

# **Truth for Today**

*The Bible teaching radio programme*

---

For reply: Email: [truthfortoday@aol.com](mailto:truthfortoday@aol.com)

**Broadcast Date:** 5 September 2010

**No.** T0641

**Speaker:** Mr. Stephen Thomson

---

## **Why Christianity: Why Christianity should make me a better parent/child**

Today we begin a series of four talks which look at the reasons why Christianity should make me better in our various dealings with others. The first talk will deal with being a better parent or child; the second, a better spouse; the third a better employee or employer; and the final talk will ask the question why Christianity should make me a better person.

So our consideration today is why Christianity should make me a better parent or child.

Before we try and give some answers and reasons, perhaps we should say a few words on what we mean by the term 'Christianity'. I remember someone talking some time ago about being a 4-wheeled Christian. A 4-wheeled Christian? Yes, someone who goes to the church in a pram to be christened then goes to the church in a taxi to get married and, yes, you've guessed the last one, the hearse to be buried!

Well, that's not the Christianity we mean or are talking about today. We are talking about the Christianity which has seen a man or woman, boy or girl come before a holy God in repentance, truly sorry for their sins and willing to confess their sinfulness to God. They have the faith to believe that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, when He died, the Just one for us the unjust ones, has answered for those sins and given us forgiveness. Salvation if you like, eternal life.

For any who are listening who as yet have not the assurance of this forgiveness, salvation from their sins, let me quote from John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life."

Please let me emphasise, the 'whosoever believeth' in Him. This forgiveness and salvation is available for everyone, without exception, but only experienced and enjoyed by those who believe. Those who fully trust, have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. As we read in the Roman epistle, this salvation is unto all but only upon them who believe. You will read this in Romans 3:22. Not just this, but leading on from the time of our personal salvation we are enjoined to 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Our growing as a Christian depends on how much we read and consider, meditate on if you like, the Bible, the word of God. How much time we spend in prayer and in the company of other believers, building ourselves up on our 'most holy faith'. Oh, if there ever was a day when we need to search out the company of other Christians for help and encouragement; it is today. The early Christians (in Acts 2:42) continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, breaking bread and prayers. May we in our day seek to follow their example!

So our Christianity, if it is real, will have a practical effect upon us as individuals and in our relationships with others. This is the basis for the exercise for these four talks. Personal, practical Christianity.

So why should my Christianity make me a better parent or child?

We may not all be parents but we are all someone's children. Apart from our first parents Adam and Eve, nature dictates that we are all children before we become parents. Indeed, some will never have the joy and responsibility (in equal measure) of bringing up children. So I will begin the consideration from the point that we are the children of our parents.

God's order is that a man and a woman should come together, and after marriage have children. No doubt we will return to this later but I say this at this point to show that God's intention is for children to be brought up in families with their father and mother. God brought Adam and Eve together and blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, Genesis 1. Broken homes and dysfunctional families are not what God has in mind for the raising of children. How our nation has suffered as a result of not following God's plan for the family!

Let us read from the Bible at this point one or two verses addressed to children. Ephesians 6:1-2: "Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." And again in Colossians 3:20: "Children, obey

your parents in everything, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.”

Obedience! What a word for us today and note, too, how the apostle Paul takes the Christians at Ephesus back in their minds to the first commandment with promise. Honour, I rather like the translation which reads ‘esteem and value as precious, your father and mother’. As children there are no doubt times when we think our parents are being too hard on us or unreasonable or simply wrong but the word of God says, obey. Not obey when it seems right, or it suits us, or is agreeable with us, but obey. What a wonderful example we have in the Lord Jesus who went down to Nazareth with His earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, and was subject to them, Luke 2:51.

The children’s hymn tells us, ‘I’m glad my blessed Saviour was once a child like me, to show how pure and holy His little ones might be’. What an example! A previous generation worked on the principle that children should be seen but not heard, and while I’m not sure how much I would go along with that, I recognise that we live in a day when children seem to demand to be the centre of attention.

Obedience then, what about it? Are we obedient children? Were we obedient children? Perhaps some of us may have been better, more obedient children if we could have had the experience of being parents first. “Children obey your parents.” Writing to Timothy in what we believe to be the last writings of the great apostle, Paul says that the perilous times of the last days would be marked by, amongst other things, disobedience to parents. Need we say more? I hardly think so. What an ugly thing it is to see a child in open defiance of their parents, and to have laws which would prevent the use of effective discipline.

We have recently returned from our family holiday, during which we played a game of golf. There were a lot of people on the course but one family caught our attention straight away. There they were, dad, mum, son and daughter. Something had evidently displeased the girl (who I would guess to be about 12) and she was having a total tantrum, during which she actually kicked her dad. Other players were held up while this was all taking place up ahead. What a horrible and ugly thing it is to see this kind of behaviour.

Can you recall the words of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels when He speaks of brothers delivering brothers to be killed, fathers against the child, and children rising up against their parents? Yes, He is speaking about the day of judgement, after the rapture of the church, but it shows us just how close we are to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the word for the children is obey. Obey and honour (esteem as precious). Why? Because this is right, as we read in Ephesians but more than this, as we read in Colossians, it is well pleasing unto the Lord. This surely gives an added dimension to our behaviour, to think that the Lord is well pleased when we children obey and honour our parents in all things. To think, too, of the only truly obedient Son, the sent One of the Father, who came to this world to be the Saviour. “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” The Lord Jesus Christ, Son of man in this world could say, “I delight to do thy will, O my God.” And with this in mind, let us not forever be pushing the boundaries with our parents. To obey surely does not just mean to do as we are told, but rather to do the things we know will please our parents.

