relationship with the maker. God wants a relationship with you. And if you accept that relationship, as born again spirit-filled teens, then you must accept the command that God has given to you and that is to be obedient unto the Lord. And so, children, obey. Once again it means "to listen" or "to be under". And I want to encourage you, you have a great example: There was another Son that was under authority. He was Jesus Christ. He was under his father's authority. And his father said, "**No, this cup cannot pass.**" (Matthew 26:39) "**But for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross.**" (Hebrew 12:2)

And so Jesus Christ didn't get what he wanted; but it was a faithful Father that led him to the cross. It was a Son that believed in his Father to go through that horrible

suffering. Let me give you another example: There was a situation of Abraham and Isaac. And it was Isaac who was willing to lay on that altar allowing his father to come down with a knife. Because his son believed in his father; there was a relationship. And when you have a relationship (and I'll get to your parents next week), but when you are seeking to maintain a relationship with your family, that's all you can ask for. If my kids will continue to seek a relationship, God will solve every one of our problems all the way down the road. And so, once again, we need that relationship; that perspective from a different view. I've been there, done it. I've been broken, I've seen horrible things, and I want to share those experiences with my kids. They accuse me of being controlling. "Oh Dad, you're controlling." No, I am just trying to prevent you from pain. "Dad I'm so quick I'm never going to get hurt." Call me when you need help. And they call because it's a painful thing, growing up is a painful thing. Broken relationship, broken dreams, and shattered dreams. When you're my age, you've been there, you've been hurt, and you've been devastated. What do I value the most? I value the staff. I value the friends I have in this church, more than the church, and I value you. You're the relationship and so I look forward to seeing what God wants to do in your life. But if you have no relationship with Christ, you're never going to be obedient. You're going to fight your parents; and therefore, you're going to be fighting God because behind your parents, God is watching. So number one: Relationship.

The second "R" word that I want to draw your attention to, very simply, is also interesting; it means very simply, "respect". Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 6 verse 1 it says, "**Children or teens obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.**" (Underline the words "this is right") In verse 2, "**Honor thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise;)**" In other words, out of the ten, there was one promise that God gave that had a promise with it. So out of the ten, the fifth commandment had a promise. This is it, "**That it may be well with thee and thou may live a long time upon the earth.**" So the second is respect. Now if I have a relationship, the second is so important - respect. "Well, I don't respect anybody." Well, you're never going to get a job. "Well I don't respect any type of

people.” Then you’re never going to make it in society. God has to give you an understanding of authority. You might not like to submit, women, but that’s where God works. I might not like to rule, but that’s where God works. I might not want to be obedient, but that’s where God pours his blessing out. So when I respect God for the way that he made me, I have no option but to be a dynamic leader. When my wife understands why God made her, then she has no option but to be a dynamic woman of submission, because God will pour a world through her life. When my children understand the importance of obedience and they’re obedient, then God will pour a world through their life.

If I have that respect, then I can say that I honor my parents. The word “honor”, in the Hebrew and in the Greek, means “to have weight”. It means to have respect within the home. Now, sometimes you don’t respect your parent’s, that’s Ok. You need to pray for them and you need to love them. Sometimes their lifestyle is not something to respect. But you’re to respect the Lord. That for some reason God brought you into this family and they were given “you” as a gift. Check that out. And you have been brought into their life to help them grow. And they, too, have been brought into your life to help you grow. So when they say no and you say no, guess what’s going to happen? Everybody’s going to grow. In other words, my children I did not have them accident. They were the personality that I needed in my life to change my life. So when I talk about Nathan or I talk about Heather, I should pay them for all the lessons I’ve learned on how to teach the Bible. They have been the greatest examples in my life of how to make this thing real. When my daughter looked at me and she said, “Dad, are you done?” Well, yes. Or my son looks to me and says, “Dad, why do you love me because I’m a Christian, but you don’t love me when I don’t walk with God?” Interesting question... In other words, Dad why is your love conditional and not unconditional? So I gave him the answer, because I’m a sinner and I’m mad. So if you start walking with God, we’d be really happy right now.

But that's not the lesson. So my whole life has been trying to get them to do what God wants them to do, but their whole life has been trying to get Dad to do what they want to do. And God's whole life has been getting all three of them to do what He wants them to do. So God brought them into your life so you, with your weird hairdo and all the weirdness about your life, you are a gift to these parents. And when they wake up in the morning they don't know what to think. It's like, "Oh, I brought you into the world?" Yes. And there's just more creativeness within my heart. And then all of a sudden you want to go somewhere, and they say no, and you think, oh... God gave you these parents. God nailed you.

