

Family Devotional

From August 14, 2016

Play: Before you start, or together as a group make a stack of cards that reflect different types of relationships. Some examples would be: father-child; doctor-patient; librarian-reader; husband-wife; grandmother-grandchild etc. Write one side of each relationship on individual cards. For example, you would write "father" on one card and "son" on a different card. Do this for each relationship until you have a stack of at least 20-30 cards, depending on the size of your group. Then shuffle the cards and use them to play "Go Fish" or "Memory" trying to match the relational partners. For example: father and child would be a match and teacher and student would be another match.

For younger children, you can say one side of the relationship and they can reply with the other side. For example: one person says "child," another responds with "father." After you finish playing, read the following passage that talks about relationships.

Read: Ephesians 6:1-9

Reflect: Verse 2 says "Honor your mother and father". This quote is from another passage in the Bible, you might have heard before. Do you recognize it? Where is it from?

This passage says this is the first commandment with a promise. Why do you think obeying and honoring our parents results in enjoying a long life on earth?

This passage has a lot of commands. Who else besides children are given commands in this passage?

Relationships is the main theme throughout this passage. We see a relationship between a father and child and a master and slave. However, did you notice no conditions were given with the commands? The passage doesn't say, "Children obey your parents IF they do what you want or always make the right decision." Neither does it say, "Father instruct your children WHEN they are being obedient and loving." The commands Jesus gives us are independent of how the other person behaves. This is an example of a covenant relationship versus a contract relationship.

In a contract two parties both agree to do their part, but if one party fails to follow through, then the other party is no longer bound by the contract. For example: At a store items have price a tag. You enter a contract relationship when you choose to buy an item. You say, "I will give you this amount" and the store says, "I will give you this item." If the item they gave you doesn't work, then you take it back and they give you back your money, or if you don't give them the right amount of money, then they keep the item. The relationship is dependent on both sides doing their part.

However, in a covenant relationship both parties agree that they will do their part no matter what the other party does. Thankfully, this is the kind of relationship Jesus offers us. He says, "I love you no matter what you have done or will do. Your actions will not change my love for you." It's because we have received this kind of love that we can also love and respect others even when they may not act in a way we want them to.

We don't usually like the idea of being a slave, but what good advice is given to slaves in this passage, that can help us in the way we approach our tasks?

As you get ready for a new school year and activities, don't just think about working to please your parents, teachers or coaches, but give your best in everything you do as a way to honor God. You can't control how another person acts, but you can choose how you will act. Act in a way that pleases Jesus!

Remember: As a family work on memorizing/mediating on Colossians 3:23-24 this week.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ... It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Ideas: Write this passage down and hang it on the refrigerator. Say it together as a family during meal time each day. Write it on a chalk or white board and erase a couple of words each day until you can say it by memory.

Respond: "Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me no matter what I have done or will do. Help me make good choices that honor my parents and teachers. Remind me that I am always working to honor You most of all.
.....Amen!"