God's Word to Children

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[0:00] Well, I want to start with a little bit of movie trivia, and only the boys and girls are allowed to answer.! But I'm going to ask you, okay, who is this? Yes.

Baby Yoda. Oh, close. That's not baby Yoda, Matthew. That's normal Yoda. That's right. He's actually about 800 years old, so not a baby.
But, he's not just Yoda. He is Jedi Master Yoda, okay? And we've got to make sure we understand that he's not just any old wrinkly creature.
He's a Jedi Master, but it doesn't seem like it, does it? You look at him, he's walking on a stick, he looks old and frail, but he doesn't seem like a Jedi Master, does he? Well, Luke Skywalker didn't think he was.
When he first met him, Luke came looking for a great Jedi Master who's going to teach him the ways of the Force. But then he came across this old guy. He didn't know he was. And he was just getting in the way.
[1:02] Luke Skywalker started getting quite frustrated, until, of course, he realized this was him. This was the Jedi Master he was looking for. This was the guy who was going to train him to be a Jedi Warrior, and to fight the dark side.

And listening to him, Luke listening to this little guy, was actually far more important to him than he thought it was. Well, boys and girls, I want to tell you this morning, your parents are like Master Yoda.
They're old and wrinkly. No, not really. Your parents are like Master Yoda because you might not realize it, but they are the very people that God has chosen in your life to train you to fight the forces of darkness in this world.
They might not look like it, but those are the people who will do that. Those are the people who are in your life to help you to fight darkness. And that is something we all need to learn to do.
The Bible tells us that. There's this book in the Bible called Ephesians. We read from it earlier. And this book, Ephesians, was written by the Apostle Paul. He was kind of like a Jedi Master as well.
[2:14] But you know what I like about Ephesians, boys and girls, is that it's like a Jedi training manual. That's what it really does. It trains us how to fight darkness. I'm going to read from Ephesians 5 verse 8.

It says this. It says, For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. Isn't that a great verse?
Live as children of light. Now that's talking to all Christians, all people who have come to know Jesus and come to be saved by Him. And it's saying here that Jesus came to take us out of darkness, out of the dark side, and put us on the light side.
He came to make us into people of light who fight darkness in the world. And in the rest of the book of Ephesians, this Jedi training manual, we learn how to do that.
We learn about the Holy Spirit power that God actually gives us to fight darkness. We learn about, this is cool, in Ephesians 6, we learn about the weapons. God has actually given us spiritual weapons to fight in the spiritual realm.
[3:18] And it tells us, it lists what those weapons are and what the armor is that we can put on. It's very exciting. The armor and the weapons to use against darkness. Boys and girls, if you haven't read Ephesians, then I encourage you, go to your parents and say, let's read Ephesians.

Can we read Ephesians? A little bit every night before supper. It's a good, it's a great book to read, to train you to be this warrior of light against the darkness in our world.
But you know what Ephesians has? It also has specific instructions for you. It's got a couple of verses that are only for you. Instructions only for children.

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And we're going to look at those instructions today. The first word of Ephesians chapter 6 is children. And so Paul says, listen, okay, I've been speaking to your parents, but I want you to listen up now.
I want to say something to you. These instructions are for children. How you too can be warriors of light. And so, whatever he says next is obviously going to be very important for you, right?
[4:26] To hear. But then what he says next is just one command. He just gives you one command. And it's this. Children, obey your parents in the Lord.

That is how you will be warriors of light. Now it sounds boring, doesn't it? To obey your parents. You would expect more.
This is a Jedi training manual. This is how we're going to fight darkness in the world. And now Paul says, obey your parents. That's boring. But, let me tell you, it is far more important than you realize it is.
To do that. Just as it was far more important for Luke Skywalker to listen to Yoda than he thought it was. It is far more important than you think it is to obey your parents. And the rest of the verses after this tell us why.
And now while, and we're going to look at that, by the way, we're going to look at two reasons why it's important to obey your parents. And while this is primarily for children living in the home, that's Paul's first audience, I think there are things in what we're going to discover that are important for parents to hear as well as important for grown-up children to hear and grandparents as well.
[5:39] So anybody in the family unit will benefit from the principles in these verses. So let's have a look at what they say. Let's find out the two reasons the Apostle Paul gives why it's so important for children to obey their parents.

