

Gods Mandate to Parents

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Audio Transcripts of Sunday Sermons

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Smashwords Edition

Summary: *Controversial "anti-smacking" legislation has recently been passed here in NZ. I just want to give some help and some biblical perspective to it, so I want to talk about this whole issue of the smacking issue, of whether to smack or not to smack, but it's a lot deeper than that. What does God have to say about this matter?*

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So how many have been aware that there's a big issue going on at the moment, about changes to the law? About half the church? I wonder where the other half live? [Laughs] What I felt to do was, because this is an area which has got a lot of emotion in it, I just want to give some help, and some perspective to it. So I want to talk about this whole issue of the smacking issue, of whether to smack or not to smack; but it's a lot deeper than that. What I know will happen is, a lot of people get a lot of emotions, and they'll jump up and down, and they'll say all kinds of things, and then key issues will be lost in the middle of it.

So what I want to do is, I want to just look at what's about to happen, how it affects us, and then I want to just talk with you and get some Biblical perspective, because if we don't come from a Bible framework, basically the framework you come from in your thinking is: well, a couple of whacks didn't do me any harm, so won't do my kids any harm, see? Now most people, that's how they think, but this is not what the issue is really about: what did you harm; or didn't do you harm. From a Christian perspective, we need to understand what God says. If you don't know what God says, then you'll have your opinions; and the question is, whether you want to run your life out of opinions, or whether we want to run our life out of revelation, what God says.

What I tend to find is, Christians have a heap of opinions; so if their parents didn't smack, they say: you don't need that, you can be a great person without that. Our parents did smack - it never hurt me; and so there's all these kinds of opinions, but what is seldom brought to light is: what does God have to say about this matter. The Bible has a lot of things to say about it, and I found generally Christians tend to get very emotional, so some will jump up and down about the law change, and miss the point completely. So what I want to do is, to just get some perspective on it, and we'll look at some things. So let's first of all look at Romans Chapter 13, just get a little bit of overall perspective.

In Verse 1 through the first three or four verses, and it says: let every soul be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except of God, and the authorities that exist have been appointed, or are appointed by God. So whoever resists the authority, resists what God has ordered, and those who resist then will bring judgment upon themselves. For rulers or authorities are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of authority? Do what's good, and you will have praise from the same. Now look at this statement: For he is God's minister to you for good. That's a hard one to swallow, but it is true. He is God's minister to you, for good; but if you do evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain.

For he is God's minister to you for good. If you do evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is God's minister. Notice how this 'minister', authorities are God's

minister. Now that's mentioned about three times. So you think of a minister, you think immediately of someone up on a stage, a preacher or something. What's hard for us to understand, is that God has got many ministers. When you meet a policeman, he's God's minister. See that's a hard one to swallow, unless you understand how God has ordered things and set things up, and what he requires of us, see? So that's what we want - the bigger picture.

So one of the things is that God has a role for government. The government's role is basically stewardship and protection of the people in the nation. One of the major mandates of government, is that they should protect the nation, and one of the things that happens in a nation, is when the character of a nation decreases - character's connected to our ability to be responsible people. When our ability to be responsible decreases, we become irresponsible, our character declines, inevitably the government will bring in more rules and regulations. It's just a matter of how it works. For example, the ability to have freedom depends on you being responsible, so if you're irresponsible enough, eventually you lose your freedoms, and if you're really irresponsible then they put you in jail. Then you don't even have the freedom to turn your light on and off, eat when you want, come in and go out. Someone does it all for you. Irresponsibility leads to loss of freedom. Responsibility leads to increasing freedom. This is just a principle, and so when a nation goes into spiritual decline, and their personal character declines, and they just want to do what they want to do, inevitably the nation becomes more irresponsible, and then government brings in laws. So we should not be up in arms and jumping up and down about government invading the home. You have to see there's a bigger picture here, and I want to show you how to fit within the bigger picture, and to have a good perspective on it all, otherwise you'll be jumping up and down, and at times may even look a bit silly about it.

New Zealand has an appalling record in the area of abuse of children. In terms of the United Nations hit list, we're near the bottom for the area of welfare and safety of children. In other words, there's more risk to people or children in New Zealand, of abuse and violence, than there is in many nations of the world. That is appalling - yet we say we're a free nation, great nation, beautiful nation to come, and yet you read the stories of children being beaten, being abused and being violently put to death, the most horrendous stories. This does not happen all over the world, and so from the United Nations list, of western countries particularly, we are well down in terms of care of children. It's an embarrassment to the nation, and an indication of the decline of the nation. It's inevitable, in that environment, people want to bring laws to try and regulate it.

Of course as we're well aware, you can't change what people are doing by passing another law, and as we'll see the proposal that's there at the moment is to repeal Section 59 of the Crimes Act, and it says something like this: Every person in the place of a parent of a child, is justified in using force by way of correction towards that child, if the force used is reasonable in the circumstances. That's the provision at the moment. What they're planning to do is remove that, and one of the reasons for removing it is of course the bigger picture of the abuse right through the nation, and of course many

parents have actually abused their children and then hidden behind that law, and have got off actually being held to account for their abusive behaviour.

