

Because I said so, that's why.

Under Authority to Parents

Introduction:

Who among us hasn't heard, "Because I said so, that's why," at some point in their lives? I'm sure there are those who have heard it many times (like me). Most often this curt reply from our parents was well earned due to our inquisitiveness (not often), our boldness, or our insolence (most often). It may be a hard pill to swallow at this point in your lives, but parents have the right, and are quite justified in this authoritative response, and in not answering your "curiosity." So we'll start with a couple of scriptures:

Ephesians 6:1 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

Colossians 3:20 "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

Now we could stop right there... because I said so, that's why... but we'll continue to search out scriptural basis for parental authority, and how it applies to you.

In Gen. 18:19 a promise was given to Abraham and Sarah of a son (Isaac). In this, God gave instruction to Abraham and the reason for such. The passage reads:

"For I have chosen him that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

Abraham and Sarah have a task to command their children and household to keep the way of the Lord. They have direction in accomplishing the task by doing righteousness and justice. But most important of all is the outcome, the results of the task done correctly, which is the Lord will bring to Abraham what he promised him. This benefit was not just for Abraham, but for his entire household.

Likewise, parents today have a task from the Lord, with instructions, for a promise to them and their children of the eternal reward of heaven. Parents and children have a stake in this promise, and must fill their roles, correctly, in order to receive the Lord's promises.

Because the Lord said so to parents, that's why

In Deuteronomy 6:4-9 Moses is giving instructions from God to the Israelites. After giving the Ten Commandments in chapter 5, he continues with some more specific applications. From chapter 6:6-7 are some instructions to parents:

⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

The commands of God are to be known by heart and taught carefully, correctly to our children. And they are to be taught full time at home, away from home, when putting the children to bed, and when getting them up in the morning. Indeed a 24/7 job.

Continuing on in the chapter, Moses tells the parents why it was so important...

Deut 6:20 & 25

²⁰ “When your son asks you in time to come, “What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you?

²⁵ And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.”

Metaphorically, parents are to build the twelve-memorial-stone altar at the Jordan River for the generations to remember. See Josh. 4:4-7

In Psalms 78:5-8 the testimony and law of the Lord is to be taught to our children, that our children may one day teach it to their children. God desires to build a truly important family legacy.

⁵ He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, ⁶ that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, ⁷ so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; ⁸ and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Solomon's wisdom states to us succinctly in Prov. 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go: even when he is old he will not depart from it.” I'm reminded of an old book used by many Christian parents titled “Train up a Child.” I remember two things about that book; one is ‘train’ being a choo-choo train in that it must be on track to make it to its desired destination (i.e. heaven), and the other is the sound of the train, the parents

practicing con—sis—ten—cy, con--sis--ten--cy, consistency, consistency in worship, teaching, and discipline as their children grow up, pick up speed en route to their final heavenly destination.

In the New Testament the instruction is given from Eph. 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” noting a directive to fathers to bring their children up in the Lord properly.

Because parents love you, that’s why

There is no doubt it is natural for parents to love their children. We can find numerous examples in the Bible of parents (both good and bad) who loved their children. But the love Christian parents give their child is supernatural, from above, special, because Christian parents want to give their child something better than anything in the world.

In 1 Samuel 1 we find the beautiful story of Elkanah, Hannah, and their son Samuel. Samuel was dearly loved by Hannah because she was barren and had prayed fervently for him, and the prayer was answered by the Lord. And yet at an early age Samuel was given to the Lord, dedicated to assist Eli the priest at the Temple. Believe it, there are many here today that have mothers and fathers just like Hannah and Elkanah, who understand the importance of their children’s salvation and are doing whatever they can, making huge sacrifices to secure that.