I remember the time my Mom said, "Don't go to the mountains with the boys and party." And I was so mad at her. It was the only time she ever said no. But that same night, six of the guys from the football team all died in one cabin in the bathroom because they were all loaded up on drugs. And I would have been there and I wouldn't have been here tonight. So God used my mother, though she wasn't saved, to lead me, guide me, and to direct me. In other words, have a respect; respect for your parents because they brought you into the world. Believe it or not, that when they had a relationship, they were actually loving each other, having you. They were saying, "We can't wait to have this kid." And now they think, "Don't know if we should have done that." And you look at them thinking, man, is anybody home inside? Wake up... you know? Quit listening to Bob Hope and start listening to heavy metal and all the other types of music going on. When I grew up it was Led Zeppelin. My parents listened to Bob Hope. Now you're listening to music and I think it's graveyard music. I'm thinking, what happened here? But it's a generation.

So respect. And so I find the reason is because in those days if you were rebellious, and if you caused any problems at home, your dad had the right to take you down and tell the judges and they would take you out and stone you. So they could kill you for disobedience or for stubbornness or for pridefulness. Parents had the right to take your life. God is saying, "If you want to live a long time, be nice." He says it right

there in Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 18, **"If a man have a stubborn rebellious son which will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him and he will not hearken to them, then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, bring him out to the elders of the city to the gates of the place and they shall say to the elders of the city this our son is stubborn and rebellious and he will not obey our voice. He is a glutton and he is a drunkard and all the men of the city shall stone him and they shall kill him."** Well, that would be kind of nice to re-enact that one... God is saying, "If you want to live a long time, be nice." Be smart and don't be dumb. In other words, learn the responsibility and the respect within the home. The reason why you get in so much trouble, teens, is because you don't respect. You don't show respect, or its authority. You have to respect authority.

And then thirdly, you must learn "responsibility". Turn with me to 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 4, **"If a widow has children or nephew, let them learn first to show pity at home and to take care of their parents for this is good and acceptable before God."** The third word is responsibility. And I want to say this because I'm guilty here myself. In other words, my mother is still alive. I need to see her more often. I need to be around her more often. I need to take care of her. In other words, there's a responsibility and some teens do not want to have responsibility. "I don't want to get involved with my sister." If you don't get involved with your sister and if you don't help her understand the right way, you could lose your sister to the enemy. "Well, I don't want to cause any problems within the home." You need to stand up for righteousness. Children need to help their brothers and sisters in the ways of the Lord. So there needs to be responsibility. If you are the older brother, what you do is going to lead the other ones down the very same path. If you want to go out of control, then leave the house and go out of control; but don't go out of control inside the house and cause the other kids to go down the road. That's not responsibility, that's not respect. You say, "Well Steve, I want to make good money, I want to be in charge." Then you need to be able to have respect and you need to be

able to have responsibility. That means you care for other people. You care about what you're doing to your Mom. You care about what you're doing to your Dad. You care about what's going on in the home. You care about what's going on over in the children's ministry or in the teen's ministry. You care so much that you're not going to gossip and destroy other people. We know that to be true. Often times within the ministry, we find the kids are just brutal towards one another. If you really care because God is in your heart and you have a relationship with Him, and you have a respect for each other, and you want to be a responsible person, then God's hand will be upon your life.

It was Daniel, at fourteen years old, that made a commitment to walk with Christ. It was Mary who we believe that was around fourteen and Ezekiel was around fifteen years old. It was teenagers that wrote the Bible. It was teenagers that led generations to the Lord. And it was teenagers back at Costa Mesa that changed the course of the world at Costa Mesa. It's teenagers today that's going to take over this pulpit. If a teenager says, "Time out, are you telling me that if I get a relationship with Christ, I respect my parents, and I have responsibility within my life, I can take over that pulpit?" Absolutely, God is looking for men and women who will go into the mission field and understand that there is more about life than about what they're going through in their own personal life. In other words, in those teenage years are difficult years. So because I'm not loved by my father, am I going to jump in bed with every other guy? No, I'm going to go to Jesus Christ because I want to keep myself pure.