So the government's response, or kneejerk response, or philosophical response, basically they want to change the law. They want to remove now that provision for a parent. Let's read it again. Every person in place of a parent of a child - the parents - are justified in using force, by way of correction, towards the child. In other words it's saying: you can use physical force to correct a child, provided the force is reasonable. Now what they're doing is taking all that away, and of course there's going to be a lot of dilemmas. The proposals won't change this, but what they will do will mean that good parents will then be turned into criminals by the use of force against their children in any kind of way. This has huge implications, and I have looked up some of the articles that have been written about it.

The proposed change won't save the problem. What it'll mean is that, if you as a parent want to spank your child, any neighbour who notices, any teacher who notices or hears about it, your child reports it to anyone, the police will be required to investigate, and the result of that is, they will be required by law to act if a complaint is made. Now you can understand the tremendous distrust this will produce in our society. It's very, very bad, and the law won't stop those who are doing this from doing this. All the law will do is make criminals out of the ones who are acting responsibly, and this is where a huge issue is. Now of course it will place the child in the same position as an adult, and this is the bit I want you to understand. I don't want us to be jumping up and down about government passing laws. This is relatively ineffective.

I want you to understand how God wants us to respond in the midst of a situation like this. Otherwise you'll be the smacking group, the non-smacking group, everyone will argue, come up with their experts and whatever, and they do all this kind of arguing. We do a survey. No one wants the law changed. The government changes the law. We know how it goes, and we've seen it already a number of times, that the government actually has its own philosophy. They have their philosophical base, their own philosophy. They have a belief system upon which they make laws. Now this is the bit that I want to get you to, is I want you to understand why it is a Christian believes certain things, and what the issues are for a Christian, because you'll jump up and down about someone taking away your rights, when God is more interested in you accepting your responsibilities. So what people will tend to do is jump up and down about invasion of their home and their rights by the government, and the rights to do this; they get all angry about my rights being taken away, but what they won't do - and this is the thing we need to do - is look at what our responsibilities are, and be sure that we fulfil our responsibilities, rather than just jump up and down about the rights.

Should we say something? Yes, we should. Should we stand up? Yes, we should. But don't stand up over the wrong issues, and when you do talk with people about this, because it's going to be a big talking issue, you need to know what to say. You need to know where you stand. Unfortunately many people in the church who actually do not - they're not good parents. They have no understanding of God's purpose for them as

parents, no understanding of God's design for the raising of children, and how that should be done. They operate primarily out of, well this is how I was raised, didn't me too much harm, it should be okay for my kids. Listen, when you become a Christian, your reference point is God and His word and eternity; not the old way you used to do stuff. In other words, when we come to Christ, we're introduced to a kingdom, a king and His purposes and plans and principles, and ways of going about things.

Now of course we bring cultural baggage, so if you're a white person, Pakeha or whatever, you'll bring in a certain kind of approach to this. If you're from a Maori or a tribal culture of any kind, you'll bring in another kind of approach; but these are not what is relevant. What is really relevant is we find what God says, His principles, then we learn how to apply them, and in doing so you will always stand against the culture, and you'll always do things that culture will disapprove of. You have to decide in your heart, whether you're called to represent Christ, and be an ambassador for the kingdom, or you're just going to copy the crowd, and go with the crowd. In the Maori people, the level of abuse of children is horrific, and I am appalled at the lack of Maori voices speaking up about it. It's a huge issue, but it's a covered issue, because prevailing thought is: well, we have our way of dealing with it. This is not acceptable. We need to see what God says about it, and understand that children become demonised when they're abused either by physical or sexual abuse, or emotional abuse or anger. They're hurt. We leave a bad legacy for the next generation, and we've got to be nation-builders, legacy-imparters.

So we've got to think a little differently about the children we're raising up, what we're doing with them, and what God calls us to do, so if you don't understand what God called you to do, you will just follow your own opinions, or the prevailing voice of the 'experts', and what you'll find is, the experts aren't experts. The only one I know who's an expert is the Holy Spirit, and He's written words down here, which tell us how to do life, and if we don't follow Him and follow the word of God, we'll listen to a whole of so called 'experts'. Now I believe we need to learn, but what you've got to understand is many of them actually do not come from a Biblical way of thinking. They come from a different base of thinking; philosophy's a base of thinking, and they produce different results to what God wants. So what you'll find is there's a lot of things you can read about that are actually really helpful, but often they miss the key point, and so what I want to do is I'll just show you a few things from scripture. I want to help you see what is a key base difference, between the way a believer would approach the issue of child raising, and a person who's a non-believer. This is foundational. It's actually at the core of how you see the whole deal, and parents today have been totally disempowered. See one of the problems with this law, it will lift up children, and put them almost on a par with adults, and that will make it very difficult for parents to actually do the job God called them to do. So this law will in effect, although it comes supposedly with good intentions, have some terrible consequences - but I don't want to worry about that so much, because laws come and laws go, governments rise and governments fall. It's more that we, in the middle of it, actually think according to God's way. That make sense?