We see other examples:

How the Shunamite woman cared for her son (promised to her by Elisha) when he was placed on her lap and died; and how she sought out help from Elisha. – 2 Kgs. 4

How Job offered sacrifices continually in case his children sinned or cursed in their hearts - Job 1:5

How Jacob’s love for Joseph was shown upon hearing of Joseph’s presumed death – Gen. 37:31-35

How David loved his children:

Bathsheba’s son – 2 Sam. 12:15-17

Death of Absalom – 2 Sam. 18:31-33

How Jairus loved his 12-year-old daughter and sought out Jesus to heal her – Mk. 5: 22-24; 35ff

How the father of the Prodigal son loved his lost son, and indeed the one who remained with him – Lk. 15:18-24, and 31

How Mary loved her son until the end in John 19:25, standing by the cross of Jesus

Because of this love the parent exercises authority over the child. While it is a joy to teach children about the love of God, discipline is altogether a different matter. You may have heard it before, as Dad pulls out the belt or Mom gets the switch, when the grounding commences, or the cell phone is taken up, “This is going to hurt me more than it does you.” It does. Discipline is a grievous thing done out of love. It is one of God’s toughest commands for parents to fulfill.

Because you’re obliged to, that’s why

To oblige is to compel by moral, legal, or physical force (Webster). At this point in your life, many of you can no longer be compelled by parental physical force. You likely are actually stronger than one or the other parent. But earlier in your life, as you recall, your parents exerted non-violent (I hope) physical force in training, controlling and disciplining you. So being beyond that (I hope again) we’ll focus on what should guide you through the rest of your life, moral and legal obligations; but not temporal (earthly) ones which are beyond the scope of this study, but spiritual obligations which if we are grounded in, will take care of the temporal ones anyway!

Solomon who asked for wisdom from the Lord and was blessed with such gives advice to his son. This advice should be carefully considered because of its origin.

Prov.1:8-9 ⁸ Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. ⁹ They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

Prov. 6:20-23 ²⁰ My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. ²¹ Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. ²² When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. ²³ For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life,

Prov. 23:22 Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

You will notice that in these passages Solomon advises his son regarding the father and mother. The significance is this is not father-to-son advice or mother-to-daughter advice, but it is advice from parent to child. The child is obliged to the father to listen to his instructions and keep his commands. The child is obliged to the mother to forsake

not her teaching, and not despise her when she is old. Both parents are due respect from the child. Are you respecting mother and father equally? Do you sass one and fear the other? Are you comfortable with one parent, but want to avoid the other? We need to be careful to respect both parents equally and remember both have authority.

You may be thinking all this is well and good if you have Christian parents who love the Lord (and you) and are wonderful teachers and disciplinarians, etc. But what if one or both are not Christians, and are not so nice? As uncomfortable or troublesome as it may be, the scriptures reveal you are still obligated to their authority; but with a stipulation. Consider:

Eph. 6:1-2 ¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—

Col. 3:20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Ezekiel best described the stipulation when he recounted God’s dealing with the Israelites. The Israelites who after they had left Egyptian captivity at God’s hand, kept reverting back to the wicked Egyptian laws and idols (i.e. were unbelieving). This was displeasing to the Lord, so He addresses their children in Ezek. 20:18-20.

¹⁸ I said to their children in the wilderness, “Do not follow the statutes of your parents or keep their laws or defile yourselves with their idols. ¹⁹ I am the LORD your God; follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁰ Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.”

There are great difficulties in being a Christian in a worldly home. Challenges I pray none of you have to suffer. But if you do, remember the encouragement from Rom. 8:18 “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

Because there are blessings, that’s why

Take heart, whether yielding to the authority of good parents or bad, the Lord has promised blessings in this life and beyond! As the Israelite children were promised in the Old Testament...

Deut. 5:16 “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.”

Ex. 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.”

You are promised in the New Testament...

Eph. 6: 3 “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Everyone, everyone hopes for a long life and that things go well in this life. Much more than just hoping for this, you are promised this from God IF you honor and obey your parents. And obedience to God’s will yields the greatest reward of heaven.

Because there is discipline (and consequences), that’s why

The Old Testament gives numerous examples of God’s punishment for disobedience. Noteworthy is the severe punishment prescribed in the Old Law for disobedient children:

Exod. 21:15 “Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death.”

Lev. 20:9 “For anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him.”

Deut. 21:18-21 ¹⁸ “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, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, ¹⁹ then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, ²⁰ and they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ ²¹ Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.”

Consider some more wise advice from Solomon regarding parental discipline and children’s obedience:

Prov. 13:1 “A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a mocker does not respond to rebukes.”

