

## **Day 1: The Sanctity of Parental Authority**

### **Scripture Reading**

Deuteronomy 21:18–19 (NKJV)

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city."

### **Devotional Teaching**

As we look at this detailed section of the law, we find a case law that applies the Fifth Commandment directly to the family. The Fifth Commandment establishes the relationship between parents and children, stipulating that sons and daughters are to honor their father and mother. This case law in Deuteronomy teaches what is to be done when parents have a son who despises that commandment and lives in open disdain of his parents. It establishes the gravity of rebellion against parental authority in no uncertain terms.

In God's order, in God's way, the father and the mother both have authority from God over their children. The text carefully notes that this rebellious young man will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother. The voice of the mother is separated from the voice of the father to show that it is authoritative in its own right. She does not simply speak for the father; she has authority from God to direct and guide her household. When a child completely refuses to heed the voice of his father or his mother, it is not a minor relational problem. It is a total and continual rejection of God's design.

We live in a culture that treats it as a light thing to speak contemptuously or rudely to a parent. Our culture is permeated with the idea that disobedience is just a phase. But here we have a revelation of the sanctity of parental authority. God placed parents in the home, and He takes rebellion against them seriously. To dishonor parents is a totally unexpected thing in the eyes of natural affection. Parents gave them life, protected them, fed them, and trained them. Therefore, true covenant faithfulness begins with recognizing and submitting to the God-given authority in the home.

### **Theological Reflection Question**

How does viewing parental authority as a divine institution, rather than just a human tradition, change the way you respond to leadership and authority in all areas of life?

### **Questions for Children**

Parents, discuss these questions with your children: What does it mean to honor your father and your mother? When mom or dad asks you to do something, why is it important to obey right away instead of arguing or ignoring them?

### **Family Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, we thank You for the gift of family and for the structure You have placed in our home. We pray that You would give the parents in this home wisdom, grace, and the fear of God as we lead. We pray for our children, that You would grant them soft hearts that desire to honor and obey. Forgive us for the times we have spoken carelessly or acted rebelliously against the authority You have established. Guide us to walk in Your ways. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Scripture Memory Verse**

Exodus 20:12 (NKJV)

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

### **Day 2: The Heart of Rebellion**

#### **Scripture Reading**

Proverbs 30:17 (NKJV)

"The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it."

#### **Devotional Teaching**

The young man described in this case law is called "stubborn and rebellious." What do we mean by this? The word translated "stubborn" is often used by the prophets to describe Israel in revolt against God. It brings to mind an untrained animal that bucks against its master and withdraws its shoulder rather than taking the yoke. If you have ever tried to physically direct someone and they stiffen their neck and pull their shoulder away from your hand, you know the body language of stubbornness. It is the posture of someone who does not want to hear anything you have to say.

The word "rebellious" goes a step further. It describes a conscious, intentional, consummate decision to disobey. It is not an accident or a moment of weakness; it is a deliberate defiance. When this case law says the son will not obey their voice, the language indicates that in absolutely nothing will he obey them. He treats the counsels, commands,

rebukes, and reproofs of his parents with utter contempt. This reveals a systemic problem coming from an evil heart.

This spirit of stubbornness brings us under God's displeasure. Every young person starts life with hopes, dreams, and aspirations for a happy, fulfilled life. But how many young people turn away from the voice of their father and their mother because they think they know better? They shipwreck their lives because they will not heed instruction. A spirit of rebellion leads to a figurative death—a death of dreams, hopes, and success. The blessing of God rests on the home where hearts are steadfast and yielded, not stiff-necked and withdrawn.

### **Theological Reflection Question**

In your own walk before the Lord, are there areas where you have withdrawn your shoulder or stiffened your neck against His commands or the godly counsel of others?

### **Questions for Children**

Parents, discuss these questions with your children: What does it look like when someone is being stubborn? How can we make sure our hearts stay soft and willing to listen to instruction?

### **Family Prayer**

Lord God, we confess that we often struggle with a stubborn and rebellious heart. We know that there is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filthiness. Please keep us from pride. Give us the grace to accept correction and to listen to the wisdom of those You have placed over us. Protect our family from the ruin that comes from rejecting Your law. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Scripture Memory Verse**

Proverbs 1:8 (NKJV)

"My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother."

### **Day 3: The Danger of Rejecting Discipline**

#### **Scripture Reading**

Proverbs 15:5 (NKJV)

"A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent."

#### **Devotional Teaching**

We must understand that this case law is not about a typical, strong-willed eight-year-old child. All children are strong-willed and require training. This text paints a picture of a grown young man who is out of control. The text tells us that his parents had tried to bring him under control. They had chastened him. They had used reproof, the rod, and every lawful form of punishment to correct his behavior. But the result of all their efforts was failure. He would not hearken to them.

When a child rejects all discipline, they set themselves on a dangerous path. The parents standing before the elders testified that their son was not only rebellious, but a glutton and a drunkard. He was running with riotous men, wasting his life and his parents' substance in debauchery. He had moved from simply ignoring instructions in the home to engaging in a lifestyle of unrestrained fleshly excess. This is what happens when discipline is continually rejected.