Okay then, so what I want to do then we'll just have a look here in this verse here. Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except of God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. So firstly I want to look at God's mandate to parents, God's purpose and mandate for parents. You need to understand why you're parents. Well just parents have kids, and we raise the kids, and they get off. Then we retire and we die, and then they carry on. Listen, is that all there is to it? Man, I've spent a whole two months trying to get us to realise that whatever God does is for eternity, see? So we need to understand that when you have children, you're bringing an eternal being into this world, and need to understand how to go about fulfilling your responsibility.

When you come home from the hospital with a wonderful little child, you now have a responsibility and a mandate from God, and we need to know what God says about it. So God has a purpose for parents. He has a responsibility He entrusts to you, and with that responsibility He gives you certain authority to act. So God called every person, adults and children, to come under His authority. The core of sin is, I want to run my life my way. That's sin. We tend to think of sin as breaking, you know, killing, murdering - that's all sin, but then sin is deeper than that. Sin is actually, I don't want anyone, especially God, or any of His representatives, to tell me what to do with my life. I want to be the sole source of what I will do. I want to run my life my way, with no accountability to any person. I want to be able to do what I want to do. That is freedom, for this generation.

Now you see that's what the Bible calls sin and lawlessness. God won't tolerate it! So God has devised and formed several structures in society; number one, family; number two, the church; number three, government; number four, business - business all through the Bible, God's all into business; but there are certain principles and responsibilities in the governing of the business. The Bible's full of that as well, what a worker should do, their responsibilities; what an employer's responsibilities are, and their authority. Parents, parents have responsibilities; so we're going to look at your responsibilities in a moment, and children also have responsibilities. If you're a child, God speaks to you directly, and He gives you certain responsibilities, and what's wonderful, He says if you will fulfil these responsibilities, there's certain things I can guarantee you will happen in your life.

Okay then, so God calls parents. He has invested us with authority, notice what it says; let every soul. How many are left out of that one? No one, no one left out. Let every soul be subject to higher powers. That word subject means this; it means to position yourself under an authority, following their direction, so together you can accomplish a common task. It's to place yourself under someone God's put over you, with a view to co-operating and getting a task done, so when the Bible tells children to be subject to their parents, it's saying put yourself voluntarily under their leadership; because they have a task, they have something God's given them to do, and it can only take place if you will respond to their leadership in your life. So everywhere in life it's got to operate that way, so parents have authority. You know why a parent has authority? You have an authority because God gives it to you, and the government can't take it away. God has given you

a responsibility to fulfil, and with that, authority, the legal right to speak and act. That's what authority is. It's delegated to you from God.

You have the responsibility to do certain things with your children, and then God gives you the right to speak and act on His behalf, to make that happen. You have to understand, that it is God gave you the authority as a parent, God gives you the responsibility as a parent, so when the government, or any kind of civic authority, tries to alter the standing of a child, put a child on the same standing as a parent, they violate God's basic order, because God has said something like this: parents, you're in charge. You pay the way, you're in charge. Parents are in charge, so if you're a parent, you are to be in charge. Now that one thing alone, we'd have a whole heap of problems with many people - often, so many of them from Havelock [expensive suburb] - I've noticed have real trouble understanding: parents, you're in charge. You're in charge of your children.

We've had many debates and arguments with parents, who don't realise they're in charge of their children. God has given you that responsibility, and if He gave you the responsibility, He expects you to perform it. He gives you the ability and grace to perform it, and He expects of you, that you give account for what you've done. You cannot yield up something God entrusted to you, and put it in the hands of another. You need to be involved with your children, involved in what God calls you to do, and I'm going to show you two major things that God tells parents very clearly, some things He tells us very clearly what to do.

Let's have a look in Genesis 18:19. I have chosen Abraham. I know him. He will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. Notice what it says. Abraham I know, and I've chosen Abraham. I know him, I know what he's like. He will command his children and his household after him, and they will keep the way of the Lord. Isn't that a wonderful verse? To do what's right, and to do what's just. Isn't that wonderful, God's mandate to a parent. So you notice here with Abraham, God said: he will command his children. Now what are you going to command them? Not to just do what he wants them to do. See parents, you've got to understand this, when God gives you the authority to lead your family, it's not to just do what you want them to do. It's not just that you'll do as you'll please. If you'll do as you please, you're modelling what it is to be a lawless person. We're not to do as we please as parents. We're actually to teach kids to walk right, because they're an inheritance of the Lord. They're something we're raising up for the Lord. They'll go on either - listen, your child that's born, is an eternal being, who will go on into heaven for eternity, or go on into hell for eternity, and you're the one who has the greatest influence in forming them. So He says: I know Abraham. He will command, he will give clear direction, clear leadership, and he will require his household to walk in a certain way. What way? To do what's right, and to act justly, and to keep the ways of God; so Abraham, the father of our faith, was a man who gave direction to his household, and directed them in godly ways.

Parents, you are charged with directing your household. You're charged with giving direction, and that will require setting boundaries. It will require establishing relationship. It will require setting requirements out. You've got a duty. This is part of what it is, to fulfil God's mandate to you. See God has given you that responsibility. Deuteronomy 6, Verses 4 to 6; If I was to ask you what is the great command, you say: that's you love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul. Well of course that's only a little part of it. You read the rest of it; You shall love the Lord with all your heart and all your soul, Verse 5, and with all your soul and all your strength, and the words I command you will be in your heart, and you will teach them diligently to your children, and talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You'll bind them as a sign on your hands, writing on your hands, and on the doorposts.