First reason, and it's a very simple one, is because it's right. That's the first thing he says. Obey your parents because it's right.
Now we need to remember in our world there is such a thing as right and there's such a thing as wrong. This is something, sadly, that our society has forgotten.
But there is, the Bible makes clear, there is right and wrong in the world. There are things that are right and there are things that are wrong. There are what we call moral absolutes. There's such a thing as right and wrong.
The right things are the things that God wants. and the things that He made us for. And the wrong things are the things that God doesn't want. And, ever since the beginning, there is a battle in our world between right and wrong.
[6:48] Every day, there is a battle going on, a war between right and wrong. By the way, that's why, boys and girls, I think I like Star Wars so much.

You may have noticed that. If you've listened to me or if you've seen the Lego in my office, you know, it's a made-up story. But, what I like about it is that it tells us about a great battle between good and evil.
You know, between the dark side and the light side, between Luke and Darth Vader and Epi Palpatine. And this great war between good and evil. And when I watch it, it reminds me that actually there is a real battle going on between good and evil in our world, all around us.
Listen again to the words of Ephesians 6. Listen to what Paul says. Boys and girls, listen to this. This is epic. Listen to these words. He says, we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.
Okay, this is not Star Wars he's talking about. This is real life. And there's a real battle going on. And it's epic. And the stakes are high. We can't see this battle.
[8:13] It's in the unseen realm, but there's real forces at play. There's real spiritual forces. These evil powers and evil spirits, mighty powers in the dark world, they really exist.

And they're really there. And this battle's really going on around us every day. And the stakes are very high. The stakes are our lives. The stakes are eternal life.
That's what's at stake in this battle. So it's very important. And that's why you want to be on the good side of this battle, don't you? Whoever you are. You want to be on the right side of this war that's going on around us.
And that is what the Bible calls being righteous. Being righteous means being on the right side of this battle. But there's a problem. The problem is that none of us start out on the good side.

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Because we're sinners. Because we've got sin inside us, none of us actually start out on the right side. Romans 3 verse 10 and 11 says, There is no one righteous, not even one.
[9:19] There is no one who understands. There is no one who seeks God. You know what that means? It means that by nature, the things that you want in your heart are not the things that God wants.

They're different. whatever it is that you want in your heart by nature is not what God wants. And that means that if you just could do whatever you wanted, I know you want to do that, right?
Don't we all? Boys and girls, don't you just want to do whatever you want to do? Just be allowed to do whatever you want? But I want to tell you that that's actually not a good thing. The Bible says if you just did what you want, you would always end up doing the wrong thing.
If you just obeyed your own heart, you would end up on the wrong side of this battle. That's scary, isn't it? But that is why God has given you parents.
That's exactly why God has given you parents who not only teach you to do the right things until you can learn to do them yourself like Jedi Masters with their Padawan apprentice.
[10:31] You know, they've got a Padawan apprentice who doesn't really know what to do and how to do it, so they've got a master to help them so that they can grow up until such time as they can do it themselves and take the trials and become a Jedi Knight.

But that's what parents are like. They're like, they help you to learn what is the right thing to do which your heart isn't going to tell you. But not only do they teach you to do the right things until you can do it yourself, but according to this verse we read earlier, obeying them is itself a right thing to do.
Which is why, for example, in Colossians, another letter, Paul writes this. He says in Colossians 3 verse 20, Children, obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord.
Just obeying them pleases the Lord. It is by itself a right thing to do. And what that means, what that verse means, boys and girls, is that every day there's a really easy way for you to please the Lord, to please God.
Whenever you obey your parents, whatever they say, as long as it's not against what God says, you can always know that you're doing something right, that you're doing something that pleases God, that you're on the right side of the battle whenever you obey your parents.
[11:55] And Satan does not like it when you do that. And that's why he's going to try to make it difficult. Every day he works to try and make that really difficult.

But that's also the first way that you get to fight him in your life. Now you're going to learn and your parents will teach you and the Bible will teach you how to fight darkness in your life when you're an adult.
But the very first way you get to fight darkness is by obeying your parents. Think about that. Even when you're a kid you get to fight the Lord of darkness.
Isn't that cool? And the way you do it is by obeying your parents even when it's hard. Satan hates that. And that is why Jesus also obeyed his parents.
The Bible tells us, I'm going to read from Luke when it tells us about Jesus when he was your age, when he was a child. And it says this from Luke 2. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them.
[13:05] Jesus was obedient to his parents. But think about that for a second. Why should he of all kids obey his parents? He made them.