As children grow up and leave home, naturally the relationship changes somewhat. Parents are not there to be obeyed, so we could ask, is that our responsibility towards our parents over? Again we see the Lord Jesus as the perfect example when on the cross, in spite of the intense suffering He was going through, He had the care of His mother on His heart. We think that Mary was a widow at that time and the Lord Jesus, being the eldest child in the family, did not evade His responsibility towards her but entrusted her care to His beloved disciple, John. So our honour and respect for our parents goes on even after we leave home.

Thinking again of our verse in Ephesians, ‘Honour (or ‘esteem and value as precious’) your father and mother’, this surely has no cut off point but rather an instruction for our lifetime. This will have a restraining influence on our behaviour as young adults, away from home, making our own way in the world, and especially as our parents become elderly. I think it has to be said that some other cultures deal better with their elderly relatives in practice. However this does not excuse us. Listen to the instruction of the word of God: ‘Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old’. Proverbs 23:22.

Now we ask the question again, but this time to those of us who are parents, why should Christianity make me a better parent?

Let’s turn again to our chapter in Ephesians and, before we have the children addressed in chapter 6, we have a word for husbands and wives. We live in a perverse society which thinks that it is perfectly acceptable for children to be brought up by same sex couples. Not so with God! Let’s read what God says about husbands and wives. Ephesians 5:31: “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” Verse 22: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” Verse 25: “Husbands,

love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

We live in days when marriage is viewed by many as an unnecessary expense. Men and women living together outside of marriage, once called 'living in sin' but who would say such a thing in 2010? We have all but abandoned God's instructions as to courtship, marriage and raising a family and what a devastating effect it is having on our nation, once called the 'land of the Bible'. So the idea of married couples, one man and one woman raising children, is not just an 'old fashioned' ideal, but the mind of God for us. Thank God if we were raised by a loving father and mother, even more so if they were Christians who instructed us in divine things!

As Christian parents, husbands and wives we are responsible for the atmosphere in which our children are brought up. I can remember the day when my youngest son came to tell me that his goldfish had died. It was hardly surprising when you saw the awful condition of the water in the bowl! The poor fish had no doubt perished as a result of the unsuitable conditions it had to live in. Is it any surprise that many of children who go off the rails and end up in all sorts of trouble, have been raised in homes where the atmosphere has been awful? So the way we order our homes is a vital consideration in the matter of raising children. Husbands, we are instructed to love our wives and what a standard is set, 'even as Christ also loved the church'. Wives, you are instructed to submit yourselves to your own husband. Let us remember our vows to each other, husbands to love, honour and cherish, wives to love, honour and obey, as long as we both shall live or until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. For a wedding present my wife and I were given a text which says "Happy the home where Jesus' name is sweet to every ear, where children early lisp His fame and parents hold Him dear." How true! As parents we are responsible for the atmosphere in the home and let's not underestimate the perceptiveness of our children to detect when things are wrong.

Looking again at our chapter in Ephesians, 6:4 says 'And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'. And the verses already referred to in Colossians adds, 'lest they be discouraged'. A special word for the fathers, no doubt, but let us never underestimate the role the mother has in the raising of the children. Who could forget mothers like Jochebed, the mother of Moses, the young man who although he was brought up in the palace of the Pharaoh of Egypt, when the moment came chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Hebrews 11) or Hannah, the mother of Samuel, or Eunice, the mother of Timothy, just to name a few.

We live in days where even the differing role of father and mother are set aside. Men and women are not the same; we are different both physically and emotionally. Much of the modern ideas especially around the subject of 'parenting' take no notice of this fundamental, God designed fact. For example, a child will instinctively want their mother when they are unwell or injured. If we go back in time to the Garden of Eden we see Eve, created from Adam and brought to him as his companion, his complement. Just think, how often we find that what we as husbands lack is found in our wives, and hopefully the same is true of us, in relation to our wives. In a sense then, we could say that Adam was incomplete without Eve. Again the whole subject is raised to a higher level when the apostle Paul brings in the thought that the relationship between husband and wife is a picture, a type of Christ and the church. What wonderful, worship inspiring, yet humbling words, 'Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it'. To think that we are the objects of such divine love and favour! What a day that will be when the Lord Jesus Christ will present the church to Himself in glorious splendour:

*Oh hasten, hasten on that hour,  
And call us to Thy seat.  
For Thou without us ne'er will count,  
Thy work, Thy joy complete.*

So if we return to the statement raised, 'Why my Christianity should make me a better parent', the reason must be that it will only do so if I am obedient to the word of God and in prayerful dependence look to my heavenly Father for the necessary strength and wisdom to bring up my children, with the help and support of my wife, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. May God help us and give us the grace to do just that! For many of us, we trust in the words found in the Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Now, finally, before we end this talk we need to return to the matter of discipline. Not a popular subject today and the result of the lack of discipline in our families, schools, workplaces and society generally is plain to see. Bad behaviour often goes unpunished and many in our country have little or no respect for others or for authority. What we must remember is that proper discipline is an act of love. We read in Hebrews 12:6 that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, (or corrects and disciplines.)" And following this quotation from the proverbs of King Solomon, the writer of the Hebrew epistle brings out the fact that the Father corrects and disciplines us, His children, for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. And although at the time it is not a joyous matter but one of grief, if we accept His discipline then it brings us greater blessing.

*“Our times are in Thy hand,  
Why should we doubt or fear?  
A Father’s hand will never cause  
His child a needless tear.”*

So in conclusion, our Christianity will make us better children and or parents if we follow God’s instructions and give expression to it in our family lives. God bless you all.

---

**Please Note:**

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1. Large Print copies of this document are also available upon request.