In other words He's saying, parents, He said you're called to passionately love God, and then you're called actually to raise up, train, direct and cultivate an environment where your kids will be followers of God as well. So there's a responsibility in the first commandment, not just to love God passionately, but to express it in what we do within our family. The first place we see your love for God, is in your family, in your marriage, and with your children. Make no mistake about it, you may be very good in business, or very good in ministry, very good at this or that, but if you're failing at home, you're failing your primary mandate - the primary mandate, the first one. In the marriage, and in the family, you have a mandate from God. You have a responsibility from God, something you're expected to fulfil; and you need to know what it is, and understand how to do it, so no government regulation rule changes or swerves you from what you ought to do. I know how these things work. I've been in education.

I went down to a school thing just recently, and they were telling us - they wanted parents to come and meet and hear about the latest thing. Okay, I'll see the latest thing that they're doing - and the latest thing apparently was phonics. I said: well isn't this a lovely thing. Thirty years ago I battled with the Department over phonics. They said phonics is out. I argued with them and said it works, so we're not putting it out, we're keeping it, and we had all kinds of contentions over it. I said: well who's going to help the children that you'll mess up on the way with your new fancy programming? And you know 20 to 30 years later, we've got a whole generation don't read too well, and part of it is the programmes they brought in, that were at the wisdom of the experts. I almost put my hand up and said: this new programme was a proven programme 20 to 30 years ago, was taken out by experts, and you're bringing it back in. Here's my question; who will put their hand up and say: we were wrong?

I have no confidence in the experts - confidence in the word of God. You've got to think that way. You're a Christian. Your orientation's how God says it's to be. Okay then, so keep going, then we read - so notice here the responsibility. Now look at this in Ephesians 6, Verse 4; Fathers - now does this mean mothers are not included, no. Fathers, God speaks to fathers, because He puts the responsibility right at the top. Father's called to be the head of the home, head of the wife, and as a partner they work together, and part of the responsibility of husband and wife of course, is to raise their

children. You can't raise your children right unless you're in agreement, and cultivate your marriage relationship where it overflows to raise the children right. If you don't cultivate your marriage, then you don't bear a witness that God's ways work. You're actually a living excuse for sin. Don't be surprised if your kids rebel.

Okay, notice what it says here, Verse 4; You fathers, okay then, you fathers - now mothers, you can listen in with this, but realise the mandate's given to dad. You share the mandate together, because God brought the woman to work with the man, as a partner in life for him. So fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, don't get them angry - well I won't go down all the reasons you get them angry, but one way you get them angry, is you lash out them. You try to discipline them with anger and frustration, or you're not there, you're too busy in your work, or you're inconsistent in what you do, or you don't explain and talk and enter their heart. These are all the ways that get kids really, really angry. Smacking can get kids really angry, if there's no heart connection, and consistent principles of why you're doing this, and what it's designed to do; so you have to actually have an explanation. You have to actually have relationship, so it says: fathers, do not get your kids mad at you, or angry or upset and frustrated.

Now one of the problems I had in teaching, is the numbers of young people that are angry, and they're angry because of the way parents are wrongly parenting them, and so we've got to learn what to do. Notice, now it tells us what to do, tells us don't do that, don't get them mad. Don't get them all angry. Well they will get angry sometimes, when you cross their way. He's not talking about that here. Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord, or bring them up. Bring them up. In other words it says, you must give direction, dads. You are responsible in the home, to give leadership to your family, to train them. That's to prepare them for something in life, and to bring them up in the admonition of the Lord. That means you are warning them, encouraging them, confronting them, about God's ways of life; how to succeed in life. Now that's a whole - I could share a lot on it. We'll just keep it at that point. You are called to actually shape and form the young life, that they might be useful to God, and to do that, there's certain things are right and certain things are wrong, and you've sometimes got to direct them which is the right way.

To do that you cannot rely on church to do it. How can one hour on Sunday hope in any kind of - how could you think one hour could possibly in any way override all you did, or didn't do, through the week? The primary responsibility is the parents. Who was responsible for the parent's education? I challenge you to find anywhere in the Bible where it says the government is. Try to find it - but parents, you are responsible for your child's training, and that's every aspect, character, spiritual life, their relational life, their connections, their education, every part of it, you are responsible. You may not do it all, but you are held responsible to bring them up, and not just any education, but you're called to train them and bring them up in how to walk in God's ways. Don't think the kids can do it for you. Don't think the youth group can do it for you. They can only provide an environment where there's a corporate thing happening, where kids get shown some things, but you've got to do it. That's why it said: love the Lord passionately, and then talk to your kids daily on the way, when you get up, every situation in life.

