

God's News In The News

Week One Hundred-Nineteen

Perilous Times Week Four

Same Topics

When looking into the list in **2 Timothy 3** it is no coincidence that the author, Paul the Apostle seems to be talking about the same things in **Romans 1** as he does in his admonition and caution to this young pastor. While one was written in Corinth about ten years earlier and the other at the actual end of his life, Paul saw the same things happening in both cities and it isn't unusual to then see similarities in how people devolve if they fall away from the truth and let the culture surrounding them dictate their relationships with God and their fellow men. And in this lesson we see even more of this degradation in respect to how they treat their parents among other things. This uncaring and selfish treatment of our mother and father requires a thorough look.

Unpersuaded

For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy... (2 Tim 3:2, NKJV)

The Greek word for "disobedient" in **verse 2** is *apeithēs* (an adjective) – literally, unwilling to be persuaded (by God) which shows itself in outward disobedience (outward spiritual rebellion); disobedient because unpersuaded. 545 /*apeithēs* ("unpersuaded") begins with the decision to reject what God prefers, with His offer to persuade about His preferred-will (cf. 2307 /*thélēma*). This seemingly little phrase is much worse than a cursory reading of the list implies. Here is how this is addressed rightly in *Barnes Notes on the Bible*:

This expresses the idea that they did not show to parents that honor, respect, and attention which was due. This has been a crime of paganism in every age; and though among the Romans the duty of honoring parents was enjoined by the laws, yet it is not improbable that the duty was often violated, and that parents were treated with great neglect and even contempt. "Disobedience to parents was punished by the Jewish Law with death, and with the Hindus it is attended with the loss of the child's inheritance. The ancient Greeks considered the neglect of it to be extremely impious, and attended with the most certain effects of divine vengeance. Solon ordered all persons who refused to make due provision for their parents to be punished with infamy, and the same penalty was incurred for personal violence toward them." Kent's Commentaries on American Law, vol. ii. p. 207; compare Virg. AEniad, ix. 283. The feelings of pride and haughtiness would lead to disregard of parents. It might also be felt that to provide for them when aged and infirm was a burden; and hence, there would arise disregard for their wants, and probably open opposition to their wishes, as being the demands of petulance and age. It has been one characteristic of paganism every where, that it leaves children to treat their parents with neglect. Among the Sandwich islanders it was customary, when a parent was old, infirm, and sick beyond the hope of recovery, for his own children to bury him alive; and it has been the common custom in India for children to leave their aged parents to perish on the banks of the Ganges.

And About The Ten Commandments

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you. (Ex 20:12, NKJV)

Here, in the ultimate top ten list we find a familiar verse about honoring parents and explains why the Jews, as noted previously treat this very seriously. Paul wants Timothy to notice this trend in the Christians in his city since it ties in with the others listed of unthankful and unholy. Here is how the commentary *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* describes it:

Or, in one word, unfilial; this with ‘unthankful, unholy,’ makes another triad: breakers of the fifth commandment go on to be breakers of the tenth; and thus throwing aside the second table go on to throw aside also the first, ‘unfilial, unthankful, unholy.’ The word “unfilial” may not be a common one, but it is defined in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* as *not observing the obligations of a child to a parent: undutiful*. One could observe that what is seen in the parents is logically seen in the children, but it also goes the other way as children who are this way became the adults with the other named qualities. So, it is a good thing to explore this commandment a little bit deeper.

A Commandment With A Blessing

Honor your father and mother so that you’ll live a long time in the land that God, your God, is giving you. (Ex 20:12, The Message)

While this commandment appears to be giving those who follow it the blessing of a longer life, it also gives us a reason as a society to adhere to it. Here is how *Dennis Prager* puts it:

If you build a society in which children honor their parents, your society will long survive. And the corollary is: A society in which children do not honor their parents is doomed to self-destruction. But why does society need parents to be honored? For starters, study after study shows that children who have a father and mother model a healthy relationship for them, turn out much better than those who don’t have that situation. But the key is that parents are to be honored, not necessarily loved. There is a difference. The Bible tell us to love everyone even our enemies, but not parents. Only parents are to be honored.

Why Honor And Not Love?

There are many examples of parents who are hard to love since they do bad things or are bad people. But they are still supposed to be honored. Honored as in given special treatment, you don’t call them by their first name, you don’t curse around them and when you move out of their home you stay in contact with them. The bad parents do exist, but they are the exception to the rule. You only have one set of parents so treat them with honor. And yet, honoring parents is lost on our world today. Today parents want to be friends with their kids. And many parents really don’t want the pressure of being an authority figure than demands honor. And we see how it’s worked out. Children don’t respect any authority when they didn’t have to do it in the home. Rioting, looting and worse is what a society gets when parents aren’t honored. Does any of this sound familiar?

No Father No Problem?

If there’s any generation that has seen what happens when a boy has no father to look up to or a girl has no father to honor, it’s ours. In a study on this phrase by *David Guzik*, he cites this telling example:

In the 1990s, a 13 year-old Los Angeles area graffiti vandal was quoted in the Los Angeles Times: “It’s like a family to belong to a crew. They watch your back, you watch theirs. You kick it everyday with them.... You get friendship, love, supplies, everything.” He also says: “I’ll tag

anything... Now I don't care. Well, sort of. I wouldn't like no one to write on my stuff. I do it to get known, to get up, regardless if people feel that I'm causing damage to property. I'd say the damage I've done is quite a bit. During the day I carry a screwdriver or a knife for protection. But at night I carry a gun. I have three guns. I hide them. My mom took a .38 from me. I'm getting it back." When asked about once when he got caught, he said: "My parents sort of talked to me about it. Of course they told me, 'Don't do it again.' But I'm not gonna listen, and they don't have to know about it."

And while some say it takes a village to raise a child, government is a poor substitute for parents. Very poor. And every totalitarian regime has always tried to break the bond between parents and their children so they can replace it with fealty to themselves. We always see them diminishing religion, but no father figure diminishes our view of God as well. Even the staunch atheist Sigmund Freud recognized that a child's view of a heavenly father is heavily influenced by the love and care they received from their earthly father. Children who don't have parents to honor will not easily grasp the moral authority of God. While this can be overcome, it need not be a hindrance at all if this commandment is heeded. It is hardly an insignificant commandment after all. And as we see in the advice to Timothy, not living with it as part of their lives was hurting their lives and, by extension their culture. It is not unusual as we see, for this young minister to be wary of people living just this way.

We Need To Work Harder

As mentioned before, tyrannical leaders knew how to destabilize societies and replacing the God-ordained bonds found in all of the Ten Commandments was a key component of this stratagem. But it wasn't good enough to destabilize it rather it was to be replaced by a loving and caring government that knew better and had the resources to provide and care for the elderly. And in our society, it extends to taking the place of the fathers as well. I am not suggesting that all government assistance is a bad thing, but what the church up until the early 1900s addressed, became the job of the almighty government in 1965. Social needs was the domain of the church and giving a cup of water in the name of the Lord is good advice for a world that is doing all it can to depress, demoralize and ultimately destroy any influence God's children have in their lives. As we see now, it starts with how we treat our parents.