Parents have authority from God to exercise discipline to punish disobedience and evil. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, and discipline is the loving means God has provided to drive it far from him. When parents fail to discipline, or when a child completely hardens himself against it, the situation becomes critical. It threatens not only the parents but the well-being of the entire family and society. True covenant faithfulness requires parents to courageously administer discipline, and children to humbly receive it as God's provision for their good.

### **Theological Reflection Question**

How does an understanding of our own natural depravity emphasize the necessity of both giving and receiving loving, corrective discipline in the home and the church?

### **Questions for Children**

Parents, discuss these questions with your children: Why do parents have to discipline their children when they disobey? How does accepting discipline actually protect you and help you grow?

### **Family Prayer**

Gracious God, we thank You that You love us enough to correct us. We ask for the courage to faithfully apply Your standards in this home. Help us to not grow weary in training and instruction. We pray that when discipline is given, it would be received with humility and lead to genuine repentance. Keep our family from the destructive path of the world. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Scripture Memory Verse**

Proverbs 12:1 (NKJV)

"Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid."

#### **Day 4: The Seriousness of Sin**

##### **Scripture Reading**

Deuteronomy 21:20–21 (NKJV)

"And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear."

##### **Devotional Teaching**

When the parents brought their incorrigible son to the elders at the gate, they were turning him over to the civil authorities for a criminal trial. If he was found guilty, the judgment was severe: he was to be stoned to death by the men of the city. For many people today, this law is consistently vilified as an example of extreme harshness. But we must remember that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

Why did God require such a severe penalty? The text gives the answer: "so you shall put away the evil from among you." This rebellion is described as a malignant evil. Think of a cancer cell. If a malignancy is left to fester and grow, it will spread and eventually destroy the entire body. Unchecked rebellion against parental authority is a moral cancer. If left alone, it dissolves the family, breeds contempt for all law and order, and leads to the ruin of the commonwealth. God mandated this penalty to completely eradicate the evil and to strike fear into the hearts of other would-be rebels.

This teaches us God's absolute hatred of the sin of rebellion. His righteous anger burns against those who disdain His design for the family. We must not tolerate a little rebellion in our homes, thinking it is harmless. We must deal with sin seriously, recognizing that the end of rebellion is always death. While the civil application of this law belonged to Old Testament Israel, the moral principle remains: God is holy, He demands honor in the home, and the consequences of despising His law are severe and inescapable.

##### **Theological Reflection Question**

In a culture that minimizes the seriousness of sin and mocks the justice of God, how can we maintain a biblical conviction regarding God's holiness and His right to judge evil?

##### **Questions for Children**

Parents, discuss these questions with your children: What does it mean when the Bible says sin is like an evil that needs to be put away? Why does God take our obedience so seriously?

### **Family Prayer**

Holy and righteous God, we tremble at Your word and acknowledge Your perfect justice. You are a holy God who cannot look upon sin with favor. Teach us to hate sin as much as You do. Keep us from making excuses for our disobedience. We pray that the fear of God would dwell richly in our family, restraining our flesh and driving us to obey Your commandments. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Scripture Memory Verse**

Deuteronomy 5:16 (NKJV)

"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

### **Day 5: The Perfect Son Who Took Our Place**

#### **Scripture Reading**

Romans 5:6–8 (NKJV)

"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

#### **Devotional Teaching**

When we read the terrifying judgment against the rebellious son in Deuteronomy 21, it should cause every one of us to pause. Do you know there is a picture here of what God has done for us in Christ? In regard to God our Father in heaven, we are all that stubborn and rebellious son. We have stiffened our necks, withdrawn our shoulders, and refused to heed the voice of our Creator. We have all earned the penalty of death for our contempt of God and His law. The judgment is just. We are the evil that deserves to be eradicated.

But this is the center of the gospel message. Instead of judging us with the penalty of death prescribed for our incorrigible rebellion, God provided a substitute. He took His Son—His perfectly obedient Son—and had Him die for us. Jesus Christ was a Son who was perfect in

His love and submission to His Father's will. Everything the Father commanded, Christ heard and did. He was completely righteous. He did not deserve to die.

Yet, God the Father placed the sins of rebellious sons and daughters upon the perfect Son. The righteous Son died for the unrighteous. He was led outside the city and executed so that the penalty could be paid and we could be brought into the family of God, completely forgiven. Oh, the love of all loves, the mercy of all mercies! Christ died for the ungodly. Because of His obedience, we are granted life, and His Spirit now works in us, giving us a new heart that desires to obey our Heavenly Father.

### **Theological Reflection Question**

How does meditating on the perfect obedience and substitutionary death of Christ change your motivation for covenant faithfulness from mere duty to profound gratitude?

### **Questions for Children**

Parents, discuss these questions with your children: Did Jesus ever disobey His Father in heaven? Because we have disobeyed, what did Jesus do on the cross to save us from our punishment?

### **Family Prayer**

Father, we stand amazed at the gospel of Jesus Christ. We confess that we have been stubborn and rebellious toward You. We deserved Your righteous judgment. But we thank You with all our hearts for sending Your perfectly obedient Son to take our place. Thank You, Jesus, for dying for the ungodly. Fill us with Your Spirit, that we might live lives of grateful obedience to You all our days. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Scripture Memory Verse**

Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."