Some good evangelical families have a little family devotion. All very wonderful, but if you don't talk about life with the kids, and show how to connect what they're doing to life, you're missing it. Okay then, so we see there, very good, very, very clear. Now notice this: parents have authority. You're acting on behalf of God. God told you to do it. The government didn't tell you to do it. God said do this. You're acting as God's representative. You have to remember that God has given you instructions what to do; He expects you to represent Him, so if you mess up and the kids get wrong attitudes to you, they get wrong attitudes to God, and you affect the whole eternal destiny. You are the first authority people children see in their life, and if they rebel against you, they're rebelling against God, they have no place in heaven. You have to understand that, and if you do not deal with this issue as they're growing, you are preparing them in ungodliness, because you're training them one way or another. We are training our children either towards godliness, or towards doing their own thing, and they learn, you know, if they fuss enough they get their way. If they throw up a tantrum, you'll fuss over them and hug them and reward them for their tantrum. Listen, what we're doing is preparing them for an eternity without God. All of us, ALL of us, will come before God, and give account of our life. If a child is raised, and they learn to rebel against authority, they will already be in a place of rebellion against God, and walking under influence of demons.

One of the things I've got a couple of messages on, how kids get demonised, and the fact that there are examples in the Bible of children who were demonised, but here's the problem. If I teach about that, the dilemma is people think all their problems are demon. The problem is not the demon. The problem is the demon got in, because parents didn't provide the nurture, admonition, warning and encouragement children needed. So God's mandate is so very, very clear. You're a person under authority, as well as your child. You want them to be under your authority, you must be under authority. We're all under the same one. His name is Jesus Christ, but we have different roles. Oooh, you're getting quiet in there. God has given you responsibility. You don't have to ask the child's permission to exercise it.

But you see the modern movement of kiddie's rights, parents end up negotiating with them. Negotiating - but God gave me a mandate what to do. Have you reduced a mandate to negotiation? See? What you've done is, you've taken and bought into the lie of the world. Parents are parents, children are children. They're all to be under - we're all to be under - the authority of God, but we have different roles, so parent has one role, the children have a different role. The parent's role is to bring them up in the nurture, admonition of the Lord. In Proverbs 22:6, train up a child in the way he should go. Train them up. Now that word 'train' means to narrow the way. Well dear God, what does that do with 'the child should try everything'? See the common philosophy is we'll let them try things, you know? This is not God's philosophy. God speaks clearly, narrow the way. Don't give them lots of options. Narrow the way. You've been around, you know some things that work and some things that don't work. They don't have to find it all out the hard way. If you want to grow some way, you want to learn from someone who already found out, so the Bible tells us: narrow their way. See, narrow their way, confine their way a little bit. It means also to rub the pallow - give them a taste for what's

really good and they'll love what's good. Get them a taste for the good thing, so parents, it's an area - it takes faith and responsibility and courage to be a great parent. You don't have to have the kids agreement about it all. See?

So you are an agent of God, to shape the child's heart, not just to try and control their behaviour. Many parents are only connected to the behaviours of the child. If the child's out of order, or they do something, they're naughty, then the parent reacts after a little while, but we're to do more than just stop them behaving badly. We want to actually shape their heart, so they have a heart for God. To shape the heart you've got to communicate. You've got to talk into them. You've got to connect with them. You've got to know what they're thinking, what they're feeling, what they're struggling with.

Okay, what does God say to the kids then? [Laughs] This is really good, see. Can we get this - discipline is an issue of honouring God. Discipline, training children, is an issue of whether you'll honour God, or dishonour Him. When you train and discipline, and correct and guide and nurture your children, you're honouring God, who gave you the role. When you won't do it, or you give it to someone else to do, you dishonour God, and disqualify yourself from greater blessing, because you haven't functioned well in the one place God put you. Hey, glory to God. Ephesians 6, 1 to 3; Children - here we are, if you're a young person - obey - oh quick! Underline it! Colour it! Obey, obey, obey! Oh, so this is right! So you remember what Abraham has commanded to teach his children, to bring them up in a way which is right? Children obeying their parents is right. Disobeying their parents is wrong. See, then notice what it says: children, honour your mother and your father, that it may go well with you, and you may live long on the earth. Now notice here, that there are two things that God wants children to do and to learn. One is obedience; and the other is honour or respect. So at least two things a parent must do, is teach children how to be obedient; how to be respectful. They need to respect. They need to respect authority. One of the major issues we have is disrespect for authority. We have to have something different operating in our families. They need to respect you.

So notice here, that there's a blessing God puts, when a child will position themselves, by obeying and honouring their parents. What'll happen is, God's blessing comes on them. Things go well. Things go well. They don't just go well today and tomorrow; they go well over the course of your life. You look at the life of a child who is obedient, and respected authorities, and responded, developed his giftings, loved God. Their life is a blessed life. You'll see it over the course of their life. The child that does their own thing will be an embarrassment to everyone, so children must learn honour and obedience. Honour means you treat them with respect and esteem, because they represent God in your life. You say well, you don't know my dad! Well maybe he has got personal lacks and personal flaws - so do you. That doesn't change the fact God made him your dad, and put him in that place. What you're doing, is looking at his faults, and then excusing your rebellion. I don't have to, because look at him. That's not the deal. God says to respect him, because of the place he has in your life. Respect him, you'll find self-respect in God.