He was there when the world was made. He was there when his parents were born, when his great-grandparents were born. And now he's come into the world as a baby and as a child.
But why should he obey his parents? He's God. Well, he obeyed them because it's right. Because it's right and because Jesus knew Satan hates it when children do that.
And so that's the first reason we see why children should obey their parents because it's right. But before we move to the second reason, I want to just have a word for the parents here today or the parents listening to the sermon.
Because of the teaching here in Ephesians 6 1 that says children are to obey their parents because it's right, what that means for you parents is that you have a right to be obeyed.
[14:16] it's a right that God has given you that you don't need to earn. And this needs to be said. In a world where parents feel that they constantly have to negotiate and convince their children to listen to them, and that's why so many families don't work, the Bible says, no, you have a right to be

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obeyed as a parent that you get automatically as a parent that you don't have to earn.

God has given it to you, and insisting on that in the home is right. Now, there is a right way and a wrong way to do that, to insist on your children's obedience.
There is a harmful and a wrong way to do that, which unfortunately many parents do, but there is also a right way to do that, which we're going to learn about next week, which is all about the role of the parents in the home, so come back then.
But for now, just realize that you have a right to your child's obedience as a parent, and it's right to insist on it, but also, importantly, it's good for them when you do.
When you help them to obey you, it is good for your children, and that's the next thing, the next reason Paul gives children, listen up, as to why you should obey your parents, because not only is it right, but it's good for you.
[15:37] Listen to what he says next in Ephesians 6 from verse 2. He says, honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you, and that you may have a long life in the land.

That's the promise you get if you obey your parents. Obeying your parents, the Bible says, will make it go well with you.
go well with you. What does that mean? Well, it's simple. It means life will be better. It'll go better. It'll go well for you, because things will work better than they would have if you didn't obey them.
Now, we saw this in the Proverbs, in this instructions that the parent gives the child in these old ancient wisdom Proverbs, and I want to just read some of them again. Listen carefully.
I'm not going to put these up on the screen. I'm just going to read them, and I want you to listen carefully to what this great deep biblical wisdom says. It says, this is from Proverbs 6, 20 to 22, My son, keep your father's command, and don't reject your mother's teaching.
[16:49] Always bind them to your heart. Tie them around your neck. When you walk here and there, they will guide you. When you lie down, they will watch over you.

When you wake up, they will talk to you. And so what these Proverbs are saying is, what your parents tell you when you're young are like bodyguards for you.
Bodyguards, you know what I mean when I say bodyguards? When you see a fancy, important politician, like a president or something, you'll see around them they're these big, tough guys, often with sunglasses, right?
You know who they are? They're his bodyguards. They protect him. They guard him if anyone wants to come and hurt him. Well, the Bible says that the instructions your parents give you when you're young are like bodyguards in your life.
They'll protect you from things that want to hurt you. The Proverbs says, when you lie down they will watch over you. Even when you're sleeping, the instructions your parents give will keep you safe.
[17:57] They might not sound like it. A lot of the instructions your parents give you you might not want to hear because it's stopping you from doing what you want to do. But, you've got to remember what the Bible says about them. They protect you.

They guard you. From simple things like make sure you brush your teeth. Okay? Or eat your vegetables. Now, parents tell you those things to guard you from tooth decay and to guard you from getting unhealthy.
They tell you these instructions to keep you safe from things that will hurt you. Or, when they say, maybe when you're a bit older, when you're a teenager, and they say to you, I don't want you to go to that party. And you go, oh, my friends are going.
I really want to go. And your parents say, no, but I don't want you to go. Now, they're not just trying to spoil your fun. But they're trying to protect you from things at that party that can hurt you that you don't know about.
And when your parents tell you things like, we're going to church now. And you might not feel like it. You might just want to stay at home and play computer games. But they're saying, no, we're going to church.
[19:07] And they're telling you this to protect you from sin and to protect you from drifting away from God. Your parents' instructions are like bodyguards. They protect you. But they don't only protect you, they also, the proverb says, they guide you you.

It says, when you walk here and there, they will guide you. They will show you the way. If you go to live in a strange city that you don't know your way around, I've done this.

