

The Principle of Control

by J. Hampton Keathley III

The sermon emphasizes the need for controls and authority in the home and society to restrain rebellion and promote obedience.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:23, Proverbs 29:15, Romans 13:1, Ephesians 6:1, 1 Timothy 3:4, Hebrews 13:17

Topics: "Authority And Control", "Parental Discipline"

Description

J. Hampton Keathley III delves into 'The Problem of Rebellion,' emphasizing the necessity of controls due to the inherent rebellion in all individuals as a result of the fall and sinful nature. The sermon explores various forms of rebellion, the importance of godly authority in different spheres of life, and the role of institutions like government, family, and church in maintaining order and protection against rebellion. Keathley highlights the need for parents to exercise control to foster obedience and prevent rebellion in children, both actively and passively.

Transcript

The Problem of Rebellion

Why do parents need controls? Controls are needed because of the immaturity and foolishness of children, but also because of the natural tendency for rebellion. Because of the fall and man's sinful condition, rebellion is inherent in all of us. In fact, the words rebel, rebellion, rebellious, etc. occur 170 times in the NIV, 131 in the NASB, and a 143 in the NRSV translations. Before we look at a few principles regarding rebellion, control, and authority, let's note a few verses on this issue:

Proverbs 29:15 reads, "The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way (left to himself without controls) brings shame to his mother." Why? Because in his or her rebellion, the child behaves in such a way that it reflects on a parent's lack of ability or commitment to discipline, to bring controls into the child's life.³ 1 Samuel 15:23 reads, "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry." With the problem of rebellion and the need of godly control in mind, one of the qualifications of an elder is that he must be "one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity" (1 Tim. 3:4).

Related to the problem of rebellion and disobedience is, of course, the fact of Satan, the rebel of rebels, and man's sin. Controls are needed because of the problem of rebellion that is inherent within sinful man through the fall (Gen. 5:3; Rom. 5:12). If there was no rebellion, there would be no need to exercise

controls. But rebellion is a fact of life. Children are born naturally rebellious and they get that from their parents (Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Prov. 29:15).

God has established institutions of authority (chains of command) such as government and the home for the protection of society. These institutions are designed to exercise God's authority within certain boundaries or defined limits in order to restrain the natural tendency in man to exploit and harm others (Rom. 13:1f; Eph. 5:22f; 6:1f; Heb. 13:7, 17). The purpose of this authority is to bring control as a hindrance to open rebellion. These limits include: (a) those who are under a particular authority, and (b) the extent and manner in which they are to exercise this authority.

These chains of command or institutions of authority are God's umbrellas of protection and instruments for the orderly administration of His plan for the human race. The point is: Our authority as a parent is God's way of protecting children; it is part of His umbrella.

What are some of these areas of authority where rebellion may occur in life?

God over the creature--angels and man

Government with the citizen

Husbands with wives

Parents with children

Elders with the flock

Believers with believers (mutual submission)

Teachers with students

Believers over demons

Man with creation

Naturally, Satan, the first and chief rebel, is against God's plan and authority and constantly attacks these institutions to create rebellion. It is significant that the serpent (Satan in disguise) approached Eve, not Adam to whom God had given the responsibility of leadership. This is evident by the fact Adam was created first and by the fact Eve was uniquely (in contrast to the male and female animals) created from him (cf. 1 Tim. 2:13; 1 Cor. 11:8ff). After Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, the first reason God gave to Adam for the judgments that would follow was his passivity as the constituted leader. Adam had listened to his wife. This was a breakdown in the chain of leadership. Satan works incessantly to cause a misuse of authority (domination, tyranny) and to cause rebellion even when there is godly and loving leadership in all institutions of authority.

When it comes to rebellion, there are two forms that occur in children:

Active Rebellion

Active rebellion is when a child will not listen to or accept his parents' instructions. Active rebellion may be manifested:

- (1) When a child throws a tantrum, responds with a defiant "No!" or rebelliously walks away while the parent is still talking to him.
- (2) When a child continues to play or focuses his attention away from mom or dad or a grandparent when they are talking to him or giving him instructions. In such cases he is also expressing rebellion.
- (3) When a child will not accept correction. This is evident when he argues with mom or dad, blames it on someone else, or pouts instead of admitting his guilt.

Passive Rebellion

Passive rebellion is demonstrated when children meet the external requirements for obedience, but are internally resentful, i.e., sitting down on the outside, but standing up on the inside.

- (1) Passive rebellion is concealed in a child's attitude, but will eventually surface in their facial expressions of indifference, disgust, anger, or disrespect.
- (2) Passive rebellion is expressed by the child who politely listens to instructions, but who consistently fails to follow them without reminders, threats, or pressure. Of course, in younger children, failure to follow through can be the result of a short attention span. They intend and want to obey, but become preoccupied within a few minutes and need a parent's reminders and supervision.
- (3) Another subtle form of passive rebellion is to do what is required, but not in the way it should be done or with the right attitude. As will be stressed later, attitude is just as important as the act of obedience. Bad attitudes will eventually express themselves in open acts of rebellion or disobedience.
- (4) If rebellion is not dealt with, passive rebellion will result in revolution--the attempt to overthrow authority.

So what is control? It is the power or ability to regulate or guide. It means to hold back, to restrain, curb, or corral. But the goal should always be to promote happy obedience in place of rebellion.

3 The focus on the mother in the last part is probably a rhetorical variation for the parent (see 17:21; 23:24-25) and is not meant to assume that she will do the training. See also 13:24 and 23:13 (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, OT, Frank E. Gaebelin, General Editor, electronic media).

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