Obedience means, you submit yourself to the authority of another, and do what you're told to do. Get this; you do it without delay. Now when you get the children, tell them something to do, they take a long time to do it, you notice. That's disobedience, and most parents will do this: they'll tell them once, tell them twice, tell them three times. Then they've trained them on a certain note. When the mother's voice reaches a scream, and her eyes are bulging, and there's veins throbbing, then the child responds, [Laughter] because they're trained that way. Isn't that wonderful? They were trained that way. You're always going to train your children - you train them either God's way, or you train them another way, see?

So obedience, they do it when they're told, they do it without excuse, they do it without challenge - why should I? Careful, you're on dangerous ground. Dangerous ground, entering the ground of disobedience, because God doesn't always tell us why. He tells us to do. When we do, we grow in wisdom and knowledge, and He shares more with us. That's how life works. That's how God works, and of course today, you've got to reason out, got to give all the reasons, got to even give them a bribe. Listen, that's not character changing. What that is training them to do, it's training them to be selfish, that I will go along with things if I want to, that I'll do what I want, when I want, if I can manipulate my way there. They learn to be selfish, and manipulate the whole system. That's why parents have got to stand in agreement on this issue here.

So the implications are very clear. Submission to authority means the child will have to do things they won't want to do. Now you see it's all very well to say the child's submitted, or you're submitted or obedient or whatever, if you're doing things you want to do, but the day you step across and you say you're not to do that, and they want to do that, that's when it shows. That's when you have the rebellion against authority. That's when you actually find you're dealing with a challenge, and you have to weigh up the challenges. This is not the place today to talk about how to do that. We've got courses that'll help you do that. Kay's got a course - there's courses around that'll help you in various ways of handling it. You've got to get the principle right, the core thing: respect and obedience.

Now listen. Some of you, when you get out in public, your kids are an embarrassment to you. You bring them here, they're an embarrassment as well, and there's one simple reason for it. You're irresponsible; or you just don't know what to do. If you don't know what to do, get into a course and learn what to do. Get someone to help you, but some mums, their kids are disobedient, kids are messy, your kids are all over the place. They don't even see it, and when you try to point it out, they get very hurt and angry. Well they're just as rebellious as the kids, just as rebellious, and so they've just got the fruit of their own way, and they'll be very embarrassed over the course of life, so we need to understand. Now here's the heart issue. In Luke 6, Verse 43 - and here's where we come completely different. This is where we part ways with the world. First we've already started to part ways with how they think anyway, because they think that kids are equal to the parents, and God says no. Parents have got one responsibility; children have got something else. It's quite different.

Luke 6 and Verse 43, notice what it says here. A good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree is known by it's fruit. There we go. Every tree is known by it's fruit. Now here's the belief system that secular people believe. They believe children are morally neutral. Neutral means they're going to take on whatever you teach them. The Bible says something quite different. The Bible says something completely different. Now you understand in secular education, their thinking, their belief system is, because they don't believe in a God, that kids are neutral. But the Bible says: there's foolishness in their hearts. See, this is where the Bible says, a completely different thing, and the overflow of the heart is in the life see? So the Bible says this, in Jeremiah 17:9, the heart is wicked, so children's heart has got wickedness in it. I know, but they look so sweet and so lovely just lying there. Oh, believe me, selfishness is wrapped up in there! Give the passage of 13 or 14 years and you will see it, in it's full bloom.

Proverbs 22:15; Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him. So what does God's word say is in that sweet little darling you brought into the world? What is in the heart? Foolishness. Yeah, foolishness. Now what does it mean by foolishness? Well the Bible says: the fool says no to God. The fool won't receive correction. The fool reacts, and goes his own way. So what it's saying is this, it's saying in every child, there is a nature there of sin, that'll cause them to want to do their own thing through life, and to challenge anyone who tries to stop them. Now of course some of them are little more compliant than others, and some are really out there, strong willed. You get the whole range of this with kids, and if you've got lovely, nice compliant kids, you can't understand these strong willed kids, and the nightmares that parents have trying to train them. But believe me, it's still the same. That little quiet child can be quietly, stubbornly, rebellious, and you'll never know until you cross their will, and then you'll just see it, the evils, you know. So the Bible says this: foolishness in the heart of every person born into this world.

Now this is where we're different. See the world says they're neutral, it's just all environment. We say no, there's an issue called sin, and they need a saviour. We represent the saviour, and we're to help them bring on the right track. God has given us the authority to do it, the responsibility to do it, and that means we will make them do things they don't always want to do, and of course this brings you into huge troubles with the Education Department, because they believe different. But the Bible's very clear; foolishness is in the heart of a child. The rod of correction will drive it far from them. Notice they've used the word 'rod'. They use the word 'correction'. Correction is correcting them, saying: that's not right, this is right. That is wrong, this is right. You'll find in the education system, you can't tell the children that - crazy stuff. It's absolute nonsense. Listen, that's right, that's wrong. This is right. Stop doing wrong. You do wrong, there'll be wrong, bad choice has got bad consequence, so God always works off choices and consequences, and we have to too.