Prov. 3:12 “for the LORD reproveth him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”

Prov. 13:24 “Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.”

Prov. 19:18 “Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.”

Prov. 22:15 “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.”

Prov. 23:13 “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die.”

Your actions, all of them whether good or bad have consequences. For good actions parents give encouragement; for bad actions parents give discipline. Remember the train we talked about earlier? The continued analogy is parents are trying to ‘keep you on the right track.’ By the rails and the lip on the wheels the train continues to the destination. When the wheels leave the track, the train cannot continue. Parents hope to make correction (discipline) early because it is much easier to put a car or two back on track than to deal with the catastrophe of a train wreck.

I encourage you to take correction, punishment, discipline without malice. Your parents are really hoping for the best. Indeed their discipline is regulated for the best interest of the child as we see in Eph. 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” And in Col. 3:21 “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”

Because you are not the Judge (or Critic), that’s why

Authority comes down from above, likewise the right to judge or criticize. John 5:22-23. The order is thus:

God → Christ → Parents → Childen

Let’s not try to reverse that. The consequences are dire. Some warnings:

Prov. 20:20 If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.

Prov. 30:11 & 17¹¹ There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers. ¹⁷ The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.

I mean to be terse on this topic. The reasons are obvious and I caution you, God is aware of your thoughts.

Because of family peace, that's why

As you grow older, you will realize your fondest memories are the times when there was peace at home. Tension in the family is never comfortable and often downright disturbing. If you understand the authority given to parents, yield to such, and accept discipline as a tool for correction to make you a better person; peace in the family can be maintained. You share a responsibility to help foster a pleasant and productive family life, working together to please the Lord.

Prov. 10:1 "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother."

Who would want to live in the following circumstances?

Micah 7: 6 "for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house."

Prov. "19:26 He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who brings shame and reproach."

Remember to do your part in maintaining peace at home.

Because your parents need you, that's why

Unless you have parents that are dealing with your aged or ailing grandparents, this topic may seem a little foreign to you. It may be hard for you to imagine your parents will need your help one day. Even if you are aware of that, until that day arrives, you cannot realize how much they will need and rely on you. As your parents are exercising their authority, disciplining you, training you and, raising you they are building your character. Your character will be tried and tested in your adult life. One of the biggest tests of your character will be how you care for your aged parents. God cares about how you handle this responsibility.

Lev. 19:32 "You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD."

Oh, how Jesus strongly rebuked the Pharisees for dishonoring parents and not taking care of them in their old age!

Mk.7:9-13⁹ And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!"¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must

surely die.’ ¹¹ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)— ¹² then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³ thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

Let’s be careful that we do not find lame excuses for neglecting the needed care of our aging parents.

Instead we should respect the care Joseph gave his father when he was aged and even beyond. (Gen. 47:7-12) We should consider how David took care of his parents even though he himself was suffering great difficulties being exiled from Jerusalem.

1 Sam. 22:3-4 ³And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab. And he said to the king of Moab, “Please let my father and my mother stay with you, till I know what God will do for me.” ⁴ And he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.”

Remember how Jesus saw to the care of his mother even at the point of death on the cross.

John 19:25-27 ²⁵ but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.”

Conclusion:

“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them.”

Even though it is written to the young, Christian parents take Ecclesiastes 12:1 to heart. They have walked in your shoes. They have suffered the angst and awkwardness of the transition from childhood to adulthood. They have made many of the mistakes and enjoyed many of the successes you are experiencing now in your lives. And they pray that when you come upon “the days of trouble” that you will remember the Creator and find pleasure in the days of your youth. As you continue respecting their authority, remember **they said so** because:

- The Lord directed your parents to exercise authority over you
- Your parents love you, they really do

- You are obliged to respect their authority
- There are blessings for you
- There is discipline and consequences if you do not
- You are not the judge or critic
- There can be family peace
- Your parents will need you one day

That's why.

A final thought. A familiar story; when Jesus was twelve He astounded the Jewish leaders in the Temple with His understanding of scripture. When His parents Joseph and Mary took him home, we read in Luke 2:51, "And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them."