Do you understand that being pure today is like, weird? I mean, so many have given up their life. Guys will give love to get sex and gals will give sex to get love. The whole thing is warped. And so here is a young gal and a young guy trying to grow up in a church and we see it all over the place. We see couples falling and living and beginning to live outside of marriage because they have no control. And the reason why is no relationship, no respect, and once again, no responsibility. I must have a responsibility. You have to take responsibility for your commitment to Jesus Christ. Responsibility for

who God has you to be in the home. That means you need to take your share and do things. I wish I could go back and tell my son some of these things and my daughter.

Lastly, you must have a "reverence". There must be a reverence. In Leviticus chapter 19 verse 3, **"You should fear every man and his mother and his father, and keep the Sabbath. I am the Lord your God."** What he is saying is that there needs to be a healthy understanding of the fear of God within your life. And so here I am as a teenager, kind of out of control. I mean, I want to do what I want to do. I want no one telling me what to do. I want to kind of move around and be and do things. Fine, here's all you got to do. Number one, are you a Christian? Well, yes. No are you really a born again, spirit-filled Christian? Yes. Ok, then there are a set of rules you have to live by. Number one, you need to build your relationship with God better than any relationship you can find on this earth. So nothing will ever stand in your way. That's a commitment between you and God; a relationship between you and God. You might not have it with your Mom. You might be in that situation of Mom and Mom, Mom and daughter, having fights all the time. If you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, God will get you through the difficult time. Number two, you must understand the importance of respect. If you don't show respect, you're not going to receive respect. They brought you into the world, you live under their roof, they pay the bills, you're able to enjoy life, you're able to talk with them as diligently as you can, and try to help them understand what you're going through in their life. Try to have respect without yelling, screaming, throwing things at them, and everything else you do. Number three, you need to be responsible. What a wonderful place to be responsible in the home. If you're responsible in the home you could be a banker. If you're responsible in the home then God can make you do anything that you want to do, you're responsible. God is able to develop your heart and you're able to care for other people. You see the responsibility, how you can take the pressure off your Mom and Dad. You can make the phone call. And don't tell them you have a flat tire, please. Come up with something better than that... Tell them, "I'm in trouble, I'm late, and I've blown it." Be honest, don't lie. You know God has given us the gift of

discernment. We know when you lie. Don't do that. God is on our side. Now it comes down to a parent and a child. It's kind of like, "Sorry, you're out-to-lunch." God said husband, wife and children. "Well, how long's that for?" The rest of your life... It's a wonderful thing because the relationship I have with my son, he says, "Dad, I need to borrow some money." Well, son you're a vice president. "I know Dad, I need to borrow some money." For how long? "For a month. Can I get it interest free?" Sure. Are you going to pay me back? "Yes." Ok, here. Now, if I didn't have a relationship with him, I'd say talk to your mother. But I'd do anything for him and I'll give him anything. There's a relationship there. There's a respect and there's a reverence. In other words, not only do I respect, but there's an honor. I value the name. God has given you a name. God has given you a place and God desires you to understand that He loves you.

Closing Prayer: Father, we thank You. That Lord, we can look to You in all of our ways. When we think of these four areas in our own personal lives, not even as teenagers but as a congregation; how that Lord, we need to have a deeper relationship with You. How that Lord, You can build that relationship through our fellowship and devotions. Father, how we can have a greater respect for You. Lord, we can respect Your word and we can listen to obedience. And God, we can see that Your commandments are not grievous but they're joyous, Lord, that we can do them, Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit. And we respect You. And Father, we can take responsibility. We're so tired of blaming everyone else because we have not succeeded. Lord, the reason we have not, is because we have not looked to You, we have not because we ask not. Father, one day we will have to take responsibility. Father, the greatest of all is the reverence. The ability of worship, to know we are exactly where You want us to be. Lord, I pray for the teens, I pray for the children. Lord, I think of their tremendous plight. And Lord, I think of our responsibility as parents, how we have really dropped the ball. Lord, we're not diving into their lives trying to understand what they're going through. Lord, we're so worried about our reputation and so worried about what they are doing to us. Lord, we forgot the very

reason why we brought them into the world; that we would be a family. I pray for the difficult relationships tonight. I pray Father, for the teenagers that you would give them tremendous strength. Lord, you want to make a Daniel; you want to make a Esther. Lord, you want to make a Mordecai; you want to make an Isaiah. And Lord, that there would always come from these areas of relationships Respect, Responsibility and Reverence. God, would you change our lives, in Jesus Name. Amen.