So foolishness means they reject God; don't want to be corrected. A fool will reject God, and so the purpose of the rod or the purpose of any kind of restraint and correction, whatever it be, whether it's withdrawal of privileges, whether it's time out, whether it's

eventually spanking or the rod, the purpose is always the same. It's to humble the heart of the child by experiencing pain, make them aware they've messed up, and bring them back into relationship with you, so they can actually be positioned for blessing. So if you just allow it to go on, or you don't deal with it - of course if you just go slapping kids, that's not Biblical training. You have to understand, it's not Biblical training. It's just you being irritated by the child, and wanting to control their behaviour by hitting them. That is not Biblical training. Biblical training always has a correcting element. You touch the heart.

You talk to - say you've got a child yelling - you stop yelling, you know. [whack] Now listen, that is not Biblical training. That's just an angry parent, assaulting their child. That's why, you know, and lots of Christians do it - the government really gets upset about this whole issue right through the nation. Listen, if you're going to smack them at any time, the key thing is, you've got to talk into the heart, and they must understand what they did, and where they went wrong. You're yelling because you want your own way. You're yelling because you're angry. They need to understand what's in the heart, and Jesus way was to deal with the things in the heart.

Then they feel some pain, then they apologise, and then you reconcile, then they can walk in blessing. Works really wonderfully, and of course so what happens is the government, or the people proposing the law change, are trying to equate abuse with smacking. Now listen, corporal punishment or the rod is totally different from abuse of children. You do it because you love them, because you're concerned about training them, and so you have to do it consistently for the same kinds of things: defiance of authority; and outright rebellion; and you restrain it for almost all other areas. It should be almost your last resort, or used only in the situation where there was outright rebellion against your right to rule.

If they rebel against your right to rule, either you subdue the rebellion, or your household is now under the control of a witchcraft spirit operating through the child, because rebellion is as witchcraft. Some homes are full of witchcraft, because the kids are out of control, and you go in there, there's no peace. You can't enjoy fellowship with the parents. You can't enjoy anything in the home, because that child is out of control, and there's another spirit - it's not called the spirit of God. It's called a spirit of witchcraft operating there, manipulating the whole household with some little child throwing tantrums and stuff. That's what you've got to train out of them. That's what we're required by God, so when I see the kid out of control, and it's like that all the time, I realise they've also got an adult out of control. Oh, but I love them. Listen, if you love them, you'll discipline them. God does love us, and He disciplines us. Very clear see, so in order to be able - for the rod to work, you cannot hit anyone in anger.

You can't hit your children when you want, and how you want. You can't just strike them willy-nilly, give a bang over the ear. Listen, that's not Biblical discipline at all. You don't do it for punishment. It's actually all done totally, that you might correct a behaviour, and a heart attitude that are wrong, and God commends us for that, but you've got to do it right. He never endorses us just hitting and slapping kids. Getting the idea?

Okay, so the core difference - now here's the key issues now. One, God called you to be a parent, and gave you responsibility and authority. Don't let anyone take it away. Two, you need to discover what the responsibilities are, and how to fulfil them. Go to a parent course, or you'll just carry on the mistakes of your parents. Three, kids need to realise, young people and our young adults, need to realise the requirement God has of us that we have a submitted heart towards those over us, and we respond with obedience and respect. Need to understand that. We need to understand that if we hit children, hit young people, that is not smacking. That is not Biblical correction. That's just frustration, acting it's way out, and the kids will get angry and upset by that.

So what shall we do now? Here's the simple thing to finish it. Now when the government invades the home and takes away a parental right, the first thing you should do is be concerned whether you're fulfilling your parental responsibility. So I think the first thing, that would help a lot of Christians right now, instead of jumping up and down about smacking, jump up and down about parents being responsible, and understanding their call by God and what they're supposed to do, and beginning to accept it and do it. That's the first thing. Second things is, I think you should raise a voice over the changes, because the changes are not good, and they'll actually penalise and create many problems for parents which are Godly, and do use some measure of corporal punishment with their kids. Three, I think you need to pursue your parenting skills. You need to learn how to communicate. A lot of parents don't know how to communicate with the heart of a child. See one of the best things you can teach them how to do, is how to express their feelings, what they feel. See some kids go [wah-wah] like that. You're just trying to shut - actually they're going through something, you want to find what's in the heart, teach them there's another way of doing it. You understand? Change the heart, not just get the behaviour, so it's nice and you've got a happy home. It's not about you. It's about raising up godly children.

Finally, it's your own personal decision what you do about smacking, about corporal punishment, but if you're going to do it do it the right way, do it in the right attitude. Understand this: if the government passes a law, still, it's your right as a parent to do it, because God said you can. Now that's a bit of a one isn't it aye? You see in China for example, they forbid parents to tell their kids about Christ, so what would you do if you were in that situation? I'd be a lovely good citizen - let your kids go to hell. I don't think so. You'd tell them about Jesus. Now when you tell your kids about Jesus, you know what will happen In China? If the kids let on that the parents have been talking about Jesus, you'll be arrested, put in jail and your kids taken off you. Will you still talk to them about Jesus? Well if you understand that actually, it's not all about the kids, it's actually about me fulfilling my responsibility to God, you'll make the stand. That's where the challenges come see? If you don't - to have a heart commitment, to actually raise our kids so they're great kids for the Lord, they love God, love the house of God, love to serve God, and they've got great character, see? Really good isn't it aye?