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When I was out of school, finished university, I went to live in London. But to me, it was a very strange city. I didn't know my way around. I didn't know where to go. But fortunately, I knew people who had been living there for a long time already.
And they could guide me, they could show me where to go and how to live in the city. Because they had been living there and they knew the place already. Well, I want to tell you something, kids, that might shock you.
Your parents have actually been in the world longer than you have. I know, I know, it doesn't seem like it, but they have. And they know their way around.
[20:10] They know the dangerous things in life. They know the stuff that you don't know yet, that you still have to learn. And so their instructions can guide you when you don't know where to go and when you don't know what to do.

And that is why obeying your parents when you are young will make it go well for you when you are older. The Bible promises that. But it promises something else.
Did you notice? In that verse in Ephesians 6, 2-3, it promises you not just that it will go well for you, but that you will have a long life.
A long life. I'll read it again. This is Ephesians 6, verse 3, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.
And that makes sense because if your parents' words guard and guide you from things that are going to harm you, people generally live longer and healthier lives when they obeyed their parents when they were kids.
[21:13] But I think there's also a deeper meaning in this verse because it says not just that you will live a long life, but that you will live a long life in the land.

Did you notice that? What land? Well, Paul's referring to the promised land. When the land is spoken about in the Bible, it refers to the covenant land, the promised land, which is the place that God has always planned for his people to come and live and enjoy all his blessings without limit.
And as we read the Bible, we realize that that promised land is ultimately the new creation God is planning. This new world. Do you know that? God is planning a new world. He's going to remake this world into what he's always intended for it to be.
A world where there will be nothing that doesn't belong, nothing that is bad, nothing that is against God's will. A world where there will be no crying, the Bible tells us, and no pain, and no death.
But instead, it will just have all the things that God made us to enjoy and wants us as a loving Father to enjoy. Doesn't that sound good? Don't you want to be there?
[22:28] Boys and girls, grown-ups, don't you want to be in that world, that amazing world that God is planning? I want to. But you know what the Bible also says? Because we're sinners, the only way to get there is by following Jesus.

Because of what He alone did on the cross, as we learned earlier, as we remembered earlier, to die for the sins of other people, to die for those who put their trust in Him and come under His kingship so that they can have their sins forgiven and come into God's new creation, which would never be possible if our sins weren't dealt with.
And Jesus came to make that possible. And so the only way to get there is by following Jesus. But if you have Christian parents, boys and girls, they are the first people who tell you about Jesus.
And while you're still a child, under their roof and under their authority, they are the number one way that you're going to learn how to follow Jesus. And that's why listening to them will give you long life. But much longer life than you think. Because not just in this world, if they're Christians, they will help you to follow Jesus, which will give you eternal life. And so, do you see why it's so important to obey your parents?
[23:49] And that's what the Bible says. Obey your parents because it's right and because it's good for you. But that is also why, even when you're older, even when you're out of the house, you will still be their child.

They'll still be your parents. And the Bible says that you're still to honor them. And this is talking to all of us, even adults with parents. We're still to honor them.
We won't obey them the same when we've left home, but the Bible says still that we are to honor them. And that is, it means to value them. to value them and to look after them especially when they get as old as Master Yoda.

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Because honoring them, even if they've made mistakes, which they would have as parents, no parents perfect in this world, honoring them pleases God.
And it recognizes that however imperfect they were, they were the ones God appointed to be there at the very beginning of your life, to guide and to guard you.
[25:01] And if they were Christians, even more, they were the ones who showed you to Jesus, which is the most valuable thing anyone can do for you. And so honor them, value them, and remember as parents, this thing to show Jesus to our children is actually our primary task.

And so come back next week to find out how to do that well. Let's pray. O Lord, we thank you for giving us parents to show us the way, to help us to know what is right when we don't know, to guide us and guard us.
And we thank you especially for Christian parents who showed us Jesus. Lord, I pray for the boys and girls here who are still in their parents home.
I pray that you would give them strength to follow your instructions, to obey their parents even when it's hard. And I pray, Lord, for the rest of us, even those who have left home, that you would help us to honor our parents and recognize what you have done through them in our lives and how you use them to make us who we are today.
Thank you for parents, Lord, and thank you ultimately that you are our Father who guides us, who guards us, and who saves us. Amen.

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