So if you're going to disobey remember, don't have a truculent attitude against authorities. Have a good attitude. We just disagree. Now the Bible's full of examples of it; Daniel, they said: listen, I know you want us to eat this food. We're not going to eat

the food, but can we make some options? Then Peter, they said listen, you can't preach the gospel. He said listen, we know you said we can't preach the gospel, but God said we're to preach the gospel, we're going to preach the gospel. But if you preach the gospel, you've got to face the consequences, so when they got thrown in jail, beaten up, they just said: praise the Lord. We're counting it honour to suffer for Jesus' sake - so what you do in this area's a personal thing, but I don't think you should make smacking the issue. I think you should make: am I fulfilling my responsibilities as a husband, wife and parent; make major on the majors, and prepare yourself to be a great parent. Say Amen! Amen, praise the Lord! [Applause] Come on, let's give the Lord a clap shall we. [Applause]

Thank you Lord. Father, we just pray for our nation Father as it goes through these kinds of turmoil, and families are all thinking about all these issues. We pray it'll be a great opportunity for your people to come to another level of responsibility and parenting, another level of skills and ability, and connecting with young people and working with them. We pray Lord it'll be a great opportunity. Opportunities open for every person here to speak about these issues, and to help parents who are struggling, and don't even understand that they've got a responsibility, and they've got rights, and they've got an authority God gave them, and that they need to do the right things. Father, I'm asking that a spirit of boldness will come upon your people, Lord to be able to talk to others about these matters, in Jesus' name. Everyone said ... [Amen!]

I was at a function recently. They had an opening of their new house. They had all the tradesmen in, we got a chance to talk to the tradesmen and the lawyers and everyone. I had a great opportunity to talk to one of the lawyers, and here's the thing. He was a good man. He's a family man, but you know what? He really couldn't get over when we started to share some of the things that God has shown us about family, and about connecting with your kids, and about holding them to account, things it took us years to learn. He just went away, he said: I never heard so many creative ways of handling some things. So we should be creative, not just slappers and bashers of kids. We should have great ways of doing it. We should take on oh man, this is a great thing, great opportunity to let our light shine.

If you're part of a culture where abuse is happening, and it's covered over, stand up! Make your own stand against it. Don't cover it. Never cover it. Start to stand up. We've got a great hour ahead of us aye? Young people, want you to be the greatest young people ever, but you've got a challenge too, to obey and honour your parents. Isn't that a great thing? Why don't you go home, and put it right with them if you haven't been, and tell them: I want to be a great young person, I want you to be proud of me.

Summary Notes

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Introduction:

- Role of Government and Stewardship/Protection.
- When character/responsibility decreases then government by law increases.
- NZ – appalling record in relation to ‘Child Abuse’ => family decline.
- Cannot change this by changing the laws.
- Proposal change – Repeal section 59 of the Crimes Act.
- “Every person in the place of a parent of a child is justified in using force by way of correction towards the child, if the force used is reasonable in the circumstances”.
- Proposed change – won’t solve the problem; will turn good parents into law breakers, and neighbours and teachers into government agents reporting.
- “Police will be required by law to act if a complaint is made”.
- “Effect of act will be to place child in the same position as an adult” - QC.

God’s Mandate to Parents – Purpose; Responsibility; Authority; Accountability.

- God calls every person to live under authority – preference to correction.
- He has invested authority in people – family, church, government, business.
- Romans 13:1-2 - “Let every soul be subject to authorities”.
- Subject = lupotasso = to position yourself in place of yielding and cooperation with one in authority to work together for common purpose.
- Parents have authority because God calls you to be an authority in a child’s life.
- e.g. Genesis 18:19 - “I have chosen Abraham, I will know him that he will command his children and household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord”.
- e.g. Deuteronomy 6:4-6 - “The great commandment – love Lord God teach children”.
- e.g. Ephesians 6:4 - “Do not provoke children – bring them up in the nature of the Lord”.
- Parents have the authority to act on behalf of God – fulfill his directions.
- Parents have the responsibility to fulfill as God’s representatives.
- God defines the task – you act on his behalf.
- You are a person under authority – as well as the child – same Lord but different roles.
- Because God has given responsibility – you don’t need the child’s permission to act.
- You are in charge – you have the responsibility – Shepherd child.
- Proverbs 22:6 - “Train up the child in the way he should go”.
- Train = to narrow, rub the palate, discipline => direction
- You are God’s agent to shape the child’s heart attitudes and behaviour.
- Discipline is an issue of honoring God and character formation
- communicate and Rod of the Lord.
- no place for anger

3. God’s Mandate to Children:

- Ephesians 6:1-3 - Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.
- God’s directive to children: Obey and Honor (Respect)
- God’s blessing: Things go well – life is blessed.
- Key issues; Children must learn to honor and obedient.
- Honor => Treat parents with respect and esteem them because of position/authority.
- Obedience => Willing submission of one person to the authority of another. Do what told – without delay; without excuse; without challenge.
- Submission to authority => child will have to do things don’t want to.
- Implications:
 - 1) Parents must train their children in honor, respect and obedience.
 - 2) Parents themselves must be an example in attitude and action.
- Inevitably there will be a clash of wills.

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